

The Prophet in Madina (622 A.D.)

Yathrib

Living in contact with the Jews, the Aws and the Khazraj tribes were not foreign to the idea of the unity of God. They had heard from the Jews that a Prophet was to come. Some of their people had come into contact with the Prophet at Mecca and had been deeply impressed by Him. The deputation (of three to five hundred referred to above) which they had sent to Mecca had returned entirely satisfied. The disciples who had preceded the Prophet were spreading the message of Islam throughout Yathrib. Unlike the Meccans, the Yathribites had no vested interest standing in the way of their accepting the new religion. Islam had already taken roots in Yathrib thus before the Prophet arrived there on the invitation of the people of Aws and Khazraj. No wonder they gave the Prophet a tumultuous welcome at Yathrib.

The name of the city was then changed to “Medinat al-Nabi”, the City of the Prophet. Islam effaced the age-long enmity between the tribes of Aws and Khazraj and they were given the honourific designation of “Ansars” (helpers or supporters). The immigrants, forty-five in number, were called “Muhajirun.”

The next task was to build a mosque in Medina like the one built in Quba. The place where Muhammad's she-camel had stopped was an open courtyard with some palm trees growing over it, and it belonged to two orphan brothers named Sahl and Suhayl. When they came to know that the Prophet wanted to build a mosque on their property, they were elated and offered the property as a present to the Prophet. But the Prophet kindly declined their offer, paying them instead two *mithqals*¹ in gold, the price settled for the plot. The plot was cleared of the trees, and a mosque 54 yards in width and 60 yards in length was built over it with clay bricks and mud. It was roofed with palm-wood rafters covered with palm branches, leaves and clay. Actually, it was not sufficiently solid to keep rain out.

The trunks of palm trees were used as pillars to support the roof. The construction of this mosque, “Masjid al-Nabi,” (mosque of the Prophet), was distributed among the converts. The Prophet, too, had his share of the work, but he was seldom allowed to work as ‘Ammar ibn Yasir, one of the earliest converts to Islam and a faithful companion of the Prophet, used to accomplish the Prophet's share of work in addition to his own. ‘Ammar was the very first person to begin digging the mosque's foundation.

Soon, a simple, unostentatious mosque was completed. Close to one side of the mosque, rooms were constructed for the Prophet and his family.

On the other side, rooms were provided for the poor adherents who had no house of their own. The latter numbered about seventy at the time and later gradually increased to four hundred. The rooms of the poor faithfuls who had no house of their own to live in were called "Suffa," and it was in one of them that a famous *muhaddith*, narrator of traditions, named Abu Hurayra used to live. He will *Insha-Allah* be discussed later in this book. On the completion of these rooms, the Prophet, who meanwhile was living with Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, whose full name is Khalid ibn Zayd ibn Kulayb, moved permanently into one of them. Abu Ayyub al-Ansari was head of the Banu al-Najjar clan to whom Selma, mother of 'Abdul-Muttalib, Muhammad's grand-father, belonged, hence Abu Ayyub was actually a distant relative of the Messenger of Allah, a maternal cousin.

The doors of the houses of some of the companions opened into the mosque. The Prophet ordered the doors of all of them except that of Ali closed. The companions raised some objections against this order. The Prophet, thereupon, stood up and addressed them. Having praised Allah, he said, "In accordance with the decree of Allah, I ordered you to close the doors and Ali to keep his open. Your wrangling is undesirable. Neither did I open nor close any door of my own accord. I only acted as I was ordered by Allah.'

The Muhajirun needed some meaningful relief. To ensure their economic security and also to establish brotherly ties between them and the Ansar, the Prophet joined each Muhajir with an Ansar in a tie of "Brotherhood" that became even more precious and enduring than the bond of blood relationship. The Ansar volunteered to share half and half with other contractual brothers everything they earned or possessed. It is to this unification of interests that the Qur'an refers in the following verses:

Surely those (Muhajirun) who believed and migrated and strived hard in the way of Allah with their property and souls, and those (Ansar) who sheltered and helped them, these are indeed friends (and protectors) of one another. (Qur'an, 8:72)

The Muhajirun were anxious not to remain a burden on their brothers. Soon, many of them settled down to trade and do business. In the course of time, they were rehabilitated, and within a few years, they were no longer in need of any financial support. It was then that the following verse was revealed:

And the possessors of relationships are nearer to each other. (Qur'an, 8:75)

In Medina, Islam had at first to face serious challenges. Danger threatened it from all sides, and it had to fight against great odds for mere survival. Some of the battles forced on it were inspired by political motives, others were the result of direct opposition to the new faith and the desperate efforts which its enemies exerted to quell it before it firmly established itself. Other difficulties were added by the predatory and warlike habits of the nomadic tribes roaming around the city and the insecurity and lawlessness prevailing in the country at large. It may be a good idea, therefore, to analyze and

understand the political conditions of Arabia of the time.

Pre-Islamic Arabia

The Arabs belonged to one ethnic race, but history does not record that they were ever united as one nation. They were divided into tribes and clans, each having its own chief or chieftain. They, no doubt, spoke the same language, but each tribe followed a different dialect. Indeed, even religion was not a binding force. Almost every house had its own god; tribes had their own supreme deities. In the south were the small principalities of Himyar, Awza and Aqyal. In the middle and northern Arabia lived the tribes of Bakr, Taghlib, Shaiban, Azd, Quza'ah, Kandaf, Lakhm, Juzam, Banu Hanifa, Tay, Asad, Hawazin, Ghatfan, and Aws. Khazraj, Thaqif, Quraish and others were frequently engaged in intensive warfare.

The Aws and the Khazraj belonged to Banu Qayla. Shortly before Muhammad's arrival, the Battle of Bu'ath, which broke out during the seventh year of the Prophet's mission, between these two clans, had shattered the power of the Khazraj who were now considering making Ibn Ubay, namely 'Abdullah ibn Ubay Salool, king of Medina. They hoped, by doing so, that they would be guided by him in consolidating their power, especially since they were more n'Omarous than the other clan. But the appearance of the Prophet and the conversion of the majority of the Aws to Islam turned the tide in favour of the Prophet. He proved himself to be the right man who came to the right place at the right time to put an end to the senseless bloodshed.

Bakr and Taghlib, too, had been fighting each other for forty years. Blood engagements had ruined many a tribe of Hadaramaut. And the Battle of Fijar between Banu Qais and Quraish had not yet ended. If any member of a tribe was killed, the tribe considered itself duty bound to seek revenge not merely upon the murderer but also on the tribe to which he belonged. Since there was no effective machinery to settle such disputes, this invariably touched off furious wars which lasted for generations.

Tribal might, dash and alacrity, were the only guarantee of a precarious security. The desert and the hills were home to fierce nomadic tribes that lived largely on plunder and depredation, but trade was also a major source of livelihood. Only a few months of the year were regarded as sacred. It was only then that bloodshed was stopped in order to facilitate the performance of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca or to trade at 'Okaz. But even this convention was at times relaxed to suit the convenience of individual tribes. Only the precincts of the Ka'ba were considered sacred and were free from bloodshed. It is to this state of affairs that the Qur'an has drawn attention:

Do they not see that we have made a sacred territory secure for them, while men are carried off by force all around them?(Qur'an, 29:67)

The conditions in the country were so insecure that till 5 A.H./626 A.D., the powerful tribe of 'Abdul-Qais of Bahrain could not think of going to Hijaz outside the sacred months. Even the caravans going to or

returning from Syria were sometimes plundered in open daylight.

Muslims' pasture lands were at times raided. Although conditions had considerably improved by then, the route to Mecca from Medina was not altogether safe till the fall of Mecca in 630 A.D.

While the country was so strife-ridden internally, dangers from outside were no less. The Roman and Persian empires had extended their domain to the fertile provinces of Yemen, Oman and Bahrain, extending their sovereignty to their land. The Romans had occupied Syria. Ghassan and some other Arab tribes, who had embraced Christianity, had been set up as the latter's feudatories. The Romans had expelled the Jews from Syria and Palestine in the second Century B.C. These Jews had migrated to Medina and its suburbs and built strong fortresses at Medina, Khaibar, Taima, Fadak and other places.

Prospering themselves, the Jews were extremely jealous of prosperity in other races and strongly resented rivalry in trade business. They believed themselves to be God's "chosen people" and their conduct was characterized by pride and arrogance intensified by the feeling of being secure inside their formidable fortresses. Only a few of them embraced Islam. They included 'Abdullah ibn Salam, one of their rabbis. The majority did not believe in Muhammad, the prophet prophecized in their Scriptures, because they expected the Promised One to be one of the Israelites, one who would rise in Syria, not in Arabia, with Hebrew as his language.

It was during such times that the Prophet started his great mission. For preparing the ground and the proper climate, the first step that he took was to unite the Ansar and the Muhajirun.

Establishing Brotherhood (623 A.D.)

In the next year, the 13th after the inception of the historic Prophetic mission, the Prophet established brotherhood between each couple of his followers, one from the Ansar and one from the Muhajirun. Thus, Abu Bakr and 'Omar ibn al-Khattab were joined as brothers; so were Hamzah and Zayd ibn al-Harithah, 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf, al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam and Ibn Mas'ud, 'Obaydah ibn al-Harith and Bilal ibn Rabah the Ethiopian, Talhah and Sa'id ibn Zayd, Mus'ab ibn 'Omayr and Sa'd ibn Abu al-Waqqas, Abu 'Obaydah and Salim...., etc. The Prophet established brotherhood between himself and Ali ibn Abu Talib, telling him, as we are told by al-Sayyuti, "You are my brother in the life of this world and in that of the hereafter."

Prayers and Fast Mandated (623 A.D.)

Bilal ibn Rabah was an Ethiopian intellectual who had embraced Nestorian Christianity then came to Arabia looking for the new prophet, fell in captivity then sold in Mecca as a slave of the Umayyads, bought by 'Uthman and freed to be one of the early converts to Islam and the very first *mu'aththin*, caller to prayers. He started calling the *athan* publicly this very year (623 A.D.). The following verses of Surat al-Baqara (Chapter of the Cow) were revealed ordering the faithful to direct their faces towards Mecca

as their *qibla*:

Indeed, We see the turning of our face to the heavens; so, We shall surely turn you to a qibla which you shall like; turn then your face towards the Sacred Mosque, and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it, and those who have been given the Book most surely know that it is the truth from their Lord, and Allah is not at all heedless of what they do. And even if you bring those who have been given the Book every Sign, they shall not follow your qibla, nor can you be a follower of their qibla, nor are they the followers of each other's qibla, and if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you shall most surely be among the unjust. (Qur'an, 2: 144-145)

Before then, they used to direct their faces towards Jerusalem, something because of which the Jews of Medina taunted them; idols still littered the Ka'ba in Mecca. And the fast of the month of Ramadan was also mandated in the same year in response to verses 179 – 181 of the same Chapter referred to above.

Ali Marries Fatima (624 A.D.)

On the 15th of Rajab of the next year (2 A.H.), corresponding to January 15, 624 A.D., Fatima, daughter of the Prophet, was married to Ali. All that Ali could offer by way of *mahr* (dower) was his coat of mail, and all that the Prophet could give to his daughter as a wedding gift were: an ordinary cot, a mattress stuffed with palm leaves, a water bag, two grinding stones, and two earthen pitchers. Yet some writers insinuate that the Prophet and his party were ambushing and plundering trade caravans!

If these writers, who profess to be unbiased, are to be believed, what had happened to the booty and the riches?! What is most dangerous about such "historians" is that they dutifully cite a mass of historical data and in the same breath utter some falsehoods so that those lies may also pass on as historically true.

Pact With The Jews (624 A.D.)

Having thus welded the Ansar and the Muhajirun into one Brotherhood, the Prophet now set himself to the task of establishing a stable society, a commonwealth based on equality of rights and on the concept of universal humanity. Granting equality of status and rights as well as full freedom of religion and of conscience to the Jews, he invited them to enter into a pact with the Muslims. He drew up a charter which has been reproduced by the historian Ibn Hashim thus:

In the Name of the Most Merciful and Compassionate God.

Granted by Muhammad, the Prophet, to the Believers, whether of Quraish or of Yathrib, and all individuals of whatever origin who have made common cause with them: All these shall constitute one community.

Then, after regulating the payment of the *dijyya* (blood money) by the various clans and fixing some wise rules regarding the private duties of Muslims among themselves, the document proceeds thus:

The state of peace and war shall be common to all Muslims; none among them shall have the right of concluding peace with, or declaring war against, the enemies of his co-religionists. The Jews who enter into this covenant shall be protected from all insults and vexations; they shall have an equal right with our own people to our assistance and good offices. The Jews of the various branches of 'Awf, Najjar, al-Harith, Jashm, Tha'labah, Aws, and all others domiciled in Yathrib shall form with the Muslims one composite nation. They shall practice their religion as freely as the Muslims.

The clients and allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom. The guilty shall be pursued and punished. The Jews shall join the Muslims in defending Yathrib against all enemies. The interior of Yathrib shall be a sacred place for all those who accept this Charter. The clients and allies of the Muslims and of the Jews shall be as respected as the principals. All Muslims shall hold in abhorrence anyone found guilty of a crime, injustice, or disorder. None shall uphold the culpable, even if he may be his nearest in kinship.

Then, after some other provisions regarding the internal management of the State, this extraordinary document concluded thus:

All future disputes between those who accept this Charter shall be finally referred, after God, to the Prophet.

The Jews of Medina accepted this Pact. After some time, the neighbouring Jewish tribes of Banu Nadir and Banu Quraizah signed it, too. But, as later events proved, it was only expediency that had dictated this course of action to the Jews. There was no change of heart on their part and they secretly nursed the same hostile feelings against the Aws and the Khazraj as before and viewed the growing confederation of the Muslims with grave concern and animosity.

In the course of time, they started taunting and abusing the Muslims, frequently quarrelling with them and resorting to treachery and sedition. They were assisted by some people of the Aws and the Khazraj who had become lukewarm converts: the *Munafiqun* (hypocrites). These were headed by 'Abdullah ibn Ubay who had his own designs to become the king of Medina and, together with the Jews, they became a constant source of danger to the newborn religion and to its adherents.

The Jews, who had thriving business deals with Quraish of Mecca, conspired with them to eradicate the infant religion before it assumed formidable proportions. As the head of the religion, and a general in a time of almost continuous warfare, Muhammad was the guardian of the lives and liberty of the people. The very existence of the nascent religion was in serious peril. Islam preaches the brotherhood of mankind; it insists upon toleration of all religions and creeds; it enjoins kindness and compassion, but it does not permit its followers to submit to the forces of disintegration.

Being in league with the Jews and the *munafiqun*, the Meccans started harassing the Muslims. Under

the leadership of Karz ibn Jabir al-Fahri, they started raiding up to the very outskirts of Medina, destroying fruit-bearing trees and carrying away flocks. News began pouring into Medina that the Meccans were allying with other tribes to launch a massive attack against the Muslims. Muhammad sent out small ambassadorial missions to these tribes to contract alliances and treaties. One of those missions entered into a treaty with Banu Zamra. The terms of the treaty were as follows:

This is the document of Muhammad, Messenger of God, for Banu Zamra. Their lives and property are safe. If they are attacked by anyone, they will be assisted except when they themselves fight against the religion (Islam). In return, they will come to the help of the Prophet when called upon by him.

A similar pact was made with Banu Madlaj at Thul-'Ashira. Quraish had sent a threatening letter to 'Abdullah ibn Ubay who was the chief of his tribe prior to the arrival of the Prophet: "You have given shelter to our man (Muhammad). You should either kill him or turn him out of Medina or else we swear that we will attack you and, killing all the males, we will capture and enjoy your women.'

The attack was considered so imminent, and the small band of Muslims was in such peril, that the Prophet used to remain awake throughout the night. Al-Darmi and al-Hakim have recorded that "When the Prophet and his companions came to Medina and the Ansar sheltered them, the Arabs decided to attack them. The Prophet's companions used to sleep holding to their weapons.'

Military Reconnaissance

Quraishites were extremely furious about Muhammad slipping away from their hands, having made all preparations to kill him. The news that Islam was rapidly gaining hold in Medina did nothing to pacify their rage and animosity. Several times news reached Medina that they were planning to attack the Muslims. As a result, the Prophet had to send out reconnoitering parties now and then to find out the designs and movements of Quraish and to watch the routes and highways to prevent any sudden attack.

Once, thirty Muslims (under the command of Hamzah, the Prophet's uncle) met a party of 300 riders (under the command of Abu Jahl) at Saiful-Bahr. The Meccans were eager to massacre the small group of thirty, but Majdi ibn 'Amr al-Juhni (who had a covenant with both groups) prevailed upon both sides and convinced them to go back to their respective places. Thus, a battle was averted.

Some time later, a patrolling party of 60 to 80 Muslims, under the command of 'Obaydah ibn al-Harith (a cousin of the Prophet) reached Rabigh and found 200 riders of Quraish under the command of 'Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl. Quraishites started the battle with their bows and arrows. Then, someone thought that the Muslims could not come with such a small force to face a group of warriors so superior in number unless they had a great army hidden somewhere. This idea spread, and they fled away.

A small party of twelve persons under the command of 'Abdullah ibn Jahsh (also a cousin of the Prophet²) was dispatched to Nakhlah, an area between Taif and Mecca, with sealed orders to be

opened after two days' journey__ a precaution against espionage which was rife. The letter, as quoted by al-Tabari on page 1275 of his *Tarikh*, stated: "Stay at Nakhlah; gather information about the designs of Quraish and communicate.'

It was only coincidentally that the party met some Meccan traders and that one of them, 'Amr ibn al-Hadrami, a highly distinguished man of nobility, was killed at the hands of 'Abdullah. One man escaped, and two others were brought to the Prophet as prisoners. The date of the incident was mistaken by the party as the last day of Jumada II, but the Meccans claimed that it was the first of the holy month of Rajab during which no aggression was permitted. The action was thus interpreted as a deliberate encroachment on the sanctity of the holy month. 'Abdullah had apparently acted beyond his instructions, and this incident aggravated the situation. Except for this isolated incident, in none of the n'Omarous expeditions listed by Arab historians as *saraya* was there any skirmish or a question of looting and plundering. They were sent out either to make alliances with neighbouring tribes, or they were reconnaissance patrols; news was reaching Medina that the Meccans might strike any day.

Badr: First Battle In Islam (624 A.D.)

Quraish had begun grand-scale preparations to attack Medina. The trade caravan which had gone to Syria that year headed by Abu Sufyan was extraordinarily equipped. Every Quraishite put all his savings in that caravan, and it was decided that the profit accrued that year would be given to the traders to spend on arms, horses, and other items of war to battle the Muslims of Medina.

This news did cause a great deal of anxiety in Medina. As Abu Sufyan was returning from Syria, he feared that the Muslims might intercept his trade caravan. He sent a messenger well in advance to inform the leaders of Quraish of his fears. Upon receiving the message, a well-equipped army of one thousand Meccans marched towards Medina under the command of Abu Jahl.

They had reached Badr (200 miles from Mecca and 80 miles from Medina) when news came that the trade caravan was passing just three miles on the seaside from the Quraishites' camp, and that it had not encountered any attack from the Muslims yet. But since the Meccans were so eager to battle Muhammad and his followers, they decided to proceed towards Medina anyway. After all, was not the objective of sending such a trade caravan this very battle?! So, why should they go back to Mecca when they had one thousand well-equipped warriors among them who were sufficient to teach the Muslims a lesson?! They camped at the stream of Badr.

Now let us see what was happening in Medina. When news came that the trade caravan was coming from Syria (on the north side) and that the Meccan army was marching towards Medina (from the south), the Muslims thought that they would be crushed between these two enemy groups.

Now, there were two options before the Muslims in Medina: to either save themselves from being overwhelmed by the Meccans with all their resources from the rich Syrian trade, or choose another

alternative (one which had the least danger for the time being and which also promised a rich booty): fall upon the Quraishi caravan returning from Syria richly laden and led by Abu Sufyan with only 40 not so well-armed men. From a worldly point of view, this latter course was the safest and the most lucrative, and many Muslims preferred it. The other alternative, which was actually adopted on the recommendation of the Prophet as guided by God, was to leave the booty alone and to march out boldly against the well-armed and well-equipped Quraishite army of 1,000 men coming from Mecca.

The Prophet, as usual, consulted with his companions in this regard. Abu Bakr said, "The Prophet knows better, but it has come to my knowledge that Quarish are fast approaching. They are only two stages from us." Omar ibn al-Khattab added, "O Messenger of Allah! The prestige of Quraish is involved in this affair. They have never bent their haughty necks to servitude. Since becoming infidels, they have never turned believers. They are sure to set themselves stubbornly against you. You should, therefore, have adequate equipment of war to meet them." Omar's statements did not please the Prophet at all, and signs of indignation were visible on his face.

Al-Miqdad ibn 'Amr³ then addressed the Prophet thus: "We should not repeat what the Children of Israel had said to Moses, that is, 'Go, you and your Lord, to fight while we sit here waiting.' Rather, by God Who sent you to guide us, we should say: 'Go you and your Lord to fight and we shall fight your foe on your right and on your left, in front of you and behind you, till the Lord grants you victory.' Hearing this speech of Miqdad, the Prophet smiled and blessed him.

Now the Prophet turned to the Ansar to see what they had to say. They formed the majority of his fighting force. He was apprehensive lest they should say that they had pledged to assist him only in repulsing any attack against their city, Medina. But Sa'd ibn Mu'ath⁴ stood up on behalf of the Ansar and said to him that they had received him as the Prophet of God and had sworn allegiance to him, promising to obey him. They, therefore, were all ready to follow him, to do whatever pleased him, though it were to throw themselves into the sea. The Prophet appreciated this statement and made it known to everyone that he had decided to face the Meccan forces, assuring them of victory.

This situation is described in the following *ayats* of the Qur'an:

Just as your Lord caused you (O Muhammad!) to go forth from your house with the truth, though a party of the believers were averse thereto; they disputed with you about the truth after it had become clear, (and they went forth) as if they were being driven to death while they looked (at it). And when Allah promised you one of the two parties that it shall be yours, and you loved that the one not armed should be yours, and Allah desired to manifest the truth of what was true by His words and to cut off the root of the unbelievers, so that He may manifest the truth of what was true and show the falsehood of what was false, even though the guilty ones disliked it. (Qur'an, 8:5-8)

These verses clearly show that the Meccan army was already on its way long before the Muslims came out of Medina to defend themselves. Also, they clearly show that although some Muslims desired to

avoid the Meccan army and to attack the trade caravan, that idea was not accepted, and that the decided aim and objective of their march was to fight the Meccan army which was already on its way.

This clearly belies the vicious and mischievous propaganda of Western writers who claim that the Prophet had intended to attack the trade caravan of Quraish and that Quraish had come out only to protect it. The verses of the Qur'an provide an authentic contemporary record of the events of Badr. If there is any writing by anyone which goes against this Divine account, it must be thrown out of the window.

You may wonder why the enemies of Islam labour so much to present this battle of Badr as one in which the Quraishites (poor souls!) were aiming at only protecting their trade caravan. The reason is this: It was the first battle between the pagan Quraishites and the Muslims, and if the responsibility of this first battle is laid on the heads of the Muslims, then all subsequent battles could be portrayed as being the continuation of this battle and, thus, the Prophet could be presented as a warrior prophet who by his plundering designs compelled the "peace-loving" Meccans to fight!

'Anyhow, let us go back to our narrative. The Meccan army was in control of the stream of Badr, and the ground of their campsite was of firm clay. Contrarily, the Muslims were far from the stream and thus experienced difficulty in finding water. To make matters worse, many Muslims had nocturnal discharge while asleep and became "unclean" (*najis*). And the ground under them was sandy which was likely to prevent fast running during the battle.

God helped them by sending rain which provided them with water enough for their needs and made the sandy ground firm for them, while the firm clay of the Meccans' side became muddy and slippery, making their stand and maneuvers difficult.

Referring to this, Allah says in the Qur'an:

(Remember) when He caused drowsiness to fall on you as a security from Him and sent down upon you water from the cloud so that He might thereby purify you and take away from you the uncleanness of Satan, so that He might fortify your hearts and keep (your) footsteps thereby firm. (Qur'an, 8:11)

In this background, look at the insinuation of some Western "scholars" who have written that the Prophet had taken control of the stream of Badr and by refusing water to the Meccans, reduced them to defeat!

Anyhow, the facts of the actual battle are, in short, as follows:

With an ill-equipped body of three hundred and thirteen persons, 61 from the Aws and 170 from the Khazraj, having among them only two horses and seventy camels (which they rode by turn), the Prophet proceeded to Badr, about eighty miles from Medina, to meet the Meccan army. Young Ali was the standard-bearer. The forces met on Friday, the 17th of the month of Ramadan, 2 A.H. (March 16, 624 A.D.). According to the customs of the Arabs, three Quraishite warriors challenged their opponents to

individual duels. They were 'Otbah, Abu Sufyan's father-in-law and father of Hind who tried to chew Hamzah's liver, as the reader will come to know later, al-Walid, 'Otbah's son, and Shaybah, brother of 'Otbah, all Umayyads.

They enjoyed a great deal of influence in their tribe. Three Ansar stepped forward accepting their challenge, but the Quraishites refused to accept them as their equals and instead invited the "Meccan renegades," as they called them, to come out to meet them on the battlefield. Ali and 'Obaydah, both cousins of the Prophet, as well as Hamzah the valiant, his uncle, all Hashemites, responded to the challenge, and the fight between these six men broke out. It was a fierce and prolonged contest. Ali and Hamzah succeeded in the end in overpowering their opponents, al-Walid and Shaybah respectively, whom they slew. Then they went to aid 'Obaydah who was severely wounded and nearly overpowered by 'Otbah. They killed 'Otbah and captured 'Obaydah who died of his wounds four days later.

After these individual duels, a pitched battle ensued. The stakes were high. Both forces fought valiantly but the Muslims were animated by holy zeal. In the thick of the battle, the Prophet was watching the progress of the battle intensely; he prayed to God, earnestly beseeching Him thus:

"O Lord, forget not Thy promise of assistance! O Lord! If this small band were to perish, there will be none to worship Thee." Coming out of his canopy, he cast a handful of gravel into the air towards the enemy saying, "Confusion seize their faces!" He called out to his men saying, "Courage, my children! Close your ranks! Discharge your arrows, and the day is yours!" According to Abu al-Fida', both armies heard his voice. The pagans imagined that they saw angelic warriors; the Quraishi line wavered, and a number of their most brave and distinguished men fell.

Allah describes this battle in the following verses:

(Remember) when you sought aid from your Lord, so He answered you: I will assist you with a thousand angels following one another. And Allah only gave it as a good news and so that your hearts might thereby be at ease, and victory is only from Allah; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise. (Qur'an, 8:9-10)

The Muslims got the upper hand. Their leader, the Prophet, sat under a canopy thatched with palm branches which was erected and closely guarded by Sa'd ibn Mu'ath. Abu Bakr did not join the ranks of the fighters but sat by the Prophet's side. The Meccan pagans took to flight in a shameful manner. In their haste, they threw their armour away, abandoning their transport animals with all their camping gear and equipment. They suffered a miserable defeat.

They were driven back, leaving seventy dead, including a number of their notable chiefs and the most brave of their men. The Muslims dug up a deep pit wherein they threw the corpses of the slain Meccan pagans, including those of 'Otbah, Shaybah, al-Walid (Khalid's father; read above his story and how Allah condemned him), Umayyah, and Abu Jahl. The Prophet addressed them thus: "O 'Otbah! O Shaybah! O Walid! O Umayyah! O Abu Jahl! Alas! Have you found what your gods promised you to be

the truth?! What my Lord promised me I have found to be true! Woe unto you! You rejected me, your Prophet! You cast me forth while others gave me refuge; you fought me while others came to my help!' "O Prophet!" said "Omar ibn al-Khattab, who was standing by his side, "Do you really speak to the dead?!" "Yes," the Prophet replied, "for they realize what I spoke to them better than you." All this is recorded in *Madarij al-Nubuwwah* and *Rawdat al-Ahbab*.

Half of these seventy were killed by Ali ibn Abu Talib alone. It was his first war. Seventy others were taken prisoners. The Muslim force had lost only fourteen men, six from the Muhajirun and eight from the Ansar.

The prisoners were treated with exceptional kindness with the exception of a couple who were most notorious; these were 'Oqbah ibn Abu Mu'eet and al-Nathr ibn al-Harith, who had to be beheaded. Even the hostile critic Muir says: "In pursuance of Mahomet's commands, the citizens of Medina and such of the refugees as possessed houses received the prisoners and treated them with much consideration.

'Blessings be on the men of Medina', said one of these prisoners in later days, 'they made us ride while they themselves walked; they gave us wheaten bread to eat when there was little of it, contenting themselves with dates.'¹⁴ The more affluent prisoners paid ransom and were set free. The others were asked to teach ten persons each to read and write and this teaching was to count as their ransom. After all, in these times of progress and enlightenment, with all the charters and agreements on the treatment of prisoners of war, history does not record another instance even remotely as generous and as humane as the Muslims' treatment of the prisoners taken in their very first encounter about fourteen hundred years ago.

Among the captives were 'Abbas, an uncle of the Prophet, Nawfal ibn al-Harith, and Aqil ibn Abu Talib, both cousins of the Prophet, and Abul-'As ibn al-Rabee', husband of Zainab daughter of Khadija and Muhammad's step-daughter. 'Abbas was stoutly built; he was a man of tall stature. He was captured by Abul Yasar, a man relatively thin, lean, and short! When asked how a man so small could overpower him, 'Abbas said that his captor looked to him at the time like a giant.

Indeed, there was a Sign (of Divine interference) for you in the two hosts (that) met together in the (Badr) encounter: one party fighting in the way of Allah and the other unbelieving, whom they saw twice as many (or as big) as themselves with the sight of the eye, and Allah strengthens with His aid whomsoever He pleases; most surely there is a lesson in this for those who have sight. (Qur'an, 4:13)

'Abbas saw the size of Abul Yasar appearing to him twice as big as he actually was, and he was not big at all... 'Abbas was asked to pay ransom for himself and for his nephews Nawfal and Aqil. He replied that if he paid up the ransom, he would be reduced to begging alms of Quraish for the rest of his life. But to his great astonishment, the Prophet revealed to him the secret of the gold which he had entrusted to his wife at midnight before departing with the Meccan army! Then he recited the following verse of Surat

al-Anfal:

O Prophet! Say to the captives in your hands: If Allah knows of anything good in your hearts, He will give you better than what has been taken away from you and will forgive you, and Allah is most Forgiving, most Merciful. (Qur'an, 8:70)

‘Abbas was now convinced beyond the shadow of doubt that his nephew was neither a pretender nor an ordinary man; how else did he know about what went on between him and his wife in the depth of the night? He admitted that nobody could know of that incident except God, so he readily embraced Islam, and so did his nephews. A few years later, when he found himself a man of considerable wealth, he reflected on the verse cited above and admitted that the prophecy was fulfilled.

In order to secure the release of Abul ‘as, his wife Zainab sent some of her jewelry, including a necklace given to her by her mother Khadija, wife of the Prophet, as a wedding gift. The Prophet identified the necklace as soon as he saw it. Sadly reflecting upon Khadija, he returned it to Abul ‘as, asking him to give it back to Zainab. He released him without any ransom on one condition: that he bring Zainab to him. Zayd ibn Harithah escorted Abul ‘as back to Mecca, and after a few days, both men came back together with Zainab, the Prophet's step-daughter. Zainab, now a Muslim, refused to go back to her pagan husband unless he accepted Islam. He embraced Islam six years later in 630 A.D. after the conquest of Mecca by the Muslims and after appearing before the Prophet as a prisoner of war for the second time.

Quraish's defeat at Badr was the death blow to Abu Lahab, the only Hashemite who was a bitter opponent of the Prophet, and he died of grief one week after the battle at the loss of his friends and relatives, especially al-Walid, Shaybah and ‘Otbah.

Battle and Aftermath

The battle of Badr was remarkable in more ways than one. It demonstrated the great devotion of the disciples to their cause and their complete faith in the Prophet and his mission. Stood before them in the Meccan ranks were many of their close relatives, sons, fathers, or uncles. Thus, the Prophet's uncle ‘Abbas, Ali's brother ‘Aqil, Abu Bakr's son, Huthaifah's father and ‘Omar's maternal uncle, to name a few, figured in the Meccan army. Yet the disciples never faltered. Personal feelings and sentiments were subordinated to the supreme cause. Such was the material from which Islam arose. The battle also proved that mere numerical superiority and matching valour are of no avail if the cause is not righteous. God helps those who make sacrifices in His cause.

The battle of Badr had far-reaching consequences. Till then, the Muslims were a harassed band avoiding any major conflict. This victory gave them confidence in their physical power. They could now meet force with force⁵. They were soon recognized as a power to be reckoned with and smaller tribes were cautioned against joining forces against them. This victory dealt a severe blow to the prestige of

Quraish. A number of their chiefs, such as Abu Jahl, 'Otbah, Shaibah, Zam'ah, 'As ibn Hisham, and Umayyah ibn Khalaf had been killed and, consequently, Abu Sufyan became their undisputed chieftain.

'Abdullah ibn Ubay and his oscillating followers professed Islam, though in name only, and as *munafiqun* (hypocrites), they were always a source of danger. The Jews of Medina and its vicinity were alarmed at the new power that had emerged. Their enmity towards the Muslims, however, did not abate, and a Jewish tribe, Banu Qinaqa', had to be punished not long after Badr as will be discussed later. The ignominy of the defeat made the Meccans more bitter and furious and the cry of "Revenge!" was on all lips.

Ghazwat Al-Sawaiq (624 A.D.)

Abu Sufyan had sworn vengeance. He took a vow that he would not touch his wives nor comb his hair till he had avenged that defeat. In order to fulfill this vow and to show that all was not lost for the Meccans, he set out towards Medina in the month of Thul-Hijjah, 2 A.H. (June 624 A.D.), leading two hundred horsemen. Salam ibn Mashkam, chief of the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadir, treated them to a feast and divulged to them the weak points of Medina's fortifications. On the next day, Abu Sufyan raided a Medina pasture, killing an Ansar named Sa'd ibn 'Amr and burning a number of houses. When this news reached the Prophet, he hotly pursued the raiders who fled, abandoning their rations. This gave the raid its name, "the battle of meal bags, *sawaiq*." Abu Sufyan was now planning for a much larger campaign.

Ghazwat Al-Ghaftan (625 A.D.)

In 3 A.H./625 A.D., the tribes of Banu Tha'labah and Banu Mihrab sent a force of five hundred and forty horsemen under the command of Da'thur ibn Muharib to raid Medina. They gave up the idea when the Prophet marched with his companions out of Medina to meet them. Da'thur, however, got an opportunity to launch a surprise attack on the Prophet who was resting alone under a tree. "O Muhammad," cried he with a drawn sword in his hand, "who is there now to save thee?!" "Allah," replied the Prophet.

This dauntless composure and complete faith in God awed the wild bedouin whose sword now fell from his hand... Seizing it, the Prophet asked him in turn, "Who is there now to save thee, O Da'thur?" "Alas, none," replied the bedouin, and I testify that there is no god except Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. By Allah! I shall never raise any army against you." "Then learn from me to be merciful," said the Prophet as he returned the sword to him. Da'thur was so impressed that he asked the Prophet for forgiveness.

Uhud Battle (624 A.D.)

Ghazwat al-Sawaiq was only a prelude to the big battle that was to follow. The chagrin and fury of Abu Sufyan and his Quraishite supporters at their defeat at Badr knew no bounds. Their whole energy was

aroused and they commenced preparations for another attack on the Muslims. Abu Sufyan rallied behind him the coastal tribes of Banu Kinanah and Banu Tihamah. Their united forces numbered three thousand well equipped soldiers, seven hundred of whom were armed with coats of mail and two hundred were mounted on horseback, besides one thousand camels, all under the command of Abu Sufyan.

The army's right wing was under the command of Khalid ibn al-Walid and the left under that of 'Ikrimah son of the ill-famed Abu Jahl. Women played their role to provide the men with moral support. They were led by Abu Sufyan's wife Hind who brought with her fifteen Meccan matrons. They took their place in the rear of the army, beating their drums and chanting poetry to animate the troops, magnifying the greatness of Hubal, the most popular deity in Mecca.

On their way to Medina, having reached Abwa', Hind wanted to dig out the grave containing the remains of Amina bint Wahab, Muhammad's mother, who lay there buried for more than fifty years, but Divine Providence interferred, so she could not carry out her wicked scheme. Finally, the army reached Thul Hulaifa, a village about five Arabian miles to the north-east of Medina, in the green corn fields of Mount Uhud, on Wednesday, Shawwal 4, 3 A.H. (March 23, 625 A.D.).

Muhammad was in Quba when he was informed by his uncle 'Abbas, who was still living in Mecca, of Quraish's expedition, so he hurried back to Medina. He consulted his followers whether to wait for the enemy's attack on the city and to defend it from within, or to meet the enemy outside the city. He was inclined to the former plan because he did not want the city's residents to be exposed to the perils of wars. Many of his close companions were of the same view, but the majority urged him to meet the enemy outside the city, and this view was finally adopted.

But when the Prophet was ready to march out, they changed their mind again and spoke about it to the Prophet, but he nevertheless marched out with only a thousand men headed by Ali. This number included the forces raised by 'Abdullah ibn Ubay who brought with him three hundred of his followers, the *munafiqun*, hypocrites, including a small number of his Jewish allies, but the Prophet refused to enlist the service of the Jews unless they accepted Islam, which they, of course, did not.

Thus, he and all his 300 men were turned back, reducing the number of Muhammad's army to seven hundred. Only a hundred of them had coats of mail, and between them they had only two horses. Their zeal was, however, so great that when some boys, who were considered too young to participate in the battle, were asked to go back, they departed very reluctantly and two of them, Rafi' ibn Khadij and Samrah, managed to remain with the army anyway.

The Prophet reached Uhud in the morning of Saturday, Shawwal 7, 3 A.H. (March 26, 625 A.D.) and took up his position below the mountain. The army was arrayed in fighting formations and fifty archers were posted, under the command of 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr, at a pass between the hills surrounding Mount Uhud to guard the army from any rear attack. They had strict orders from the Prophet never to leave

their post, whatever the outcome of the battle might be, till they received further instructions.

The standard was in the hands of Mus'ab ibn 'Omayr. Zubayr was in command of the mailed section and Hamzah in command of the rest. On the side of the Meccans, Talhah held the standard and the various regiments were under the charge of Khalid ibn al-Walid (who commanded the cavalry), 'Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl, Safwan ibn Umayyah and his brother 'Abdullah. According to some references consulted for this book, the Meccan pagans enlisted in their army a number of their black slaves to fight with them.

Talhah, the pagans' standard-bearer, challenged the Muslims to individual combat. The challenge was accepted by Ali ibn Abu Talib who soon cut off one of his legs with a single blow then killed him with another. It took only a few seconds. Talhah's dead body lay on the ground. The standard was taken by his brother 'Uthman who was slashed to death by Hamzah. The third standard-bearer was killed by Ali. This continued till nine (or some historians say ten) standard-bearers were killed one after the other. These historians include Ibn al-Athir, Ibn Hisham, and al-Tabari. Abu 'Amir, a veteran Meccan hero, stepped forward with his fifty archers and showered the Muslims with arrows. The Muslims responded with as thick and as prompt shower of arrows of their own. Thus did the battle begin with the Quraishites advancing in the form of a crescent. Ali, Hamzah and Abu Dajjanah demonstrated heroic valour.

Wahshi, an Abyssinian slave, had been commissioned by Hind, wife of Abu Sufyan, to kill either Muhammad, Ali, or Hamzah (in order to avenge the death of her father, 'Otbah ibn Rabi'ah, her brother, al-Walid, as well as that of Hanzalah son of Abu Sufyan at Badr at their hands). He was lurking behind a rock when he singled Hamzah out and, seeing him engaged in a duel with Saba ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza, a Meccan hero, threw a spear at him which pierced his 'Abdomen, killing him instantly. At that juncture, Ali assigned the command of the various regiments of the army to Abu Dajjanah, Mus'ab ibn 'Omayr, and Sahl ibn Hunayf. They collectively launched an attack against the Meccan army, breaking its center. The Meccans now wavered, and Ali and his heroes gained the enemy's camp. The Meccans were seen turning to their heels, leaving their camp to the Muslims who proceeded to overrun it.

The Meccans were now losing heart till one of their women, 'Omra daughter of 'Alqamah, took up the standard herself. The Meccans again rallied behind her but they were crushed by the Muslims. The Meccans, having paid a heavy toll, fell back in disarray and the Muslims started gathering the booty.

Their eagerness for spoil, however, turned the tide of victory which was almost already at hand. Thinking that the battle was over, most of the archers who were guarding the passage in the hill left their posts lured by the spoils even against the orders of their leader 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr. Khalid ibn al-Walid was fleeing when he saw such an opportunity and, gathering a group of men, he killed the few remaining defenders of the pass.

Then he launched a furious attack from the rear. The Muslims were taken so much by surprise that they did not know what to do. In the general melee, their ranks became disorganized. The retreating Meccan forces rallied again and launched a fresh onslaught from the front. The Muslims' standard-bearer,

Musa'ab ibn 'Omayr was killed. He bore a great facial resemblance to the Prophet. Up went Ibn Suraqah's cry that Muhammad had been killed.

This threw the Muslims into further confusion and utter dismay with some saying that had Muhammad been a true prophet, he would not have been killed, as is recorded in *Tarikh al-Khamis*. Others were talking of going to Abu Sufyan and apologizing to him, trying to win his amnesty. Even many of their famous personalities lost heart. "Omar ibn al-Khattab threw his sword away saying that there was no use fighting since the Prophet was no more. He fled towards the mountain and, in his own words, he was jumping from one boulder to another like hill goats.

Anas ibn Nazar, uncle of the renown *sahabi* Anas ibn Malik, saw how "Omar ibn al-Khattab and Talhah ibn 'Obaydullah were sitting leisurely along with others, so he asked them what they were doing. "We have nothing to do," they replied, "since Muhammad has been slain." "But my friends!," said Anas, "Even if Muhammad were killed, certainly Muhammad's Lord lives and never dies; therefore, do not value your lives only because the Prophet is dead. Rather, you should fight for the cause for which he fought." Then he cried out, "O God! I am excused before You and acquitted in Your sight of what they say!" Drawing his sword, he fought valiantly. It was in reference to this incident of how some people deserted the Prophet and how others fought beside him to the last that the following verses of the Holy Qur'an were revealed there and then:

And Muhammad is no more than a Prophet; prophets have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heel will by no means harm Allah in the least, and Allah will reward the grateful. And a soul will not die except with the permission of Allah; the term is (already) fixed, and whoever desires the reward of this world, I shall give him of it, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, I shall give him of it, and I will reward the grateful. And how many a prophet has fought (and) with whom were (present) many worshippers of the Lord? So they did not become weak-hearted on account of what befell them in Allah's way, nor did they weaken, nor did they abase themselves, and Allah loves those who are patient. (Qur'an, 3: 144-146)

Abu 'Obaydah, Abu Bakr, and 'Uthman fled away, too. The latter returned to Medina three days later.

Many valiant soldiers, renouncing all discretion, entered the thick of the Meccan ranks determined to fight to the end. This went on till Ka'b ibn Malik (or some say Anas ibn Nazar) saw the Prophet and shouted at the top of his voice that the Prophet was still alive. The spirit of the Muslims revived, but the Prophet now became the chief target of the Meccan forces. 'Abdullah ibn Qam advanced towards the Prophet and struck a sword on his head with such force that two links of his helmet penetrated the Prophet's face.

'Otbah ibn Abu Waqqas threw a stone at the Prophet, further injuring his face and dislodging his two upper teeth. The Prophet now had fallen in a pit where Ali ibn Abu Talib found him and protected him

against the continuous furious onslaughts of the Meccans. When the Prophet saw this sacrificing spirit of Ali, he asked him as to why he, too, did not flee like the others. Ali replied: "Should I become a *kafir* after having accepted Islam?" Anas ibn Nazar continued fighting till he was martyred. And when Ali's sword broke down, the Prophet gave him his own sword, Thul-Fiqar. It was then that a voice was heard from above saying, "There is no sword except Thul-Fiqar. There is no brave man except Ali."

At the same time, arch-angel Gabriel told the Prophet that it was the height of loyalty and bravery which Ali was demonstrating to the Prophet. The Prophet said: "Why not? Ali is from me and I am from Ali." Gabriel said: "And I am from you both."

Later, some Muslims like Sa'd, Zubayr, Talhah, Abu Dajjanah and Ziyad, gathered around the Prophet. Faithful companions, including the brave lady Umm 'Ammarah, prevented others from getting too close to the Prophet. With their bodies did they shield him against the rain of arrows. Standing in such a great peril, the Prophet cried to God: "O God! Forgive my people, for they know not!" There was no rancor, no bitterness, no ill-will in his heart against his mortal enemies even in such a precarious situation. An overwhelming compassion for the people and a burning desire to lead them to the right path actuated all his deeds and sayings. Then some other Muslims arrived where the Prophet was being defended at fearful odds by the small band of his companions. After some furious fighting, they managed to retreat to the security of the heights of Uhud.

Meanwhile, the word had reached Medina that the Prophet was killed. The Prophet's daughter, Fatima al-Zahra, surrounded by a group of Muslim women, hurried to Uhud. To her great relief, Fatima found her father alive but his forehead and face were covered with his blood. Ali brought water in his shield and Fatima cleansed and dressed the wounds.

The Meccan forces had turned the tables but they were too exhausted to drive their advantage home either by attacking Medina or by driving the Muslims from the heights of the mountain. They satiated their desire for vengeance by committing ghastly brutalities upon the slain and the injured, cutting off their ears and noses and mutilating their bodies. The brave Hamzah was amongst the slain. His heart was torn out by Hind, wife of Abu Sufyan, who also cut off his ears and nose and took out his heart and liver. She tried to chew the liver but Allah made it so hard that she could not do so... She had to throw it out. The horrible scene was so revolting that the Prophet forbade forever the practice of mutilation.

With victory almost within their grasp, the Muslims had suffered a heavy blow. They were shaken in body and in spirit. But the Prophet preached to them fortitude and endurance.

In this battle, seventy Muslims were martyred and an equal number wounded. Ali received sixteen serious sword wounds. On the list of martyrs were: Mus'ab ibn 'Omayr, Sa'd ibn al-Rabi', 'Ammarah ibn Ziyad, and Hanzala son of Abu 'Amir, the first archer to defend Muslim lines. The Meccans lost 30 (or 22) warriors twelve of whom at the hands of Ali.

For those who laid their lives in the way of Allah, the following glad tidings had been revealed:

And reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; nay, they are alive (and) are sustained by their Lord. (Qur'an, 3:169)

Having finished his engagements at Uhud in five or six days, the Prophet returned to Medina where he heard the wailing of the women of Banu 'Abd al-Ash-hal for their dead. He expressed his regret that Hamzah the valiant had none to mourn him in the city. Sa'd ibn Mu'ath felt the same, so he went at once to his women and brought them to the Prophet's house so that they would mourn the death of Hamzah, and the Prophet blessed them for it. Their example was followed by all the women of the Ansar. This is recorded by al-Tabari and Ibn Athir.

Battle's Aftermath

While retreating to Mecca, Abu Sufyan had bribed a traveller going towards Medina to inform the Prophet that the Meccans were again assembling a great force to attack Medina. Hearing the news, Ali said: "Allah is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is He."

The Prophet went out at once, taking with him only those seventy warriors who were wounded in Uhud, to pursue the Meccan forces. He stayed for three days at a place called Hamra'ul-Asad but did not find any trace of the Meccans, so he returned. The Qur'an mentions this episode in the following *ayat*:

Those who responded to the call of Allah and the Messenger even after the wound had afflicted them, those among them who do good and guard (themselves against evil) shall have a great reward. Those to whom the people said: Surely men have gathered against you; therefore, fear them, but this only increased their faith, and they said: Allah is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is He. So they returned with favour from Allah and (His) grace; no evil touched them, and they followed the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace. (Qur'an, 3:172-174)

The defeat at Uhud did, indeed, create serious problems for the Muslims. It emboldened the nomadic tribes on the one hand to make forays upon Medina and, on the other hand, encouraged the Jews of Medina to foment further trouble. Yet it was not disastrous for the Muslims. While a defeat at Badr, when the Muslims were yet a handful, would have wiped them out and rang the death knell of the Prophetic mission, a defeat here and there after Islam had gained strength only put the Muslims in the testing crucible so that they might emerge more determined and cured of any complacency and vanity to which they might have otherwise fallen prey.

The Meccans were determined to annihilate the Muslims. This objective they could not achieve. Their infantry had suffered such losses that they could not even drive home the advantage they gained in the last stages of the battle. They had thought they were the masters of all western Arabia, but they could do nothing more than hold their own against the Muslims. It is not surprising, therefore, that they marched back to Mecca frustrated and discouraged.

The Meccans realized that on their own they could not crush the Islamic movement. They now started instigating other tribes to make common cause with them. Most of the tribes were already inimical to Islam. They practiced idolatry while Islam forbade it and enjoined worship of one God. Raiding and plundering were the general means of their livelihood while Islam dictated an orderly society, forbidding oppression, exploitation, and foul play. It enjoined its followers to seek honest means of livelihood. The influence of Quraish extended far and wide and all the tribes came into contact with them at the time of the annual pilgrimage. The Jews were also constantly instigating the tribes against the Muslims.

The victory of the Muslims over Quraish at Badr had overawed nomadic tribes but their defeat at Uhud emboldened them to show their hands and a number of skirmishes followed.

Muhammad Marries Hafsa

As mentioned earlier, "Omar ibn al-Khattab was trying for some time to get the Prophet to marry his daughter Hafsa (607 – 667 A.D.). It was in the month of Sha'ban of the same year, 3 A.H., corresponding to January 625 A.D., that such marriage finally took place. She was widow of Jaish ibn Huthaifah al-Sahmi who had died in Medina shortly after the Battle of Badr wherein he had participated. "Omar ibn al-Khattab had first offered her to Abu Bakr to marry her, then to 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, but she was rejected by both. "Omar mentioned such rejection to the Prophet once by way of a complaint, so he, in order to oblige him, accepted her as his wife. She was, however, divorced by the Prophet on account of her temper at a later time then, on the entreaties of her father, the Prophet took her back. She died in the month of Sha'ban, 45 A.H. (November 665 A.D.) at the age of 60.

Hasan Son of Ali is Born (625 A.D.)

In the month of Ramadan of the same year (February 625 A.D.), Hasan was born to Ali and Fatima, Muhammad's only daughter. In the next year (4 A.H./626 A.D.), his brother Husain (junior Hasan) was born. Both were named after Shabar and Shubayr, sons of Aron, brother of Prophet Moses.

Sariat Abu Salmah (626 A.D.)

Talhah and Khalid instigated their tribe, Banu Asad, to attack Medina on the first of Muharram of 4 A.H./June 16, 625 A.D. The Prophet dispatched a force of one hundred and fifty men to intercept them. The invaders dispersed on seeing this force and there was no engagement.

Sariyat ibn Anis (626 A.D.)

Sufyan ibn Khalid of the Banu Lahyan made preparations to attack Medina in the same month (4 A.H.). The Prophet sent 'Abdullah ibn Anis with a force to meet him. 'Abdullah was killed. Hostile critics say that the Prophet got the chiefs of some tribes killed to overawe them. They quote Arab historians like al-

Waqidi, Ibn Hisham and Ibn al-Athir in recounting the names of the persons killed, but they very conveniently omit the details and circumstances given by the same authorities regarding the raids they were committing or the preparations they were making to assault Medina. The Prophet could not ignore the danger that surrounded the Muslims; he would not allow them to be exterminated.

Treachery at Bi'r Ma'unah (625 A.D.)

The tribes were not only repeatedly raiding Medina but also employing treacherous methods to deplete the Muslim's ranks and resources. In Safar of 4 A.H./July of 625 A.D., Abu Bara' 'Amir ibn Malik ibn Ja'far, chief of Banu 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah, came to Medina and offered a present to the Messenger of Allah who declined to accept it. "I do not accept a present from a polytheist," Muhammad said to him, "therefore, accept Islam so that I may accept your present."

Then the prophet recited for him some Qur'anic verses, but the man neither accepted Islam nor went away. Instead, he said, "O Muhammad! What you are inviting to is beautiful and good; so, if you send some of your men to the people of Nejd to invite them to accept it, I hope that they will." "I fear for them what the people of Nejd may do to them," said the Prophet. 'Amir ibn Malik said, "I guarantee their safety; so, send them away so that they may invite people as you invite them."

The Prophet sent al-Munthir ibn 'Amr of Banu Sa'idah with seventy of the best Muslims including al-Harith ibn al-Sammah, Haram ibn Milhan, 'Orwah ibn Asma ibn al-Salt al-Salami, Nafi' ibn Budayl ibn Warqa' al-Khuza'i, 'Amir ibn Fuhayrah, slave of Abu Bakr, in the month of Safar, four months after the Battle of Uhud. With the exception of one person, namely Ka'b ibn Zayd, the entire party was put to death when it reached Bi'r Ma'unah. They were killed by the tribesmen of Banu 'Asiyyah, Banu Ra'la, and Banu Thakwan. Having been injured, Ka'b ibn Zayd lay down pretending to be dead. He survived to take part in the Battle of Khandaq wherein he received the honour of martyrdom⁷.

The Foul Play at Raji'

Likewise, the tribes of Adh'al and al-Deesh sent a deputation to the Prophet headed by one Murthid ibn Abu Murthid al-Ghanawi to inform him that they had accepted Islam and needed some instructors. He sent ten disciples with them. On reaching Raji', the deputation was attacked by men of Banu Lahyan, a branch of the Huthayl tribe. Seven of the disciples were killed and the rest were captured. The Muslims defended themselves, killing seven of their attackers, but they were soon overwhelmed by a much larger number of foes.

The captives were sold in Mecca and those who purchased them put them to death. One of the captives was Zayd ibn al-Dathnah. A crowd, including Abu Sufyan, assembled to see him being slaughtered. Abu Sufyan inquired of him if he would not have considered himself lucky had Muhammad been there to be slaughtered in his place. The devoted attachment of Zayd to the Prophet can be gauged from the reply he gave. He said: "By God, I do not value my life even this much that in its place a thorn may pierce the

sole of the Prophet's foot.' He was thereupon slashed to death. Abu Sufyan could not help saying, "By Allah! Never have I found people loving their fellow more than the people who follow Muhammad.' 8

Jews' Attitude

For a long time, the Jews were masters of Medina. The tribes of Aws and Khazraj (the Ansar) had settled there later. Gradually, these tribes gathered strength and equaled the Jews in power and prestige. The internecine war of the Bu'ath, however, weakened them, and the Jews again assumed ascendancy. The Jews were a prosperous people and money lending at exorbitant rates of interest was one of their main occupations. With the deterioration in the economic situation of the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, many of them became heavily in debt to the Jews.

The position of authority and eminence, which their material superiority and strength gave to the Jews, received a big setback when Islam started spreading in Medina. The expansion of Islam was, therefore, viewed by them with great indignation and apprehension. This has always been their attitude and will always remain so.

Certainly you will find the most violent of all people in enmity for those who believe (Muslims) to be the Jews and those who are polytheists, and you will certainly find the nearest in friendship to those who believe to be those who say: We are Christians. This is so because there are priests and monks among them and because they are not arrogant. (Qur'an, 5:82)

In this verse, the Muslims are told by the Almighty that their most bitter enemies are the Jews, and that their best friends may be from among the Christians who, unlike the Jews, are not characterized by arrogance. Despite this verse, we see many leaders of Muslim countries vying with each other to lick the Jews' shoes when they are supposed to be guarding themselves against their mischief.

Expediency had actuated the Jews to enter into a pact with the Muslims, but soon they began plotting against Islam. They would distort the words and verses of the Qur'an and mock and jeer at the Muslims. But the Prophet was bidden to bear it patiently:

... And you shall certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you and from those who are polytheists much annoying talk, and if you are patient and guard (yourself against evil), surely this is one of the matters of great resolve. (Qur'an, 3:186)

The Prophet tried his best to maintain friendly ties with the Jews. He even prayed for one of them (who had lent him some money) once that the Almighty would safeguard his beauty. Till his death at the age of 80, that Jew's hair never turned gray. Read this incident on p. 15, Vol. 18, of *Bihar al-Anwar*. It is also recorded in the classic reference titled *Al-Kharaj*. The Qur'an stressed the fundamental unity between both religions, Islam and Judaism, and asked the Jews to come to terms with the Muslims:

Say: O people of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: That we shall not

worship any but Allah and (that) we shall associate nothing with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah, but if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims. (Qur'an, 3:64)

Neither kindness nor fair dealing on the part of the Prophet could, however, conciliate the Jews. They tried to revive the rift between the tribes of Aws and Khazraj. Some Jews would accept Islam one day and renounce it the next in order to show that there was nothing significant in Islam.

And a party of the people of the Book says: Profess faith in that which has been revealed to those who believe in the first part of the day and disbelieve therein at the end of it, perhaps they will go back on their religion. (Qur'an, 3:72)

They conspired with the *munafiqun* and sent emissaries to the enemies of Islam. Apprehension and envy at the growing power of the Muslims following their victory at Badr rankled in their hearts, and they redoubled their efforts to exterminate the new religion. Quraish were further instigating them to do so, sending a threatening epistle to them: "You possess arms and fortresses. You should fight our enemy (Muhammad); otherwise, we will attack you and nothing will prevent us from grabbing the arms of your women.'

Ka'b ibn Ashraf, Jewish chieftain of Banu Nadir, was a poet of considerable fame and fortune. Like so many others, he was bitterly hostile to Islam. With his fiery poems, he began to incite the people to rise up against the Muslims. After the battle of Badr, he composed a number of eulogies mourning the Meccan chiefs slain in the battle. He used to recite them at every gathering. He contacted Abu Sufyan with a view to making a combined effort to wipe out the Muslims. He openly recited a number of poems derogatory to the Prophet.

As poetry had a high place in the life of the Arabs and could deepen influence and sway feelings, Ka'b ibn Ashraf had become not only a nuisance but a serious menace. We have it on the authority of al-Ya'qubi and *hafiz* Ibn Hajar that Ka'b plotted to kill the Prophet. When this plot became known to the Prophet, he consulted his companions and it was decided that Ka'b should be silenced forever. Muhammad ibn Maslamahh undertook to carry out the job and, on getting an opportunity, he killed Ka'b ibn Ashraf on Safar 14, 3 A.H./August 9, 624 A.D.

Banu Qinaqa', the most powerful Jewish tribe, were the first to resile from the alliance with the Muslims. Says Ibn Sa'd, "The Jews attempted sedition during the battle of Badr and were envious of the Muslims, retracting from their pact with them.'

An incident in 2 A.H./623 A.D. led to a flare-up. A veiled Muslim lady had gone to the shop of a Jew. She was pestered and her clothes thrown up. A Muslim standing nearby was unable to tolerate this indecent behaviour, so he killed the Jew. The Jews, thereupon, killed the Muslim. The Prophet remonstrated with them but they defiantly replied that they were not (as weak as) Quraish (who were defeated in Badr) and would show him what battle was. Within the security of their fortress, they started

making preparations for war. The fortress was besieged by the Muslims for fifteen days and the Jews had to sue for peace, promising that they would accept the Prophet's decision.

The Prophet decided to kick them out of Medina for good, giving them ten days to depart to Greater Syria on the pain of death, allowing them to take all their movable possessions except their arms. First they paid no heed to his order and were resolved to resist. They were besieged within the walls of their fortresses for fifteen days following which they surrendered and were expelled in the Summer of 4 A.H./625 A.D. Most of them proceeded to Khaybar where they had possessed landed property; some of them marched to Syria and Palestine.

Their immovable property was confiscated. Buildings were distributed among the Muhajirs who still had no houses of their own in Medina since the date of their migration from Mecca. Some Ansar who also had no dwellings of their own were provided with the dwellings. Some of them did not like the idea of leaving their houses to be occupied by the Muslims, so, they demolished them. The Qur'an refers to the various aspects of this expulsion in Surat al-Hashr:

He (Allah) it is Who caused those (Jews) who disbelieved (in Muhammad) from among the People of the Book (Torah) to get out of their homes in the first banishment; you did not think that they would get out, while they were certain that their fortresses would defend them against Allah, but Allah came to them from where they did not expect and cast terror into their hearts; they demolished their houses with their own hands and the hands of the believers; therefore, take a lesson, O you who have eyes! And had it not been that Allah had decreed for them the exile, He would certainly have punished them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have the chastisement of the Fire. This is so because they opposed Allah and His Prophet (Muhammad), and whoever opposes Allah, then surely Allah is severe in retributing (evil). (Qur'an, 59:2-4)

Some European critics see only the immediate cause, that is, the indecent behaviour with the Muslim lady and, ascribing it to boyish prank, they try to minimize it. In their view, therefore, the punishment was too harsh, but they fail to take notice of the constant efforts of the Jews to undermine the Islamic movement. It was not one incident but a series of events that had brought on the final clash.

Expulsion of Banu Nadir (625 A.D.)

Medina's Jews plotted to kill the Prophet, encouraged by the Meccans and by 'Abdullah ibn Ubay. The Prophet was once with some of his companions when he paid the Jews a visit, seeking their help in arranging the payment of blood-money of two persons from the tribe of Banu 'Amir. The Jews asked the Prophet to come inside their fortress, but the Prophet did not like the idea. Instead, he sat outside the fortress's wall. They sent one man to climb the wall from inside the fortress and kill the Prophet by throwing a big boulder on his head.

The Prophet, through divine revelation, came to know of this treacherous scheme in the nick of time and immediately left the place.

Then he sent Banu Nadir an ultimatum with Muhammad ibn Maslamah: Since they had broken their treaty, they should leave Medina within ten days. They wanted to migrate when 'Abdullah ibn Ubay encouraged them not to leave Medina, promising them help with 2,000 warriors. The Jews then refused to leave Medina. The following *ayat* refers to this promise of help:

Have you not seen those who have become hypocrites? They say to those of their brethren who disbelieve from among the people of the Book: If you are driven forth, we shall certainly go forth with you, and we will never obey anyone concerning you; and if you are fought, we will certainly help you, and Allah bears witness that they are most surely liars. Certainly, if these are driven forth, they will not go forth with them, and if they are fought, they will not help them, and even if they help them, they will certainly turn (their) backs, then they shall not be helped. (Qur'an, 59: 11-12)

Their fortress was besieged, and 'Abdullah ibn Ubay did nothing to help them as predicted in the Qur'anic verses cited above. After 15 days, they agreed to leave Medina. They were allowed to take away all their movables which they could take except weapons of war.

They passed through Medina's market singing and beating drums to show that they were not disheartened by that banishment and that they would soon avenge this defeat. Some of them went to Syria while others settled with the Jews of Khaybar.

Since there was no war, according to the command of Allah (see Sura 59, verses 6 to 10), all the wealth left by them became the personal property of the Prophet who, having consulted with the Ansar, distributed all movable property to poor Muhajirun and three poor companions from the Ansar: Sahl ibn Hani, Abu Dajjanah and Zayd. He gave the immovable property to Ali ibn Abu Talib who made it *waqf* (trust) for the descendants of Fatima.

The 59th Chapter of the Qur'an (The Banishment) describes various aspects of Banu Nadir's expulsion as quoted above.

Battle of Khandaq (627 A.D.)

Upon settling down at Khaibar, Banu Nadir decided to seek revenge against the Muslims. They contacted the Meccans, and 20 leaders from the Jews and 50 from Quraish made a covenant in the Ka'ba that as long as they lived, they would fight Muhammad. Then the Jews and Quraish contacted their allies and sent emissaries to a number of tribes. Banu Ghatfan, Banu Asad, Banu Aslam, Banu Ashja', Banu Kinanah and Banu Fizarah readily responded. The Meccans, four thousand strong, including three hundred cavaliers and fifteen hundred camels, were joined by six thousand allies from among the Jews and the bedouin tribes. The three armies set out, ten thousand strong, under the

command of Abu Sufyan in the beginning of the month of Shawwal, 5 A.H. (the end of February 627 A.D.) to attack Medina.

When news of these preparations reached Medina, the Prophet consulted his companions, as he always did during such situations. There was hardly sufficient time to make preparations for the war. He decided this time to remain within the city and fight back. The stone houses of the city were built adjacent to one another so as to make a high and continuous strong wall for a long distance except in the north-west where a wide open space could afford the enemy an easy entry. At this place, with the suggestion of Salman al-Farisi, who was familiar with the mode of defending cities in other countries such as his (Persia), a trench, fifteen feet in width and fifteen feet in depth, was dug. Muslims were divided into parties of 10 each, and each party was allotted 10 yards to dig.

The Prophet himself participated in this task, carrying the excavated earth away. The *khandaq* (moat) was completed in nick of time: just 3 days before the host of the enemies reached Medina. The houses outside the city were evacuated, and the women and children were accommodated for safety on the tops of the double-storied houses at the entrenchment. Muslims could muster only three thousand men to face this huge army, and they immediately took cover behind the ditch. The Prophet camped in the center of the entrenchment in a tent of red leather on a space shaped like a crescent. The camp had the rising ground of Sila' on its rear and the trench in the front.

Huyaiy ibn Akhtab, head of Banu Nadir, met secretly with Ka'b ibn Asad, head of Banu Quraizah, a Jewish tribe which was still in Medina. Huyaiy was the most antagonistic Jew towards the Prophet. Banu Quraizah, on his instigation, tore down the treaty which they had concluded with the Muslims. The Jews decided that they would assist the pagan Quraishites after ten days' preparations and would attack the rear of Muhammad's army from the north-western side of the city which was located on the south-east side of their fortress and which was easily accessible to them.

Rumours reached the Prophet about the Jews' schemes, so he sent two chiefs, one from the Aws and one from the Khazraj: These were Sa'd ibn Mu'ath and Sa'd ibn 'Abadah respectively to ascertain the truth. Both men proceeded to meet the Jews. Having made searching inquiries and some scouting of their own, they returned to report to the Prophet that the temper of the Jews was even worse than it had been feared. This news alarmed the Prophet. It was then necessary to take precautions against any surprise attack or treachery from the side of those Jews.

The north-western part of the city, which was located on the side of the Jewish stronghold, was the weakest of all defences. In order to protect the families of his followers throughout the city, the Prophet, as a meager measure of safeguard, had no choice except to send a considerable number of his men from his already small army of three thousand to afford them such a protection. His men's supplies were hardly adequate due to the length of the entrenchment that formed his defense line. Still, he had no choice except to detach two parties, one of three hundred men under the command of Zayd ibn Harithah, his freed slave and adopted son, and another of two hundred men under the command of a

chieftain from Medina. Their job was to patrol the streets and the alleys of the city night and day.

This treachery and danger from inside Medina, when Muslims were surrounded by the combined armies of pagans and Jews of all of Arabia on the outside, had a telling effect on the Muslims. The enemy was astonished to see the moat because it was a novel military tactic for the Arabs. They camped on the outside for 27 (or 24) days. Their number increased day by day, and many Muslims were extremely terrified, as the Qur'an portrays for us. Surat al-Ahzab describes various aspects of this siege. For example, read the following verses:

When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes turned dull, and the hearts rose up to the throats, you began to think diverse thoughts about Allah. There, the believers were tried, and they were shaken a tremendous shaking. (Qur'an, 33: 10-11)

At that time, many hypocrites, and even some Muslims, asked permission to leave the ranks of the Muslims and to go home:

And when a party of them said: O people of Yathrib! There is no place for you to stand, and a party of them asked permission of the Prophet saying: Verily our houses are exposed, and they were not exposed; they only described to flee away. (Qur'an, 33: 13)

The bulk of the army, however, steadfastly withstood the hardship of inclement weather and rapidly depleting provisions. The coalition's army hurled arrows and stones at the Muslims.

Finally, a few of Quraish's more valiant warriors, 'Amr ibn 'Abd-wadd, Nawfal ibn 'Abdullah ibn Mughirah, Dhirar ibn Khattab, Hubairah ibn Abu Wahab, 'Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl and Mirdas al-Fahri, succeeded in crossing the moat.

'Amr called for battle; nobody responded; he was considered equal to one thousand warriors. History accounts state that all the Muslims were as though birds were sitting on their heads: they were too afraid to raise their heads.

Three times did the Prophet exhort the Muslims to battle 'Amr. Three times it was only Ali who stood up. In the third time, the Prophet allowed Ali to go. When Ali was going to the battlefield, the Prophet said: "The whole faith is going to fight the whole infidelity; the embodiment of the former bounds is to crush the entirety of the latter." The Prophet put his own turban on Ali's head, his own coat of mail over Ali's body, and he armed Ali with his own sword, Thul-Fiqar, then he sent him to meet his opponent. Then the Prophet raised his hands to supplicate thus: "O Allah! 'Obaydah, my cousin, was taken away from me in the Battle of Badr, Hamzah, my uncle, in Uhud. Be Merciful, O Lord, not to leave me alone and undefended. Spare Ali to defend me. You are the best of defenders."

Ali invited 'Amr to accept Islam or to return to Mecca, or to come down from his horse since Ali had no horse and was on foot.

"Nephew," said 'Amr to Ali, being a friend of Ali's father Abu Talib, "By God I do not like to kill you." Ali

replied, "By God, I am here to kill you!" 'Amr, now enraged at this reply, alighted from his horse. Having hamstrung his horse, a token of his resolve never to run away from the battlefield but either to conquer or to perish, he advanced towards Ali. They were immediately engaged in a duel, turning the ground underneath them into a cloud of dust, so much so that for a good while, only the strokes of their swords could be heard while they themselves could not be seen. 'Amr succeeded once in inflicting a serious cut on Ali's head. At last, Ali's voice was heard shouting, '*Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!*'

That was his cry of victory. It always is Muslims' cry of victory. Seeing how the most brave among them has been killed by Ali, the other pagans who crossed the moat now took to their heels with the exception of Nawfal whose horse failed to leap; it fell into the moat. As the Muslims showered him with a hail of stones, he cried out thus: "I rather die by the sword than by the stones!" Hearing this, Ali leaped into the moat and fulfilled his last wish, dispatching him to hell!

Ali, contrary to the Arab custom then, did not, however, strip either men from their armour or clothes. When 'Amr's sister came to her brother's corpse, she was struck with admiration at the noble behaviour of her slain brother's adversary and, finding out who he was, she felt proud of her brother having met his fate at the hands of the person who was known as the unique champion of spotless character. She said, as recorded in *Tarikh al-Khamis*, "Had his conqueror been someone else other than the one who killed him, I would have mourned 'Amr for the rest of my life. But his opponent was the unique spotless champion.'

Ali, the "Lion of God," thus distinguished himself as on previous occasions: in the battles of Badr and of Uhud. About this battle, the Prophet said:

Verily, one attack of Ali in the Battle of Khandaq is better than the worship of all human beings and jinns up to the Day of Resurrection.

No further activity was attempted by the enemy that day, but great preparations were undertaken during the night. Khalid ibn al-Walid, with a party of cavaliers, attempted during the night to clear the ditch for crossing the next day. The next morning, the Muslims found the entire enemy force arrayed in fighting formations along their line of entrenchment. The enemies tried to overrun the Muslim side of the trench but were repelled at every point. The ditch served its purpose; it could not be crossed. During the entire military campaign, by the way, only five Muslims were martyred. The Muslims' vigilance paralyzed the enemies despite their numeric superiority. Numeric superiority is not always a prerequisite for victory. The Almighty grants victory to whosoever He pleases.

But the Muslims were running out of provisions. The Prophet had to tie a stone on his stomach in order to minimize the pangs of hunger. Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said: "Our hearts had reached our throats in fear and in desperation." On the other hand, the besieging army was getting restive, too; it could not put up any further with the rain and cold; its horses were perishing daily and provisions nearing depletion. The Prophet went to the place where the Mosque of Victory (Masjidul-Fath) now stands and prayed to Allah.

Said the Prophet, “O Lord! Revealer of the Sacred Book, the One Who is swift in taking account, turn the confederate host away! Turn them to flight, O Lord, and make the earth underdeed them quake!”

A fierce storm raged, uprooting the tents of the enemies; their pots and belongings went flying in all directions; it blew dust in their faces, extinguished their fires, and their horses were running around as though they were possessed. An unbearable terror was cast in their hearts. In the fourth night, after having finished his prayers, Muhammad asked Abu Bakr if he would go to the enemy's camp to discern and report their activities. He replied saying, “I ask pardon of Allah and of His Messenger.” The Prophet promised Paradise to be the reward of anyone who would venture out for that purpose, then asked “Omar ibn al-Khattab if he would do it.

‘Omar's answer was similar to that of Abu Bakr. The Prophet's request is actually an order, a divine one, since it is coming from one who does not say anything or do anything without the Will of the Almighty. These facts are recorded in *Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthur*, *Al-Sira al-Muhammadiyah*, *Al-Sira al-Halabiyya*, *Tarikh al-Khamis*, and *Rawdat al-Ahbab* for all to review. The third person the Prophet asked was Huthayfah al-Yemani who readily responded to the request and proceeded to the enemy camp in the darkness of the night where he saw the devastation wrought by the storm. He saw Abu Sufyan looking very depressed. When he came back to his camp and reported in detail to the Prophet what he had seen, the Prophet was delighted to find out that his plea to Allah was answered.

Either feeling the pain of the severity of the weather or struck with terror at that storm which was interpreted as a manifestation of the Divine Wrath, Abu Sufyan decided to lift the siege and to march back at once. Summoning the chiefs of his allies, he announced his decision to them, issuing orders to dismantle the camp. He and all the Meccans with him, as well as the pagan tribes that allied themselves under his command, fled away. The first to flee was Abu Sufyan himself who was so upset that he tried to ride his camel without first untying its rope. Khalid ibn al-Walid guarded the rear of the armies with two hundred cavaliers against a pursuit. The Ghatfan tribesmen and the bedouin allies returned to their deserts; not a single person remained on the battlefield in the morning. It was with great joy that in the morning the Muslims discovered the sudden disappearance of the enemy, finding themselves unexpectedly relieved. The siege lasted for twenty-four long days ending in March of 627 A.D.

This episode is referred to in the Qur'an in this *ayat*:

O ye who believe! Remember the bounty of Allah unto you when came upon you the hosts, so We sent against them a strong wind and hosts that ye saw not, and Allah sees all what you do. (Qur'an, 33:9)

And also in *ayat* 25 which says:

And God turned back the unbelievers in their rage; they did not achieve any advantage, and Allah sufficed for the believers in fighting, and Allah is Strong, Mighty. (Qur'an, 33:25)

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud was interpreting this thus: "And God sufficed the believers (through Ali ibn Abu Talib) in their fight,' as we read in *Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthur*.

As a direct result of this defeat of the infidels' combined forces in the Battle of Khandaq (moat, or the Battle of Ahzab, coalitions), Quraish's influence waned, and those tribes who were till then hesitating to accept Islam out of fear of Quraish began to send deputations to the Prophet. The first deputation came from the tribe of Mazinah, and it consisted of four hundred persons. They not only accepted Islam but were ready to settle down in Medina. The Prophet, however, advised them to return to their homes.

Likewise, a deputation of a hundred persons came from the Ashja' and embraced Islam. The tribe of Juhainah lived near them, so they were influenced by their conversion. One thousand of the latter's men came to Medina to join the fraternity.

Banu Quraizah Defeated (627 A.D.)

According to the terms of the treaty which Banu Quraizah had contracted with the Muslims, they were bound to assist the Muslims against outside aggression. But, not to speak of assisting the Muslims or even remaining neutral, they had sided with the Meccans and joined the besieging foe. What was worse, they had tried to attack the fortress where Muslim women and children had been lodged for safety. Living in such a close proximity to Medina, they had become a serious menace.

Having put aside his armour after his return from the site of the Battle of Khandaq, the Prophet, on the same day when the battle had come to a close, was washing his hands and face at the house of his beloved daughter Fatima whom he used to visit before proceeding to his own house and whenever he returned from an expedition or an expedition. It was then and there that arch-angel Gabriel brought him the divine command to proceed immediately against the Jews of Quraizah. He instantly sent Ali with his standard, then he followed in person with his army and laid the siege of their fortress, a siege which the enemy had not expected, thinking that the Muslims were already worn out following one of their most exhausting battles.

First, Quraizah Jews resisted, but the siege of twenty-five days sufficed to bring them to their knees and prepare them to pay for their treachery. They ultimately opened the gates of their fortresses on the condition that their fate should be decided by Sa'd ibn Mu'ath, chief of the Aws, a long time friend and ally of the Jews. Sa'd had been wounded during the battle of the moat and was still under treatment when he was brought to decide the fate of Banu Qurayzah.

He came riding a mule and looking quite weak. He could not walk, so he was supported by some of his friends. He was surrounded by men of his tribe who were all urging him to be lenient towards Jewish prisoners, reminding him of their services to the Aws when the war of Bu'ath was raging. Basing his judgement upon the verses of the Old Testament itself, Sa'd ruled that the fighting men, six hundred in number according to some accounts, should be killed, the women and children be taken captive, and their possessions be confiscated and divided among the besieging troops. The sentence was carried

out.

Ibn 'Abbas narrates the following with reference to the Prophet's conquest over Banu Qurayzah: When the Messenger of Allah called Ka'b ibn Asad so that he would be beheaded, he said to him, "O Ka'b! Did you avail yourself of the advice of Ibn Hawash who came from Syria? He (Ibn Hawash) said, "I have left wine and all intoxicants and came to misery and dates for the sake of a Prophet to be delegated. His advent will be in Mecca, and this (Medina) is the place to which he will migrate. He is the one who smiles quite often, and who quite often kills.

A bit of bread and a few dates suffice him. He rides the donkey without a saddle. In his eyes there is redness. He puts the sword on his shoulder and does not care who faces him. His domain will reach so far that nobody can go beyond it.⁶ Ka'b said, "Yes, all of this is true, O Muhammad! Had the Jews not taunted me of being too coward to fight you, I would have believed in you and followed you, but I am a follower of Judaism; a Jew do I live, and a Jew shall I die.' The Messenger of Allah then said, "Bring him forward and strike his neck,' and so it was⁹.

It was in reference to this conquest that the following *ayats* were revealed:

And He drove down those of the people of the Book who backed them from their fortresses, and He cast awe into their hearts: some you killed and some you took captive. And He made you inherit their land and their dwellings and their possessions, and (to) a land which ye have not yet trodden, and God has power over all things. (Qur'an, 33:26-27)

Some critics had described this punishment as harsh. But what other punishment could be meted out to them? They had violated the pact and, instead of helping the Muslims, they joined the forces of their enemies and had actually besieged the Muslims. There were no prisons where prisoners of war could be detained nor any concentration camps where they could be put to forced labor, and the capture of women and children, though allaying to the notions of the present age, was probably the only method known in those days to provide sustenance to them when the earning members of their families had lost their lives. At any rate, this was the cust'Omery aftermath of a war.

One of the greatest losses suffered by the Muslims in the Battle of Khandaq (Moat) is the death of Sa'd ibn Mu'ath one month after the end of the battle under the weight of his wounds. That was in 5 A.H./626 A.D. Ubayy has narrated saying that Sa'd ibn 'Abdullah quotes Ibrahim ibn Hashim quoting al-Husain ibn Yazid al-Nawfali quoting Ziyad al-Sukuni quoting Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq who in turn quotes his father Imam Muhammad al-Baqir saying that the Prophet performed the funeral prayers for Sa'd ibn Mu'ath then said,

Ninety thousand angels, including Gabriel, have attended the funeral of Sa'd ibn Mu'ath today to bless him and pray for him. I asked Gabriel, "What did he do to deserve your prayers, all of you, today?!" Gabriel said, "He used to recite Surat al-Ikhlās (Ch. 112 of the Holy Quran) standing, sitting, riding, walking, going or coming.'¹⁰

May Allah have mercy on Sa'd ibn Mu'ath.

Jews of Banu Mostaliq (627 A.D.)

The Jews of Banu Mostaliq were neighbours of Banu Qurayzah. Although they saw what had happened to the latter, they did not learn a lesson from it and started making preparations to invade the part of Medina where the Muslims were residing. Having come to know of their designs, Prophet Muhammad sent them Buraydah ibn al-Hasib in order to verify the reports that had reached him. Upon his return, Buraydah confirmed the truth of what the Prophet had heard. A pre-emptive war was imminent. With Ali as the standard bearer, the Prophet led his troops on Sha'ban 2, 5 A.H./December 30, 626 A.D. to battle the Banu Mostaliq Jews.

The fighting broke out, and ten Jews were killed, including the leader of Banu Mostaliq, namely al-Harith ibn Abu Zarar. Having seen their leader being killed, the Jews took to flight but not before the Muslims captured two hundred of them along with one thousand camels and five hundred sheep. Juwayriyya, daughter of the slain Jewish chief, was among the captives. Before the fight began, her father had already pleaded to the Prophet not to sell her in the slave market as was usually done in those days. Captives who could not buy their ransom or get someone to pay it on their behalf used to be auctioned at the slave market. Juwayriyya embraced Islam and was married to the Prophet who safeguarded her dignity and treated her like a queen. In order to please her even more, Muhammad set all her relatives free.

Treaty of Hdaybiya (627 A.D.)

On the first day of the month of Thul-Qi'dah, of the same year, 5 A.H./March 27, 627 A.D., a month in which no fighting was to take place according to the ancient Arabian custom, the Prophet saw in a dream that he and his followers were circling the Ka'ba and performing all the rituals of the pilgrimage. The next morning, he communicated his dream to his followers who were very glad to have such good news. Particularly happy were the Muhajirun who had not forgotten about their families and relatives whom they had left behind in Mecca and whom they very much longed to see. Almost six years had passed since they had seen the Ka'ba and their families, relatives and friends.

The Prophet decided to perform the '*Omrah* (the lesser pilgrimage) to the Ka'ba which had been till then denied to the Muslims due to the hostility of the Meccans. About fourteen hundred Muhajirun and Ansar expressed their readiness to go with him. Lest there should be any misgivings in any quarter about his intentions, he directed the Muslims not to carry any arms other than travellers' sheathed swords, and he himself put on the robes of *ihram* and took his wife Umm Salamah with him. He also took seventy camels to sacrifice. On the way, they halted at Thul Holayfa. Then the Muslims reached Hdaybiya, ten miles from Mecca, where the Prophet's she-camel Qaswa stopped on her own, knelt down and refused to go any further. Some people said that she was exhasuted, but the Prophet interpreted it as a Divine

sign that he should not proceed any further. He, therefore, camped at Hdaybiya.

There was no water available in the place where they had camped. There were some wells there, but they were all filled up with sands. Taking an arrow from his quiver, the Prophet planted it in one of those wells. Immediately water came out to the great relief of everybody.

An envoy was sent to the Meccans to obtain their permission to visit the Ka'ba but it was rejected. Instead, the Meccans collected a force of 200 cavaliers under the command of Khalid ibn al-Walid and 'Ikrimah son of the infamous Abu Jahl to prevent the Muslims from entering Mecca. Soon the Prophet and his companions were face to face with this force. The Quraishites sent Budayl ibn Warqa' al-Kuza'i with a number of men from his tribe Khuza'ah to tell the Prophet that he was not allowed to visit the Ka'ba. "I have left behind me," said Budayl, "Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy and 'Amir ibn Lu'ayy, accompanied by a powerful host, and they shall fight you and prohibit you from reaching the sanctuary."

The Prophet said, "We did not come here to fight anyone; rather, we came to perform the *'umra*. War has exhausted and harmed Quraish. If they wish, we can agree on a period of truce so that they may leave me and the people alone. If they wish to embrace what other people have embraced, they may do so; otherwise, I swear by the One Who holds my life in His grip, I shall fight them in defence of my mission till I perish or Allah carries out His command." Budayl said, "I shall convey to them what you have just said."

Quraish deputed 'Orwah ibn Mas'ud al-Thaqafi to have a talk with the Prophet, but nothing came out of it. The Prophet then sent Karrash ibn Umayyah to Quraish to assure them that they had no hostile intentions at all, only to perform the *'Omra*. He rode his own camel Tha'lab, but he was mistreated and his camel maimed, and it was only with difficulty that he was able to escape with his life. He could have been killed had no Ethiopians interfered and assisted his escape.

At that juncture, the Prophet thought that the best person to speak to the haughty Quraishites would be 'Omar ibn al-Khattab, so he asked him to be his emissary to those who used to be his bosom friends, but 'Omar asked to be excused saying that he was not on good terms with Quraish and suggested that his friend 'Uthman ibn 'Affan would be a more suitable envoy. 'Uthman, who belonged to the same clan to which Abu Sufyan belonged, was sent to persuade Quraish to allow the Muslims to visit the Ka'ba. He told the riders that Muhammad had come only to visit the sacred sanctuary and that after slaying the sacrificial camels, he and his followers would all return.

But the Quraishites replied that they had sworn not to allow Muhammad to enter the city that year and that if he, 'Uthman, wished to visit the Ka'ba himself, he could do so. 'Uthman declined their offer saying that he could not do so without the Prophet first performing the rites of the lesser pilgrimage. He then returned to the camp. Since it took so long for 'Uthman to return, rumour was in the Muslim camp that he had been murdered by the Meccans, and the Prophet was quite upset.

The vanguard of Quraish, only eight in number, but some accounts say forty, attacked the Muslims from

the direction of the Tan'eem mountain with the intention to massacre them as they were performing the early morning prayers, but the attackers were captured. The Prophet demonstrated great clemency and generosity, setting them all free. The Muslims took a pledge on the hands of the Prophet, known as "Bay'at al-Ridwan", to stand by him to the last. Referring to this pledge, the Qur'an says:

Indeed God was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to thee under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility on them and rewarded them with a near victory. (Qur'an, 48: 18)

Those who study the Islamic history impartially will conclude that there were many who swore the pledge of "Bay'at al-Ridwan" and who forgot it or claimed to have forgotten it as soon as the Prophet died... Surely these will be called to account before the Almighty on the Day of Judgment and to answer to the deviation they caused in the march of Islam, reverting to the *jahiliyya*, the pre-Islamic era, following their own inclinations and seeking their own vested interests rather than implementing the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah... 'Abdullah ibn Mughaffal, an eye witness to Bay'at al-Ridwan, said that the Prophet took a pledge from them not to flee from the battle again, since some of them had done just that before, leaving him an easy target to the mischief of his foes and the foes of his Lord.

It came to be known later that the news of 'Uthman's murder was not true. After considerable difficulty, a treaty was ultimately signed with Suhayl ibn 'Amr, Quraish's envoy, on the following terms reproduced in almost all the Arab Chronicles:

- (1) Muslims should return to Medina that year without performing the pilgrimage.**
- (2) They could return the next year but their stay should not exceed three days.**
- (3) The Muslims should not bring any arms with them except sheathed swords.**
- (4) There would be no war between Quraish and the Muslims for ten years.**
- (5) Muslims residing in Mecca would not be allowed to migrate to Medina, but if any Muslim wanted to settle in Mecca, he should not be prevented from doing so.**
- (6) Any idolater or Meccan Muslim migrating to Medina without the permission of his clan will be sent back to Mecca, but a Muslim of Medina going back to Mecca without permission will not be allowed to return.**
- (7) Any tribe in Arabia will be free to join any of the parties to the pact, and the allies also will be bound by this treaty.**

Although these terms were apparently disadvantageous to the Muslims, the Prophet accepted them. Ali wrote the peace treaty himself, and it was witnessed by a number of the most prominent companions of the Prophet (*sahaba*) despite the fact that they had their own reservations in its regard, considering it a most unfavourable and humiliating one.

Some Muslims were unhappy about this treaty. "Omar ibn al-Khattab talked very rudely to the Prophet. "Are you not a true Prophet of Allah?," Omar asked the Prophet. "I am, no doubt," answered the

Prophet. "Are we not right and the adversaries are wrong?" he asked the Prophet again. Muhammad answered him in the affirmative, whereupon he went on to ask one more time, "Why should we, then, obliterate our faith and bear the brunt of humiliation?" The Prophet answered, "I am only a messenger of Allah, and I can do nothing against His will; He will help me."

"Omar, however, was not satisfied with the Prophet's answers. Ibn Hisham, the renowned historian, goes on to record the dialogue between "Omar and his friend Abu Bakr wherein the former exclaimed: "Is not Muhammad the Messenger of Allah? Are we not Muslims? Are they not infidels? Why should our divine religion be thus humiliated?" Al-Waqidi, who also researched this topic, cites "Omar adding, "Had these terms been fixed by anyone other than Muhammad himself, even by a commander whom I appoint, I would have scorned to listen to them." Afterwards, he used to say: "Never did I have doubt (about the truth of Islam) since my acceptance of Islam except on that day (of Hudaibiya)." A copy of the agreement was given to Suhail, whereas the original remained with the Prophet.

No sooner had the terms been agreed upon than a critical occasion arose. Abu Jundal son of Suhail had been imprisoned by his father for having accepted Islam and was being severely mistreated. He managed to escape and, with his fetters on, reached Hudaibiya just before the treaty was signed. His father, Suhail ibn 'Amr, the emissary of the Meccans, demanded his return according to the terms of the treaty. The Muslims said that the treaty had by then not been signed yet. Suhail said that if his son was not returned to him, there would be no treaty at all. Abu Jundal pleaded with the Muslims in the name of mercy not to throw him back to the tyranny of the Meccans and showed them the injuries they had inflicted on him.

The Muslims were moved to plead his cause and "Omar made an impassioned appeal, but the Prophet silenced them by declaring that he could not break a treaty. He consoled Abu Jundal by saying that God would create some way for his deliverance. "Omar leaped to comfort the young man thus: "These infidels' blood is no better than the dogs' blood," encouraging him to kill his father so that the whole peace treaty would amount to nothing... Abu Jundal, however, did not consent to undo what the Messenger of Allah had just done; the peace treaty has to be respected.

Having concluded the Hudaibiya peace treaty, the Prophet wanted to perform as many of the rituals relevant to the lesser pilgrimage as possible. He ordered his *sahaba* to slaughter their sacrificial animals and to shave their heads, but he was sorely grieved to see that nobody paid heed to his command. It grieved him so much that he mentioned it to his wife Umm Salamah. But when he sacrificed his animals and shaved his head, removing the robes of *ihram*, they, too, did likewise, though reluctantly.

After three days' stay at Hudaibiya, the Muslims returned to Medina. On the way back, Surah 48 titled "Victory" was revealed describing the treaty as an open victory for the Muslims. Later events confirmed that it was really a great victory for them. The first six of its 29 verses are:

In the Name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful

Surely We have bestowed upon you a clear victory so that Allah may forgive your past faults and those to follow and complete His favour upon you and keep you on a right course. And so that Allah may help you with a mighty victory. He it is Who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers so that they may have more faith added to their faith, and Allah's are the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is Knowing, Wise, so that He may cause the believing men and the believing women to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein (forever) and to wipe out their sins, and that is a grand achievement with Allah. And so that He may punish the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women, and the polytheistic men and the polytheistic women, those who entertain evil thoughts about Allah. On them is the evil turned, and Allah condemns them and has cursed them and prepared hell for them, and evil is its resort. (Qur'an, 48:1-6)

There were, unfortunately, a number of hypocritical men with the Prophet at Hudaibiya, those opportunists who pretended to be more zealous about Islam than they really were, and their future actions proved so.

Till then, idolaters and Muslims had not been mixing with each other. By virtue of this treaty, they started doing so freely. Muslims, now more than ever before, openly declared their faith and invited others to embrace it. The enemies of Islam were silenced; they could not freely persecute the Muslims. On account of their family ties and trade connections, the Meccans started visiting Medina, and many of them stayed there for months. Peace became a reality, and both parties started enjoying its fruits. Non-Muslims were getting acquainted with the teachings of Islam and were deeply impressed by the righteous conduct and moral integrity of the Muslims.

The Muslims of Medina who were visiting Mecca left behind them similar impressions. The result was that the Meccans were themselves attracted to Islam and many of them embraced the new religion. It is recorded that during two years after this treaty, more people accepted Islam than all those who did so during the nineteen years since the inception of the mission put together. A clear proof is found in the fact that while only 1,400 Muslims had accompanied the Prophet for the lesser pilgrimage when the treaty of Hudaibiya was concluded, two years later, that is, when Mecca fell in the hands of the Muslims, he was accompanied by at least 10,000 Muslims.

Immediately after the signing of the treaty, Banu Khuza'ah, who for a long time were inclined to the new faith, openly embraced it, entering further into an alliance with the Prophet in 629 A.D. This, in fact, was the first practical benefit of the treaty.

Inviting Rulers of Neighboring States To Islam (628 A.D.)

The peace afforded by the Hudaibiya treaty gave an opportunity to the Prophet to propagate Islam throughout Arabia and enable Islam to embark upon its attempt to embrace all humanity. He sent ambassadors with his letters to Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor, Khosrow Parviz II, the Kisra of

Persia¹¹, the kings of Egypt and Abyssinia, and to the chiefs of Yemen and Syria. These letters have been preserved and reproduced by Arab chroniclers.

The Byzantine emperor Heraclius (575 – 641 A.D.) woke up one day looking very distressed. His patriarchs immediately knew what was wrong with him. They said to him, “Yes! Last night, you saw in a vision that the King of the circumcized people has now attained power and authority. But we do not know any nation that circumcizes its sons other than the Jews, and they are already under your authority. Perhaps you should kill them all and set your mind to ease.’ As they were thus involved in their discussion, the emperor's governor over Bostra brought to the court an Arab.

“This man, O King,’ said the Governor, “is an Arab who is telling a very serious tale.’ Through an interpreter, Heraclius ordered the man to narrate the tale of what has happened in Arabia. The Arab said, “A man from among us has put forth a claim to Prophethood. Some people have followed him and some have not, and wars have been raging between both parties. Thus did I leave them behind.’ Heraclius ordered the man to be stripped. Once they stripped him, they found him circumcized. “This, by God, is what I saw in my vision,’ said Heraclius who ordered them to give him his clothes back. Then he called into his presence the chief of his police force and said to him, “Look everywhere throughout Syria and find me one of the people (Quraishites) of this man (meaning Muhammad).’¹²

Abu Sufyan narrates saying that he had come out in a trade caravan when they were intercepted by the chief of police of Heraclius who asked his group, “Are you from the people of Muhammad?’ The answer came in the affirmative. Abu Sufyan and his men were taken to the court of Heraclius who had already received a letter from the Prophet inviting him to accept Islam.

That letter to Heraclius was carried by Duhayyah ibn Khalifah al-Kalbi, a famous Meccan businessman who had already accepted Islam, and it read as follows:

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

From Muhammad, the slave and Messenger of Allah, to Heraclius, the emperor of Rome. Peace be on him who follows the guidance. After this, I invite you to accept Islam. Accept Islam and you will prosper and Allah will give you double rewards. But if you refuse, the sin of your people also will fall on your shoulders. O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we shall not worship anything save Allah, and that we shall not associate anything with Him, nor shall some of us take others for lords besides Allah. But if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.

Duhayyah has said, “As soon as I delivered the Prophet's letter to (emperor) Heraclius, he ordered the patriarch of his empire to be brought to him. When the patriarch came, Heraclius showed him the Prophet's letter. Having read it, the patriarch said, ‘This is the Prophet whose advent we have been expecting! Jesus son of Mary conveyed to us the glad tidings about him.’

Then the patriarch added saying, ‘As far as I am concerned, I believe in him, and I follow him.’ Heraclius said, ‘As far as I am concerned, if I do the same, I shall lose my kingdom.’ After a while, Heraclius said,

'Find me some of his own people who are here so that I may ask them about him.' Abu Sufyan and a group of businessmen from Quraish happened to be in Greater Syria at the time. Those businessmen were brought to Heraclius who said to them, 'Let the one closest in kinship to him come forward to talk to me.' Abu Sufyan came forward.'

Let us stop here for a minute to introduce the kind reader to this great man, Duhayyah ibn Khalifah al-Kalbi.

Duhayyah was a successful businessman. Before accepting Islam, he came one day, as usual, to Medina's bazaar (near the Prophet's mosque) and beat his drum to announce his arrival and the presence of his merchandise for prospective buyers as was the custom in those days. Soon a large number of people surrounded him. He asked them where they had been and was told that they were at the mosque praying with Muhammad, the Messenger of God. "Do you mean to tell me that you came here to buy something, leaving your Prophet behind?!"

When their answer came in the affirmative, Duhayyah rebuked them thus: "Fie upon you, folks! Do you have any sense of shame at all for doing that?! Get away from me! I am not selling you a thing." He immediately packed his wares and left the bazaar. The Almighty appreciated what Duhayyah had done out of respect for His Prophet notwithstanding the fact that Duhayyah had not yet believed in Muhammad and in his message. Duhayyah later accepted Islam. As a token of appreciation from the Almighty to him, the arch-angel of revelation, Gabriel, used to go to Prophet Muhammad looking like Duhayyah who was one of the most handsome businessmen in Mecca and Medina. Here is a proof testifying to Gabriel impersonating Duhayyah:

Ibn 'Abbas narrates in a consecutively narrated tradition transmitted by a chain of reliable narrators saying that the Messenger of Allah used to love to see Ali as the first person to visit him every day in the late morning. The Prophet was in his house's courtyard one morning, resting his head on the lap of Duhayyah ibn Khalifah al-Kalbi, napping, when Ali arrived. He addressed Duhayyah thus, '*Assalamo Alaik!* How is the Messenger of Allah doing?' Duhayyah said, "Very well, O Brother of the Messenger of Allah!"

Ali said, "May Allah reward you on our behalf, we Ahl al-Bayt, with good rewards." Duhayyah responded to this by saying, "I love you, and I would like to express a compliment to you as a gift from me to you. Here it is: You are the Commander of the Faithful (*Ameerul-Mo'mineen*), leader of the victorious hosts, and the master of all the descendants of Adam on the Day of Judgment with the exception of the prophets and the messengers. The standard of praise shall be in your hand on the Day of Judgment.

You shall be escorted, you and your supporters (Shi'as), in the company of Muhammad and his party to the Gardens. Successful is he who accepts you as his *wali*; a disappointed loser is he who abandons you. Due to Muhammad's love for you did they love you, hating whatever Muhammad hated. Those who hate you shall never receive any intercession from Muhammad. Those who love you are the choicest of

Allah's people.' Then Duhayyah tried to adjust the Prophet's head in his lap when the Prophet woke up and inquired about that whispering. Ali told the Prophet that he was talking with Duhayyah, whereupon the Prophet said, "That was not Duhayyah! That was Gabriel! Gabriel called you by the name whereby Allah, the most Ealted One, calls you, and it is He Who cast love for you in the hearts of the *mu'mins*, casting fear of you in the hearts of the *kafirs*,' As we read on pp. 267–268 of Vol. 18 of al-Majlisi's *Bihar al-Anwar*.

Now let us return to what went on between Heraclius and Abu Sufyan.

The conversation that took place between Heraclius and Abu Sufyan is preserved in the books of traditions thus:

Heraclius: Is the family of the person claiming prophethood a noble one?

Abu Sufyan: It is a noble family.

Heraclius: Has anyone else in this family claimed prophethood?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Has there been any king in this family?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Are the people who have accepted this religion weak or influential?

Abu Sufyan: They are weak people.

Heraclius: Are his followers increasing in number or decreasing?

Abu Sufyan: Their number is on the increase.

Heraclius: Have you ever known him to tell lies?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Does he ever commit a breach of any pact?

Abu Sufyan: He has not done it so far, but we would like to see if he keeps up a new peace treaty that we have recently negotiated with him.

Heraclius: Have you ever fought him?

Abu Sufyan: Yes.

Heraclius: What was the result?

Abu Sufyan: Sometimes we won and sometimes he.

Heraclius: What does he teach?

Abu Sufyan: He bids people to worship one God and not to associate any partners with Him, to offer prayers, to be truthful and chaste, and to bestow alms.

Heraclius then summed up the conversation thus:

You say that this man belongs to a noble family. Prophets always come from noble families. You say that no one else in the family ever before claimed prophethood. Had it been so, I would have thought that he was influenced by family traditions. You say that none of his predecessors was a king. Had it been so, I would have thought that he was aspiring to attain kingship. You admit that he never tells lies.

A person who does not tell a lie to a man cannot tell a lie about God. You say that poor people are the adherents of his creed. The first followers of prophets always come from this class. You say that his religion is expanding. This is characteristic of a true religion. You say that he does not deceive. Prophets do not deceive anyone. You say that he bids you to offer prayers and to observe purity and chastity. If all this is true, his realm will come right up to my domain. I had thought that a prophet might be coming, but I did not think that he would be born in Arabia. If I could go there, I would have paid homage to him.

Abu Sufyan used to say that he had to give true answers to the emperor, as he was afraid of being contradicted by one or more caravan companion if he gave any false reply.

Heraclius wanted to know more about Muhammad's religion. He, therefore, sent a man from the tribe of Ghassan with these instructions: "Report to me three observations: 1) see on what he sits; 2) see who sits on his right side; and 3) if possible, try to find out what his seal says." The man came to the Prophet and found him sitting on the ground treating his feet with warm water. Ali was sitting on his right side. "Who is this man?," he asked. "Ali, the Prophet's cousin," he was told.

He wrote down his observations, forgetting the third instruction. The Messenger, seeing how the man was trying to remember what he had forgotten, instantly said to him, "Come and take a look at what your fellow (Heraclius) had instructed you to try to see," showing him his seal. The man returned to Heraclius and reported to him all what he had seen. "This is the one foretold by Jesus son of Mary! He rides the camel; so, you should follow him and believe in him." Then he said to his messenger, "Go and invite my brother (to Islam), for he is my partner in the kingdom." The messenger went back to report to Heraclius that his brother was not receptive to the idea at all, fearing the loss of his kingdom, as we are told by al-Majlisi on p. 378, Vol. 20, of *Bihar al-Anwar*.

The letter Muhammad sent to Khosrow II Parviz son of Hormizd IV, the Sasanian Kisra of Persia, was carried by 'Abdullah ibn Huthafah. It stated the following as recorded by the historian al-Ya'qubi:

**In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful
From Muhammad the Messenger of Allah to Khosrow son of Hormizd. Accept Islam, so you will be safe (from Allah's wrath); otherwise, be forewarned of a war from Allah and His Messenger, and peace be with whoever follows the right guidance.**

Khosrow Parviz was enraged at the very idea of an "ordinary" person addressing him, the great Kisra that he was, on terms of equality, and even starting with his own name before that of his; so, he tore the letter to pieces¹³. In his rage, he said, "Who is this person who invites me to accept his religion and starts his letter with his name before mine?!" As a token of his ridicule, Khosrow Parviz sent the Prophet some of his country's soil. When the Prophet was informed that Khosrow had torn his letter to pieces, he said, "May Allah tear his domain to pieces just as he tore my letter. For sure, his domain shall be torn apart. He sent me soil... For sure, you will come to possess his land." And so it was.

Khosrow Parviz, further directed his governor over Yemen Firoz al-Daylami, nicknamed "Abu Mahran,"

who used to be one of the ministers of Sayf ibn Thee Yazun,¹⁴ to arrest the person claiming to be a prophet and to send him to his court. The governor's messengers arrived at Medina and asked the prophet to comply with Kisra's orders on pain of his country's destruction, giving him one night to do so. The Prophet replied, "My God informed me that your lord was killed last night; God sent upon him his son Sheroe¹⁵ after seven hours of the night had passed; so, wait till this news reaches you, ' as we read in al-Majlisi's *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 20, p. 382.

As the reader knows, all the above took place in 628 A.D. In order to verify the accuracy of the date of death of Khosrow Parviz, I consulted the Micropedia of the Encyclopedia Britannica III, and I found this exact date: 628 A.D. recorded as the date of death of this Persian Kisra. The reader can see the same for himself on p. 793 of Vol. 5 of the said Encyclopedia. Surely Allah and His Messenger always say the truth! *Allahu Akbar!*

It also gives me pleasure to assure the discreet reader that I went to extremes verifying the dates (Hijri and Gregorian) contained in this book, spending a great deal of time comparing one reference with another, consulting both Arabic and English references so that each and every date is accurate. Only Allah knows the extent and the pain of my frustration whenever I came across so many discrepancies relevant to historical data in print. Having verified all these dates in classic books, I further consulted a computer program for final verification.

The reader can now rely on these dates as much I, the author, can, and surely Allah knows best. All Praise is due to Allah, and only to Allah, Who has enabled me to write this book and other books that I have also written, translated, or edited; I humbly thank Him for it and pray that He accept my endeavour as a mere token of appreciation of all what He has done for me although the favour of writing it is most surely His, not mine. We all are tools in the hands of the Almighty and nothing more. The will of Allah be done.

It is interesting to state here that Prophet Muhammad used a seal for the very first time in this same year after being told that the monarchs ruling the domains beyond Arabia would not honour any letter unless it was sealed.

The Prophet's letter to al-Harith ibn Abu Shimr al-Ghassani, chief of the Ghassan tribe ruling western Syria, was carried by Shuja' ibn Wahab, who was put to death by al-Harith. The Ghassan tribe was an Arab tribe that inhabited the Western side of the Syrian Desert during the Prophet's time.

This eventually became the cause of a conflict with the Christians (then the dominant power over Syria) which resulted in the Battle of Mu'tah in 629 A.D. and the Expedition of Tabuk in 630 A.D.

The Prophet sent an epistle to al-Munthir ibn Sawa, the then King of Bahrain appointed by the Persian emperor, was delivered by al-'Ala ibn al-Hadrami. It read as follows:

In the Name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful. From Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to al-Munthir son of Sawa: Peace on him. Praise be to Allah besides Whom there is no other god. And I

bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. And now I remind you of Allah, the Mighty and the Glorious. Whoever receives admonition receives it for his own good, and whoever obeys my envoys and follows their instructions obeys me. Whoever is sincere to them is sincere to me.

My envoys have spoken well of you. I have accepted your intercession on behalf of the people of Bahrain. Leave to the Muslims all they owned before accepting Islam. While I hereby grant indemnity to the wrongdoers, you should also forgive them. You shall not be deposed so long as you conduct yourself well. And whosoever continues following his (religion of) Judaism shall be liable to pay the *jizya* (protection tax).

The letter sent earlier to Negus, the king of Abyssinia, which was carried by ‘Amr ibn Umayyah al-Damri, stated the following:

In the Name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful. From Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to Negus, the king of Abyssinia: Peace on him who follows the path of Guidance. Praise to Allah besides Whom there is no other god, the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Preserver of Peace, the Keeper of the Faithful, the Guardian. I bear witness that Jesus son of Mary is indeed a spirit of God and His word which He conveyed unto the chaste Virgin Mary. He created Jesus through His word just as he created Adam with His hands. And now I call you to Allah Who is One and has no partner, and to friendship in His obedience. Follow me and believe in what has been revealed to me, for I am the Messenger of Allah. I invite you and your people to Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious. I have conveyed the message, and it is up to you to accept it. Once again, peace on whoever follows the path of guidance.

Another epistle sent to Muqawqis, the then Roman Viceroy over Egypt, was carried by Hatib ibn Balta’ah and it said:

In the Name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful. From Muhammad, the servant and Messenger of Allah, to Muqawqis, Chief of the Copts: Peace on him who follows the path of guidance. I invite you to accept the message of Islam. Accept it and you shall prosper. But if you turn away, the sins (of misleading by your example) of the Copts shall fall upon you. O people of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah and that we shall ascribe no partners to Him and that none of us shall regard anyone as lord besides God. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.

According to a number of books of history, the Prophet also sent Saleet ibn ‘Amr al-’Amiri with two of his letters to both kings ruling Yemen then: Thumal ibn Athal and Hawthah ibn Ali who belonged to the tribe of Banu Haneef. I very much wished to research the text of those letters and the response to them, but I could not do so due to the deadline which I had to meet before sending this book's manuscript to the press. I seek forgiveness of Allah, of His Prophet, and of the kind reader. Deadlines are one of the inconveniences writers have to tolerate.

The Battle of Khaybar (628 A.D.)

Banishing the Jewish tribes of Banu Nadir and Qinaqa' from Medina intensified the Jews' animosity towards the Muslims. These tribes were instigating other tribes, Jewish and pagan, to join them in a conclusive assault upon the Muslims. Two years ago, they instigated a number of powerful bedouin tribes, with whom they entered into alliances, as well as the Quraishites of Mecca, to raid and besiege Medina, but their attempts failed. Their chief, Ibn Abul-Haqiq, who enjoyed security at the fort of Qamus, instigated the tribe of Banu Fizarah and other bedouins to raid Medina. In fact, the Battle of Ahzab, or of Khandaq (moat), was the first attempt in which the Jews had actually participated in besieging the Muslims. Ibn Abul-Haqiq in particular had played an active role in that siege.

These Jewish tribes had settled down in Khaybar at a distance of about 80 miles (or 96 Arabian miles or 8 stages) north-east of Medina. "Khai-Bar" means: "fortified place". The valley of Khaybar was studded with fortresses strongly situated on rocky hills numbering ten. The more fortified ones were seven: Naim, Qamus (on a hill of the same name), Katiba, Shiqu, Natat, Watih and Sulalim, of which Qamus (where Ibn Abul-Haqiq resided) was the most fortified. It was the one that proved to be a formidable challenge to the Muslims.

Past reverses they suffered did not deter them. Usir ibn Razam, another prominent Jew of Khaybar, rallied behind him all the Jewish tribes then solicited the aid of Ghatfan for a final showdown. To demonstrate their strength, Ghatfan sent a posse headed by none other than 'Oyaynah, chief of the tribe of Banu Fizarah, that captured twenty camels belonging to the Prophet after killing their herdsman and capturing his wife.

This incident took place in Rabi' I of that year 7 A.H./July 628 A.D.. In the next month (Rabi II), the Banu Ghatfan tribe, an ally of the Jews, with the instigation of the latter, made a similar attempt, sending Muhammad ibn Maslamah with ten men. All those ten men were killed by the Muslims, and the leader of the scheme was seriously wounded. He was mistaken as having been killed, so his body was put together with the corpses of the other ten men. Finding an opportunity, however, he fled. In the same year, Oib died and was succeeded by 'Osayr ibn Zarim who renewed his attempts to hatch plots against the Muslims with the tribe of Banu Ghatfan. News reached the Prophet of their schemes.

The news of the preparation of the Jews was reaching the Prophet in Medina frequently. At last, the Prophet decided to crush them once and for all before they could destroy the Muslims. It was the "near victory" foretold in the Sura of "Victory" revealed just after the truce of Hdaybiya:

Indeed, God was well-pleased with the Believers when they swore allegiance to thee under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility on them and rewarded them with a near victory. (Qur'an, 48: 18)

By mid-Muharram, 7 A.H./May 28, 628 A.D., the Prophet marched on Khaybar with 1,400 (or 1600

according to some accounts) strong. In order to surprise the enemy, the Prophet's troops marched during the night and halted during the day. A road guide had to be hired to show the army the way. The Jews had made a maze of roads surrounding their fortresses.

In about seven days, six of the Jewish fortresses were overrun by the Muslims. Then Qamus was besieged. As the Muslims were busy for one month attacking less fortified fortresses, the Jews were equally busy laying waste the country surrounding them with the intention to starve the Muslims. They destroyed even their own date trees growing around their fortresses. They successfully repulsed every attempt of the Muslims to advance.

Abul-Fida' says the following in his *Tarikh*, book of history:

In those days, the Prophet sometimes used to suffer from partial headaches. As a matter of chance, on the day he reached Khaybar, he suffered from the same. Abu Bakr, therefore, took the standard and went out to fight but returned unsuccessful. Then "Omar took the standard and fought hard, more than his predecessor, but returned equally unsuccessful. When the Prophet came to know of these reversals, he said, "By Allah, tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger and whom Allah and His Messenger love, one who is constant in onslaught and does not flee, one who will stand firm and will not return till victory is achieved.' Having heard this, both the Immigrants and the Helpers aspired for the flag.

When the day dawned, having said the morning prayers, the Prophet came and stood among his companions. Then he called for the standard. At that moment, every companion was engrossed in the hope and desire of getting the flag, while the Prophet called for Ali who was suffering from sore eyes. The Prophet took some of his own saliva on his finger and applied it to Ali's eyes. The eyes were at once cured and the Prophet handed over the standard to him.

Madarijun-Nubuwwah proceeds to state the following: "Then Ali started with the flag in his hand and, reaching under the fort of Qamus, planted the standard on a rock. A rabbi who was watching from the fort asked, 'O standard-bearer! Who are you?' Ali replied, 'I am Ali son of Abu Talib.' The rabbi called unto his people, 'By the Torah, you will be defeated! This man will not go back without winning the battle.'⁶ Shaikh 'Abdul-Haqq, the Dehlavi *muhaddith* (traditionist), author of *Madarijun-Nubuwwah*, states the following: "Perhaps that Jew was well informed of Ali's valour and had seen his praises in the Torah.'

He further states the following in his afore-mentioned book:

Al-Harith, brother of Marhab (the most courageous Jewish warrior), first sallied forth from the fort with a huge spear whose point weighed about 3 mounds¹⁶. In his immediate attack, he killed a number of Muslim veterans. Then Ali proceeded towards him and killed him in one stroke. When Marhab was informed of his brother's plight, he rushed out of the fort accompanied by some of the bravest soldiers from the Khaybar garrison to avenge his brother's death. It is said that Marhab was the strongest, tallest, and the fiercest among the warriors of Khaybar and that none equalled him in his might. That day, he

was armed twice over, wearing double armour with two swords dangling by his sides. He was also wearing two turbans with a helmet over and above.

He marched ahead in the battlefield singing about his own valour. Nobody among the Muslims dared to fight him in the battlefield. Ali, therefore, darted out, reciting about his own valiance in response to Marhab's. Taking the initiative, Marhab attacked Ali with his sword. But Ali avoided the blow and rendered with Thul-Fiqar such a forceful blow on Marhab's head that it cut through the latter's helmet, the double turban, the head, till it reached the man's throat. According to some narratives, Marhab was cut up to his thigh, in others that it tore him into two parts upon the saddle. Marhab took his way to the hereafter in two pieces. Then the Muslims under the command of Ali began fighting the Jews. Ali himself killed seven generals of the Jewish forces each one of whom was considered to be most valiant.

After these had been killed, the remnants of the Jewish troops ran helter-skelter towards their fort. Ali followed them in hot pursuit. In this rush, one Jew delivered a blow to Ali's hand wherein he carried his shield. The shield fell down. Another Jew picked it up and made good with his booty. This infuriated Ali and who was now strengthened with such a spiritual force and divine strength that he jumped across the moat and came straight to the door of the iron gate. He dislodged it from its hinges, held it up as a shield and resumed fighting.

According to Ibn Hisham's *Sirat*, and according to *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil* and Abul-Fida's *Tarikh*, Abu Rafi' is cited saying, "When the Prophet gave the flag to Ali and bade him fight the forces of Khaybar, we, too, accompanied him. When Ali was a short distance from the fort, fighting all along, a Jew struck a blow on his hand with such a force that the shield Ali was holding fell down. Ali at once pulled out a part of the gate of Khaybar, held it up as a shield and fought till Allah granted him a clear victory. Once the fighting was over, he threw it away. It was so heavy that eight men from among us could hardly turn it over from one side to the other.'

An agreement was reached with the Jews of Khaybar. Their lands and movable property were left in their hands. They were allowed to practice their religion freely. In return for the protection they would receive, they were required to pay the Muslims half the produce of their lands. The Prophet maintained the right to turn them out of their lands whenever he so decided. The battle of Khaybar is important as it put an end to the Jewish resistance and, for the first time, a non-Muslim people were made "Protected Persons" of the Muslim commonwealth.

On the same day, Ja'far ibn Abu Talib returned from Ethiopia. The Prophet said: "I do not know on which blessing of Allah I should thank Him more: on the victory of Khaybar or on the return of Ja'far?!"

Safiyya The Jewess

Safiyya daughter of Huyay ibn al-Akhtab, the Jewish arch-enemy of the Prophet of Islam, was the wife of Kinanah ibn al-Rabee' ibn Abul-Haqiq, a Jewish chief. She embraced Islam during those days. She

had seen in a vision the moon falling from the heavens into her lap.

Her husband, having listened to her narrate her vision, violently slapped her, hurting her eye. He taunted her of having desired the domain of Hijaz under Muhammad's control. When she fell in captivity, she managed to reach the Prophet. She was wearing the mark of a bruise on her eyelid caused by Kinanah striking her only on account of narrating that dream to her. Muhammad welcomed her into the folds of his nation and offered to marry her. She welcomed his offer and the marriage was soon solemnized.

Jewess Tries to Poison Muhammad

While the Prophet was still in Khayber, a Jewess presented him with a dressed and grilled lamb just when he was about to be served his dinner. Expressing his gratitude for the present, the Prophet took the shoulder, his favourite part, to eat, giving the man sitting next to him, namely Bishr ibn Ma'rur, a Khazrajite Ansar who had courageously participated in the battles at Badr and Uhud, another piece and passing pieces to other *sahaba* who were present there and then as was always his habit. As soon as the Prophet tasted the lamb, he realized that it did not taste right.

Rather than swallowing it, he spat it out. Meanwhile, Bishr had already swallowed some of the meat. He collapsed and died instantly. Conducting an intensive inquiry, the companions of the Prophet came to know that lamb had been prepared by a Jewish captive who was summoned and interrogated. She defended herself by saying that was her revenge for the loss of her father, brother, husband and other relatives, for the devastation wrought by the Muslims on her people and "country." She added saying that if Muhammad were a true Prophet, he would discover the mischief before any harm afflicted him; but if he were a pretender, he would fall a victim to her scheme and the Jews would be saved from his tyranny.

There are two different stories as to what happened to that Jewess. One says that she was put to death there and then. Another tells quite a different story. Following is the narration of the same incident by a grandson of the Prophet, namely Imam Ali ibn Muhammad, peace and blessings of the Almighty be upon him and all the Progeny of Prophet Muhammad:

When the Messenger of Allah returned from Khaybar to Medina, after having won a great victory (over the Jews), a Jewess who had pretended to have accepted Islam took a lamb's shoulder and cooked it. Putting it before the Prophet, she said, "O Messenger of Allah! May both my parents be sacrificed for your sake! I was very much concerned about you when you came out to meet the hosts at Khayber, for I know that they are very tough people. I know that the shoulder is your favourite, and grilling is your favourite method of cooking, so I made a vow (*nathr*) that if Allah saved you from them, I would slaughter a lamb for you and feed you from its grilled shoulder.

Now Allah has saved you from them and granted you victory over them, I have brought you my *nathr*.' In the company of the Prophet there were men such as al-Bara' ibn Ma'rur and Ali ibn Abu Talib. The

Messenger of Allah said, "Bring me some bread.' Once the bread was brought, al-Bara' stretched his hand and took a morsel of the meat and put it in his mouth. Ali ibn Abu Talib, peace be upon him, said to him, "O Bara! You should not do anything ahead of the Prophet.' Al-Bara' was a bedouin. He said to Ali, "O Ali! It seems as if you are calling the Messenger of Allah miser!'

Ali said, "I never make such an implication about the Messenger of Allah; on the contrary, I respect and revere him. Neither I, nor you, nor any of Allah's creation should say something or do something or eat or drink before the Messenger of Allah does so.' "I never imply that the Messenger of Allah is miser, either.' Ali said, "This is not why I said what I said. But this woman who used to be Jewish has come here and we do not know her very well. If you eat of it according to the order of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, he will be the one to guarantee your safety. But if you eat it without an order from the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, you will be on your own.'

Ali continues to narrate this story saying that meanwhile, al-Bara' was chewing his morsel. It is then that the shoulder spoke out and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Do not eat of me, for I am poisoned!' Al-Bara' fell a victim to the swoon of death. He was not lifted from the ground except to be buried. The Messenger of Allah said, "Bring me that woman.' She was brought to him. "What made you do what you did?,' the Prophet asked her.

She said, "You have caused me a great disaster, indeed. You have killed my father, my uncle, my husband, my brother, and my son, so I did what I did saying to myself, 'If he were a king, I would seek revenge against him, but if he were a prophet, as he claims, having promised to conquer Mecca and to bring victory, Allah will protect him from it (from the poison), and it will not harm him.' The Messenger of Allah said, "O woman, you have said the truth.' Then he added, "Do not be fooled by the death of al-Bara', for Allah caused him to fall into a trial and tribulation on account of his doing something before the Messenger of Allah. Had he eaten of it with the permission of the Messenger of Allah, it would not have harmed him nor poisoned him.'

Then the Prophet ordered a number of his companions to be brought to him including Salman, Miqdad, Abu Tharr, 'Ammar, Suhayb, Bilal, and other *sahaba* totalling ten in number in addition to Ali. Once they were all present, the Prophet told them to sit down around the food like a circle. Then the Prophet put his hand on the poisoned shoulder, blew of his breath over it, then said, "In the Name of Allah *al-Shafi*, the Healer; in the Name of Allah *al-Mu'afi*, the One Who grants good health; nothing at all can harm when His Name is invoked, nor any ailment, not in the earth, nor in the heavens, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.' Then he added, "Eat in the Name of Allah.' The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, ate of it, and they, too, ate of it to their fill. Then they drank water. The Prophet ordered the Jewess to be imprisoned.

On the next day, he ordered her brought to him. "Did you not see with your own eyes how these men ate of that poisoned food? Did you not see how Allah protected His Messenger and His Messenger's

sahaba?' The woman said, "Yes, I have, O Messenger of Allah! Before now, I had entertained serious doubts about you being a Prophet, but now I am certain that you are, indeed, the Messenger of Allah; therefore, I testify that: There is no god except Allah, the One and Only God Who has no partner, and that you are His servant and Messenger.' Her actions testified to the soundness of her conviction.¹⁷

The name of that Jewess is given in al-Majlisi's *Bihar al-Anwar* as Zainab daughter of al-Harith ibn Salam ibn Mashkam, niece of the same Marhab referred to above.

Then it was time to bury al-Bara' ibn Ma'rur. The Prophet inquired about Ali and was told that he had gone for an errand for one of the Muslims. The Prophet, hearing that, sat down. The *sahaba* asked him as to why he sat down instead of proceeding with the funeral rituals. He said, "Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, ordered me to postpone the performance of the prayers for al-Bara' till Ali returns so that he would forgive him for what he had said in the presence of the Prophet, so that He may consider his death by this poison an atonement for his sins.' Some of those who were present during the entire incident said to the Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah! He was only jesting! He was simply teasing Ali! He was not serious at all; so, how can Allah take him so seriously?'

The Prophet said, "Had he been serious, Allah would have wiped out all his good deeds even if he had spent what is between the earth and the 'Arsh by way of charity in gold and silver, but he was, indeed, jesting, so he is excused. But the Messenger of Allah does not desire any of you to think that Ali was angry with him. He, therefore, will renew in your presence his sentiments towards him, and so that he may seek Allah's forgiveness for him. Allah will then bring him (Bara') closer to Him and grant him a loftier status in His Paradise.'

Shortly thereafter Ali returned and stood before the coffin to say: "O Bara! May Allah have mercy on you. You used to fast and to stand for the prayers, and you have died in the way of Allah.' The Messenger of Allah then said, "Had any deceased person not needed the Messenger of Allah to perform his funeral prayers, your fellow here (meaning Bara') would have found such a supplication from Ali sufficient.' Then he stood up, performed the funeral prayers for Bara' ibn Ma'rur and had him buried. He went thereafter to attend the Fatiha *majlis* for him.'¹⁸

By the way, "Zainab' was a common name before the advent of Islam. One of the most famous women who carried this name was the last pagan Arab queen of Tadmur, Palmyra, kingdom of Nabatean Arabs, till Roman emperor Aurelianus (Aurelian), who ruled Rome from 270 to 275 A.D., destroyed her kingdom in 273 A.D. She is known as Queen Zaynab or Zenobia, a bedouin corruption of "Zainab.'

Fadak

The Prophet then sent an expedition with Ali ibn Abu Talib to a Jewish tribe living in Fadak. Without any battle, they agreed to the same terms as the people of Khaybar had.

The income from Khaybar was for all Muslims in general, whereas the income from Fadak was exclusively for the Prophet because it was taken without any use of force. Jalaluddin al-Sayyuti states in *Ad-Durr al-Manthur* on the authority of Bazar, Abu Yaceli and Ibn Abu Hatim who have learned the tradition from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri that when the verse: *Wa ati thal-Qurba Haqqahu* ("And give thy kinsfolk their dues") (Qur'an, Chap. 17, V. 26) was revealed, the Prophet gave the property of Fadak as a gift to Fatima. Also, Ibn 'Abbas has narrated that when the verse "And give thy kinsfolk their dues" was revealed, the Prophet assigned the Fadak property to Fatima.'

Abu Hurayra and the Falsification of Hadith

In the same year (7 A.H./629 A.D.), a young and very poor man from the Daws tribe of southern Arabia (Yemen), met the Prophet immediately after the battle of Khaybar and embraced Islam. He is well known in history as "Abu Hurayra," the fellow of the kitten, after a kitten to which he was very much attached. His name shone neither during the lifetime of the Prophet nor of the four "righteous caliphs" but during the un-Islamic reign of terror of the Umayyads which lasted from 661 to 750 A.D. It was then that the Islamic world witnessed an astronomical number of "traditions" which were attributed, through this same Abu Hurayra, to the Prophet of Islam. Since these traditions, known collectively as *hadith*, constitute one of the two sources of the Islamic legislative system, the *Shari'a*, it is very important to shed a light on the life and character of this man even if some readers may consider this chapter as a digression from the main topic.

It is of utmost importance to expose the facts relevant to Abu Hurayra so that Muslims may be cautious whenever they come across a tradition narrated by him or attributed to him which, all in all, reached the astronomical figure of 5,374 "traditions," although he spent no more than three years in the company of the Prophet, a fact supported by the renown compiler al-Bukhari, whenever such company did not involve any danger to his life, and despite the fact that Abu Hurayra did not know how to read and write... The reader can easily conclude that this figure is unrealistic when he comes to know that Abu Bakr, friend of the Prophet and one of the earliest converts to Islam, narrated no more than 142 traditions.

"Omar ibn al-Khattab, the story of whose conversion to Islam is narrated earlier in this book, narrated no more than 537 traditions. 'Uthman ibn 'Affan narrated no more than 146 traditions. And Ali, the man who was raised by the Prophet and who was always with him, following him like his shadow, and whose memory and integrity nobody at all can question, narrated no more than 586 traditions. All these men, especially Ali and Abu Bakr, spent many years of their lives in the company of the Prophet and did not hide when their lives were in jeopardy, as is the case with Abu Hurayrah, yet they did not narrate except a tiny fraction of the number of "traditions," many of which cannot be accepted by logic and commonsense, narrated by or attributed to Abu Hurayra.

This is why it is so important to discuss this man and expose the factories of falsification of *hadith*

established by his benefactors, the Umayyads, descendants and supporters of Abu Sufyan, then his son Mu'awiyah, then his son Yazid, all of whom were outrightly hypocrites and had absolutely nothing to do with Islam.

Abu Hurayra's name is said to be 'Omayr ibn 'Amir ibn 'Abd Thish-Shari ibn Tareef, of the Yemenite tribe of Daws ibn 'Adnan¹⁹. His mother's name is Umaima daughter of Safeeh ibn al-Harith ibn Shabi ibn Abu Sa'b, also of the Daws tribe. His date of birth is unknown, but he is said to have died in 57, 58, or 59 A.H., and that he had lived to be 78. This would put the date of his birth at 677, 678 or 679 A.D.

When he came to the Prophet, he was young and healthy and, hence, capable of enlisting in the Prophet's army. But he preferred to be lodged together with the Muslim destitutes at the Suffa referred to above. Most of the time which Abu Hurayra spent with the Prophet was during the lunches or dinners the Prophet hosted for those destitutes.

Abu Hurayra himself admitted more than once that he remained close to the Prophet so that he could get a meal to eat. Another person who used to shower the destitutes of the Suffa with his generosity was Ja'far ibn Abu Talib (588 – 629 A.D.), the Prophet's cousin and a brother of Ali ibn Abu Talib. He was, for this reason, called "Abul Masakeen," father of the destitutes. This is why, Abu Hurayra used to regard Ja'far as the most generous person next only to the Prophet. When the Prophet mandated military service for all able men in the Mu'ta expedition, Ja'far ibn Abu Talib did not hesitate from responding to the Prophet's call, but Abu Hurayra, who considered Ja'far as his patron, preferred not to participate, thus violating the order of the Prophet. History records the names of those who did likewise.

In 21 A.H./642 A.D., during the caliphate of 'Omar ibn al-Khattab, Abu Hurayra was appointed as governor of Bahrain. After two years, he was deposed because of a scandal. The details of that scandal are recorded in the books of Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, the Mu'tazilite writer, and in Ibn al-Atheer's famous classic book *Al-'Iqd al-Fareed*. A summary of that incident runs as follows:

When Abu Hurayra was brought to him, 'Omar said to him: "I have come to know that when I made you governor of Bahrain, you did not even have shoes to wear, but I am now told that you have purchased horses for one thousand and six hundred dinars.' Abu Hurayra said, "I had horses which have multiplied, and I received some as gifts.' 'Omar then said, "I would give you only your salary. This (amount) is a lot more than that (more than your salary for both years).

Pay the balance back (to *baytul-mal*, the Muslim state treasury)! Abu Hurayra said, "This money is not yours.' 'Omar said, "By Allah! I would bruise your back!' Saying this, 'Omar whipped Abu Hurayra till he bled. Then he thundered: "Now bring the money back!' Abu Hurayra replied: "I am to account for it before Allah.' 'Omar said, "This could be so only if you had taken it rightfully and had paid it back obediently. I shall throw you back to your mother as though you were dung so that she would use you to graze donkeys.'

According to the sequence employed by Ibn Sa'd in his *Tabaqat*, Abu Hurayra ranks in the ninth or tenth

class. He came to the Messenger of Allah near the end of the seventh Hijri year. Hence, historians say that he accompanied the Prophet no more than three years²⁰ according to the best estimates, while other historians say it was no more than two years if we take into consideration the fact that the Prophet sent him to accompany Ibn al-Hadrami to Bahrain, then the Messenger of Allah died while he was still in Bahrain.²¹

Abu Hurayra was not known for his *jihad* or valour, nor was he among those who were regarded as brilliant thinkers, nor among the jurists who knew the Qur'an by heart, nor did he even know how to read and write... He came to the Messenger of Allah in order to satisfy his hunger as he himself said, and as the Prophet came to understand from him, so he lodged him among the people of the Suffa to whom the Prophet used to send some food.

Yet he became famous for the abundance of *ahadith* which he used to narrate about the Messenger of Allah. This fact attracted the attention of verifiers of *hadith* especially since he had not remained in the company of the Prophet for any length of time and to the fact that he narrated traditions regarding battles which he had never attended.

Some verifiers of *hadith* gathered all what was narrated by the "righteous caliphs" as well as by the ten men given the glad tidings of going to Paradise in addition to what the mothers of the faithful and the purified Ahl al-Bayt, and they did not total one tenth of what Abu Hurayra had narrated all alone. This came despite the fact that among the latter was Ali ibn Abu Talib who remained in the company of the Prophet for thirty years.

Then fingers were pointed to Abu Hurayra charging him with telling lies and with fabricating **and forging hadith**. Some went as far as labelling him as the first narrator in the history of Islam thus charged. Yet he is called by some "Islam's narrator" and is surrounded with a great deal of respect. They totally rely on him, even go as far as saying '*Radiya Allhu 'anhu*,' Allah be pleased with him, whenever they mention his name.

Some of them may even regard him as being more knowledgeable than Ali due to one particular tradition which he narrates about himself and in which he says, "I said, 'O Messenger of Allah! I hear a great deal of your *hadith* which I have been forgetting!' He said, 'Stretch your mantle,' had created the heavens, the earth, and all creation in seven days. When "Omar heard about it, he called him in and asked him to repeat that *hadith*. Having heard him repeating it, "Omar struck him and said to him, "How so when Allah Himself says it was done in six days, while you yourself now say it was done in seven?!" Abu Hurayra said, "Maybe I heard it from Ka'b al-Ahbar..." "Omar said, "Since you cannot distinguish between the Prophet's *ahadith* and what Ka'b al-Ahbar says, you must not narrate anything at all." ²²

It is also narrated that Ali ibn Abu Talib has said, "Among all the living, the person who has told the most lies about the Messenger of Allah is Abu Hurayra al-Dawsi."²³ Mother of the faithful 'Ayisha, too, testified to his being a liar several times in reference to many *ahadith* which he used to attribute to the

Messenger of Allah. For example, she resented something which he had once said so she asked him, “When did you hear the Messenger of Allah say so?” He said to her, “The mirror, the kohl, and the dyestuff have all diverted you from the *hadith* of the Messenger of Allah,’ but when she insisted that he was lying and scandalized him, Marwan ibn al-Hakam interfered and took upon himself to verify the authenticity of the *hadith* in question.

It was then that Abu Hurayra admitted, “I did not hear it from the Messenger of Allah; rather, I heard it from al-Fadl ibn al-’Abbas.’²⁴ It is because of this particular narration that Ibn Qutaybah charged him with lying saying, “Abu Hurayra claimed that al-Fadl ibn al-’Abbas, who had by then died, testified to the authenticity of that tradition which he attributed to him in order to mislead people into thinking that he had heard it from him.’²⁵

In his book *Ta’weel al-Ahadith*, Ibn Qutaybah says, “Abu Hurayra used to say: ‘The Messenger of Allah said such-and-such, but I heard it from someone else.’ In his book *A’lam al-Nubala*, al-Thahbi says that Yazid ibn Ibrahim once cited Shu’bah ibn al-Hajjaj saying that Abu Hurayra used to commit forgery.

In his book *Al-Bidaya wal Nihaya*, Ibn Katheer states that Yazid ibn Haroun heard Shu’bah ibn al-Hajjaj accusing him of the same, that is, that he forges *hadith*, and that he used to narrate what he used to hear from Ka’b al-Ahbar as well as from the Messenger of Allah without distinguishing one from the other.

Ja’far al-Iskafi has said, “Abu Hurayra is doubted by our mentors; his narrations are not acceptable.’²⁶

During his lifetime, Abu Hurayra was famous among the *sahaba* for lying, forging and narrating too many fabricated *ahadith* to the extent that some of the *sahaba* used to deride him and ask him to fabricate *ahadith* agreeable with their own taste. For example, a man belonging to Quraish put on once a new *jubbah* (a long outer garment) and started showing off. He passed by Abu Hurayra and [sarcastically] said to him, “O Abu Hurayra! You narrate quite a few traditions about the Messenger of Allah; so, did you hear him say anything about my *jubbah*?!”

Abu Hurayra said, “I have heard the father of al-Qasim saying, ‘A man before your time was showing off his outfit when Allah caused the earth to cave in over him; so he has been rattling in it and will continue to do so till the Hour.’ By Allah! I do not know whether he was one of your people or not.’²⁷

How can people help doubting Abu Hurayra’s traditions since they are so self-contradictory? He narrates one “*hadith*” then he narrates its antithesis, and if he is opposed or his previously narrated traditions are used against him, he becomes angry or starts babbling in the Ethiopian language.²⁸

How could they help accusing him of telling lies and of forgery after he himself had admitted that he got traditions out of his own pouch then attributed them to the Prophet?

Al-Bukhari, in his *Sahih*, states the following:

Abu Hurayra said once, “The Prophet said, ‘The best charity is willingly given; the higher hand is better

than the lower one, and start with your own dependents. A woman says: 'Either feed me or divorce me.' A slave says, 'Feed me and use me.' A son says, 'Feed me for the woman who will forsake me.' He was asked, "O Abu Hurayra! Did you really hear the Messenger of Allah say so?" He said, "No, this one is from Abu Hurayra's pouch."²⁹

Notice how he starts this "tradition" by saying, "The Prophet said," then when they refuse to believe what he tells them, he admits by saying, "... this one is from Abu Hurayra's pouch"! So congratulations to Abu Hurayra for possessing this pouch which is full of lies and myths, and for which Mu'awiyah and Banu Umayyah provided a great deal of publicity, and because of which he acquired position, authority, wealth, and mansions. Mu'awiyah made him the governor of Medina and built him the Aqeeq mansion then married him off to a woman of honourable descent for whom he used to work as a servant...

Since Abu Hurayra was the close vizier of Mu'awiyah, it is not due to his own merits, honour, or knowledge; rather, it is because Abu Hurayra used to provide him with whatever traditions he needed to circulate. If some *sahaba* used to hesitate in cursing "Abu Turab," finding doing that embarrassing, Abu Hurayra cursed Ali in his own house and as his Shi'as heard:

Ibn Abul-Hadeed says,

When Abu Hurayra came to Iraq in the company of Mu'awiyah in the Year of the Jama'a, he came to Kufa's mosque. Having seen the huge number of those who welcomed him, he knelt down then beat his bald head and said, "O people of Iraq! Do you claim that I tell lies about the Messenger of Allah and thus burn myself in the fire?! By Allah! I heard the Messenger of Allah saying, 'Each prophet has a sanctuary, and my sanctuary is in Medina from Eer to [the mountain of] Thawr; so, anyone who makes it unclean will be cursed by Allah, the angels, and all people, and I bear witness that Ali had done so.' When Mu'awiyah came to hear this statement, he gave him a present, showered him with his generosity, and made him the governor of Medina."³⁰

Suffices us to point out to the fact that he was created governor of Medina by none other than Mu'awiyah. There is no doubt that verifiers and researchers who are free from prejudice will doubt anyone who befriended the enemy of Allah and His Messenger and who was antagonistic towards the friends of Allah and of His Messenger...

There is no doubt that Abu Hurayra did not reach that lofty position of authority, namely the governor of Medina, the then capital of the Islamic domains, except by virtue of the services which he had rendered to Mu'awiyah and other authoritative Umayyads. Praise to the One Who changes the conditions! Abu Hurayra had come to Medina with nothing to cover his private parts other than a tiny striped piece of cloth, begging passers-by to feed him. Then he suddenly became ruler of the sacred precincts of Medina, residing in the Aqeeq mansion, enjoying wealth, servants and slaves, and nobody could say a word without his permission. All of this was from the blessings of his pouch!

Do not forget, nor should you be amazed, that nowadays we see the same plays being repeatedly

enacted, and history certainly repeats itself. How many ignorant indigent persons sought nearness to a ruler and joined his party till they became feared masters who do and undo, issuing orders as they please, having a direct access to wealth without being accounted for it, riding in automobiles without being watched, eating foods not sold on the market...?

One such person may not even know how to speak his own language, nor does he know a meaning for life except satisfying his stomach and sexual appetite. The whole matter is simply his having a pouch like the one Abu Hurayra used to have with some exception, of course, yet the aim is one and the same: pleasing the ruler and publicizing for him in order to strengthen his authority, firm his throne, and finish his foes.

Abu Hurayra loved the Umayyads and they loved him since the days of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, their leader. His view with regard to 'Uthman was contrary to that of all the *sahaba* who belonged to the Muhajirun and the Ansar; he regarded all the *sahaba* who participated in or encouraged the killing of 'Uthman as apostates.

Undoubtedly, Abu Hurayra used to accuse Ali ibn Abu Talib of killing 'Uthman. We can derive this conclusion from the statement he made at Kufa's mosque and his saying that Ali made Medina unclean and that he, therefore, was cursed by the Prophet, the angels, and everyone else. For this reason, Ibn Sa'd indicates in his *Tabaqat* that when Abu Hurayra died in 59 A.H./679 A.D., 'Uthman's descendants carried his coffin and brought it to the Baqee' to bury it as an expression of their appreciation of his having had high regards for 'Uthman.³¹

Surely Allah has his own wisdom in faring with His creation. 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, the master of Quraish and their greatest, was killed although he was the Muslims' caliph bearing the title of "Thul-Noorayn", the man with two celestial lights, and of whom, according to their claim, the angels feel shy. His corpse did not receive the ceremonial burial bath nor was it shrouded; moreover, it was not buried for full three days after which it was buried at Medina's then Jewish cemetery.

Full details about this burial are available on p. 160, Vol. 3 of the 2005 A.D./1426 A.H. edition of al-Tabari's *Tarikh*. Yet Abu Hurayra died after having enjoyed pomp and power. He was an indigent man whose lineage and tribal origins were not known to anybody. He had no kinship to Quraish. Despite all of this, the caliph's sons, who were in charge of running the affairs during Mu'awiyah's reign, took to bearing his corpse and to burying it at the Baqee' where the Messenger of Allah was buried...! But let us go back to Abu Hurayra to examine his attitude towards the Prophet's Sunnah.

In his *Sahih*, al-Bukhari quotes Abu Hurayra as saying, "I learned the fill of two receptacles [of *ahadith*] from the Messenger of Allah: I have disseminated only one of them; as for the other, if I disseminate it, this throat will be slit."³²

Here is Abu Hurayra revealing what erstwhile is hidden, admitting that the only traditions he quoted were the ones that pleased the ruling authorities. Building upon this premise, Abu Hurayra used to have two

pouches, or two receptacles, as he called them. He used to disseminate the contents of one of them, the one which we have discussed here that contains whatever the rulers desired. As for the other, which Abu Hurayra kept to himself and whose *ahadith* he did not narrate for fear his throat would be slit, it is the one containing the authentic traditions of the Prophet. Had Abu Hurayra been a reliable authority, he would have never hidden true *ahadith* while disseminating illusions and lies only to support the oppressor, knowing that Allah curses whoever hides the clear evidence.

Al-Bukhari quotes him saying once, "People say that Abu Hurayra narrates too many *ahadith*. Had it not been for two [particular] verses in the Book of Allah, I would not have narrated a single hadith: 'Those who conceal what We have revealed of clear proofs and the guidance, after Our having clarified [everything] for people in the Book, these it is whom Allah shall curse, and those who curse shall curse them, too' (Qur'an, 2: 159). Our brethren from the Muhajirun used to be busy consigning transactions at the market-place, while our brethren from the Ansar used to be busy doing business with their own money, while Abu Hurayra kept in the shadow of the Prophet in order to satisfy his hunger, attending what they did not attend, learning what they did not learn.'³³

How can Abu Hurayra say that had it not been for a couple of verses in the Book of Allah, he would not have narrated a single hadith, then he says, "I learned two receptacles [of *ahadith*] from the Messenger of Allah: I have disseminated one of them; as for the other, if I disseminate it, this throat will be slit'?! Is this not his admission of having concealed the truth despite both verses in the Book of Allah?!

Had the Prophet not said to his companions, "Go back to your people and teach them"?³⁴ Had he not also said, "One who conveys is more aware than one who hears"? Al-Bukhari states that the Prophet urged the deputation of 'Abd Qays to learn belief and scholarship '... then convey what you learn to those whom you have left behind.'³⁵ Can we help wondering: Why should the throat of a *sahabi* be slit if he quotes the Prophet?! There must be a secret here which the caliphs do not wish others to know. Here, we would like to briefly say that "the people of the remembrance" was [a phrase in] a Qur'anic verse revealed to refer to Ali's successorship of the Prophet.

Abu Hurayra is not to blame; he knew his own worth and testified against his own soul that Allah cursed him, and so did those who curse, for having hidden the Prophet's hadith. But the blame is on those who call Abu Hurayra the narrator of the Sunnah while he himself testifies that he hid it then testifies that he fabricated it and told lies in its regard, then he further goes on to testify that it became confused for him, so he could not tell which one was the statement of the Prophet and which one was made by others. All of these *ahadith* and correct admissions are recorded in al-Bukhari's *Sahih* and in other authentic books of *hadith*.

How can anyone feel comfortable about a man whose justice was doubted by the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abu Talib who charged him with lying, saying that among the living, nobody told more lies about the Prophet than Abu Hurayra?! "Omar ibn al-Khattab, too, charged him of the same; he beat him and threatened to expel him. 'Ayisha doubted his integrity and many times called him a liar, and many

other *sahaba* cast doubts about his accuracy and rejected his contradictory *ahadith*, so he would once admit his error and would sometimes prattle in Ethiopian³⁶. A large number of Muslim scholars refuted his traditions and charged him with lying, fabricating, and throwing himself at Mu'awiyah's dinner tables, at his coffers of gold and silver.

Is it right, then, for Abu Hurayra to become "Islam's narrator" from whom the religion's injunctions are learned?

Judaica and Jewish doctrines have filled the books of hadith. Ka'b al-Ahbar, a Jew, may have succeeded in getting such doctrines and beliefs included into the books of hadith, hence we find traditions likening or personifying Allah, as well as the theory of incarnation, in addition to many abominable statements about the prophets and messengers of Allah: all of these are cited through Abu Hurayra.

After Khaybar, Wadi Al-Qura and Taima (629 A.D.)

Following the conquest of Khaybar, the Prophet proceeded to besiege the Jews residing in Wadi al-Qura. These Jews resisted for only two days during which eleven of their men were killed. After their capitulation, the Jews of Taima surrendered, too. Thus, the Prophet extended his control to all the Jews who resided north of Medina and who remained for years a constant threat to Islam and to the Muslims.

On his return to Medina, the Prophet, in the month of Jumadi II, 7 A.H./October 628 A.D., married Umm Habiba daughter of his arch-enemy Abu Sufyan. She had been for some time an adherent to the Islamic faith and had participated in the migration to Ethiopia. While she was there, the Prophet wrote Ethiopia's Negus a letter requesting him to contract his marriage with Umm Habiba for the dower of four hundred dinars, which he did. She was then more than thirty years old. The reader will come across her again in this book, *Insha-Allah*.

The Prophet Visits Mecca (629 A.D.)

Having returned to Medina from Khayber and the other Jewish strongholds victoriously, the Prophet spent four or five months in Medina. According to the terms of the treaty with the Meccans, the Muslims could now visit Mecca. In the month of Thul-Qi'da, towards the end of the seventh year of Hijra (March 629 A.D.), the Prophet, accompanied by about two thousand Muslims, proceeded to Mecca to make the lesser pilgrimage (the *'umra*). Quraish left their houses and watched the Muslims from their tents pitched on the heights of the surrounding hills.

The Prophet ordered Bilal ibn Rabah, the Ethiopian caller to prayers, to ascend the holy place to call the believers to midday prayers. That was the very first time such call was ever made, and that was the very first time the Muslims congregated publicly in such a large number around the Ka'ba to perform the prayers led by the Messenger of Allah. Surely that was history making, a milestone.

The Prophet and his companions remained in Mecca for three days. After these three days' sojourn, the Muslims retired strictly in accordance with the terms of the treaty. During those days, Maimuna daughter of al-Harith al-Hilali (578 – 671 A.D.), a widow 51 years old, was married to the Prophet according to the suggestion of 'Abbas, the Prophet's uncle. She was living with her sister Umm al-Fadl, wife of 'Abbas. Another sister of hers, Asma daughter of 'Omays, was married to Ja'far ibn Abu Talib, Ali's brother. A third sister named Selma had already been married to Hamzah, another uncle of the Prophet, as the reader recalls. Three sisters were married into the same family!

On the fourth day, the Prophet left Mecca and halted at Sarif, about eight miles from Mecca, for the evening. It was there that the wedding actually took place.

Khalid ibn Al-Walid and 'Omar ibn Al-'As Accept Islam (629 A.D.)

Another sister of Maimuna, now wife of the Prophet, was married to al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah, father of Khalid ibn al-Walid and the wealthy Meccan who was condemned in the Holy Qur'an in Surat al-Muddathir (Chapter 74), as narrated above. His son, Khalid, was a cousin of this same Maimuna, and he accepted Islam in 8 A.H (629 A.D.), and so did 'Omar ibn al-'As. The latter was a poet who used to employ his poetry in attacking the Prophet of Islam and ridiculing his creed, instigating the pagans to fight him. Both of these men played important roles in Islamic history following their conversion.

In the same year, the Prophet, and for the first time, had a three-step pulpit to sit on in order to preach to the faithful. He was growing old (now 61), yet he never asked anyone to make a pulpit for him, but when a Muslim carpenter suggested to him to do so, he welcomed the idea.

Battle of Mu'ta (629 A.D.)

It has already been mentioned that the envoy sent by Muhammad to the Ghassanid governor of Bostra (Busra) on behalf of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius inviting him to Islam had been killed en route at the hands of Shurahbil, a feudatory of Heraclius. Shurahbil was the chief of the Moabites. These Moabites are the ones who were then residing in and ruling Moab, which is known in Arabic as "Mu'ta," located in a hilly region east of the Dead Sea. They are Arab tribesmen who had carved Hubal, the chief idol of Mecca, and given to the Khuza'ah tribesmen as a gift. It became Mecca's chief idol. They were also famous for making excellent swords known as the Mashrafis.

In order to exact reparations, the Prophet, on his return to Medina from Sarif after marrying Maimuna, sent a force of 3,000 men with an order to march to the place where the envoy, Harithah ibn 'Omayr al-Azdi, had been killed.

The Prophet gave to the slain envoy's son Zayd ibn Harithah, his freed slave and once adopted son, the command of the army, saying to the troops, "If Zayd is killed, then Ja'far ibn Abu Talib will be the

commander, and if he, too, is killed, then ‘Abdullah ibn Rawahah will command the army. And if he is killed, then the Muslims should select someone as their commander.’

Hearing it, a Jew said: “If he is a true Prophet, none of these three will remain alive.’

Before dispatching this expedition, he instructed them as follows:

- (1) Many servants of God will be busy worshipping Him in their places of worship (churches). Do not touch them.**
- (2) Do not lift your hand against any woman (to strike her).**
- (3) Do not kill any child or minor.**
- (4) Do not kill any old person.**
- (5) Do not destroy any green tree.**

These instructions imparted in an age when hardly any scruples were exercised during bloody engagements indicate the depth of the Prophet's compassion and the efforts he was exerting to effect reforms in all walks of life.

The Muslim force marched under the command of Zayd ibn Harithah to Mu'ta in Syria. In order to meet it, the Syrians had raised a huge army. Although far outnumbered, the Muslim force gave a heroic account of its valour, but the disparity in number was too great. When its commander, Zayd, was slain, the command was taken over by Ja'far ibn Abu Talib, a cousin of the Prophet. He, too, was killed and ‘Abdullah ibn Rawahah al-Ansari took the command. When, as prophesied by the Prophet, he, too, was martyred, the command went to Khalid ibn al-Walid who was able to bring about a successful retreat.

It is said that Khalid was then given the title of “the lion of Allah.’ As the retreating army came close to Medina, its people came out to meet them reproachfully, crying out, “You runaways! You fled away from the enemy while fighting for Allah!’ Umm Salamah, wife of the Prophet, once asked the wife of Salamah ibn Hashim ibn al-Mughirah, one of those runaways, as to why her husband never came out to offer his prayers in the company of the Prophet. She replied that the people used to taunt him as a runaway from Mu'ta; so, he abstained from going out of his house.

The Prophet was much grieved by the death of Zayd and Ja'far. About Ja'far, whose hands were both severed before he fell down at the age of only 41, the Prophet said that Allah had given him two wings of emerald in place of his arms whereby he flies in the Garden with the angels. That is why Ja'far is known as at-Tayyar (the flyer). When the news came of his martyrdom, the Prophet went to Ja'far's house and, calling his children by their names, he embraced them as he burst into tears. Asma, Ja'far's wife, realized what had happened, so she loudly cried, whereupon her neighbours' women came to express their grief at the sad news. The Prophet then went home and asked his family to send food to the family of his cousin Ja'far because, he said, no food would be cooked there since they were grieving for the loss of Ja'far. Then the Prophet proceeded to the house of Zaid ibn Harithah and took Zaid's little girl into his arms and wept profusely. A bystander could not understand why the Prophet wept so much. “It is the fond yearning in the heart of a friend for his friend,’ said the Prophet to him.

The Peace Treaty Violated (629 A.D.)

In the same year (8 A.H./629 A.D.), Banu Bakr, who had signed the Hudaibiya treaty, killed a man from the Khuza'ah tribe one night. The Khuza'ites sent a deputation of forty men to the Prophet asking him to punish the treacherous murderers, but he resented any infringement on the treaty, promising that he would take up their cause personally.

When Quraish knew of this deputation, they were very alarmed and sent Abu Sufyan to Medina to reconcile the Muslims. Upon reaching Medina, Abu Sufyan went straight to the house of his daughter Umm Habiba, wife of the Prophet. He was about to sit down when Umm Habiba pulled the rug from underneath him saying, "This is a bed of the Messenger of Allah and is too sacred to be polluted by an impure idolator." Abu Sufyan felt the humiliation and left the place cursing her. Appearing before the Prophet, he wanted to explain that he and Quraish wished to renew the peace pact, but the Prophet would not waste his time listening to him.

He, therefore, sought the mediation of Ali and Abu Bakr, but both men declined to interfere. Then he sought the favour of Fatima daughter of the Prophet, begging her to let her oldest son be his protector. Fatima replied that Hasan was too young to take anyone under his protection, being only six years old, adding that no protection can avail anyone against the will of the Prophet which is also the will of the Almighty.

Seeing how all doors were closed in his face, Abu Sufyan went one more time to Ali and asked him what he suggested he should do. Ali suggested that Abu Sufyan should do nothing more than proclaiming on behalf of Quraish the friendly ties which they wished to maintain and the continuation of his own protection as the head of Quraish. Standing in the courtyard of the Prophet's mosque in Medina, Abu Sufyan announced what Ali had suggested, but he also noticed that nobody paid him any attention at all. He was ignored by everybody. When he reported what had happened to him in Medina to Quraish, the latter told him that all what he had done was simply to make a fool of himself. "I know that," said Abu Sufyan, "but what else could I have done?"

Preparations To Invade Mecca (630 A.D.)

Abu Sufyan's failure to safeguard the Hudaibiya treaty confirmed the apprehensions of the Khuza'ites who blamed it all on Quraish. You see, the Quraishites were allied of Banu Bakr, the culprits in this incident. Had they been sincere in their peaceful intentions, they should have taken up the issue with Banu Bakr themselves first and foremost, but they did not.

Since the infringement on the peace treaty has been confirmed, the Prophet decided to take over Mecca by surprise. He immediately summoned all his allies from all quarters to meet him in Medina, his headquarters. He did not give them any hint regarding the meeting's agenda. One day, Abu Bakr happened to enter the house of his daughter 'Ayisha, wife of the Prophet, and he was somehow

surprised to see her busy preparing the Prophet's war outfits and battle gear. He asked her about the reason, but she only said that a military expedition was soon to take place. She did not say where the army would be marching or even in any direction at all. All the roads leading to Mecca were blockaded in order to prevent any intelligence from reaching the Meccans.

Just while all the arrangements were being made for the campaign, the Prophet ordered his followers in Medina to be ready and to take utmost secrecy so that no hint of any kind should leak out to Mecca. In spite of all these precautions, the secret preparations almost succeeded in reaching the Meccans. Hatib ibn Balta'ah, one of the Muhajirun and a trusted companion of the Prophet, wrote his family in Mecca saying, "From Hatib ibn Balta'ah to the Meccans. Health! The Messenger of Allah is preparing to attack you while you are unaware of it. To arms!' The carrier of the letter was a woman named Sara.

The Prophet was informed of it by revelation, so he immediately dispatched Ali and al-Zubayr with other men on horseback to intercept the woman. The Muslims found her and carefully searched her, finding no letter with her. They almost gave up when Ali decided to make a last ditch effort, knowing that the Messenger of Allah could not have been mistaken.

Drawing his sword, Ali brandished it before her eyes as he demanded that she should either produce the letter or be killed. The woman trembled as she drew out a letter from the long tresses of her hair where she had hidden it. When the letter was brought to the Prophet, he ordered its writer to be brought to him. Hatib was brought before the Prophet to whom he pleaded for clemency, saying that he was a true believer, that he was concerned about his unprotected family in Mecca, and that he wrote the letter in order to save his family. The Prophet contemplated on Hatib's previous services of the creed, accepted his plea and pardoned him. The first nine verses of Surat al-Mumtahana (Chapter 60 of the Holy Qur'an) were revealed in reference to this incident; they were:

In the Name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful

O you who believe! Do not take My enemy and yours as friends: would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth, driving out the Messenger and yourselves because you believe in Allah, your Lord? If you go forth struggling hard in My path and seeking My pleasure, would you manifest love for them? And I know what you conceal and what you manifest, and whoever of you does this, he indeed has gone astray from the straight path. If they find you, they will be your enemies, and they will assault you with their hands and tongues in an evil manner, and they ardently desire that you will disbelieve. Your relationship would not benefit you, nor your children, on the Day of Resurrection; He will decide between you, and Allah sees what you do. Indeed, there is for you a good example in Abraham and those with him when they said to their people:

Surely we are clear of you and of what you worship besides Allah; we declare ourselves clear of you, and enmity and hatred have appeared between us and you forever until you believe in Allah alone, but not in what Ibrahim said to his father: I would certainly ask forgiveness for you, and I

do not control for you aught from Allah. Lord! On Thee do we rely, and to Thee do we turn, and to Thee is the eventual resort. Lord! Do not make us a trial for those who disbelieve, and forgive us, Lord! Surely You are the Mighty, the Wise. Certainly there is for you in them a good example for him who fears Allah and the Last Day, and whoever turns back, surely Allah is the Self-sufficient, the Praised One. It may be that Allah will bring about friendship between you and those whom you hold to be your enemies from among them, and Allah is Powerful, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

Allah does not forbid you regarding those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allah loves the doers of justice. Allah only forbids you regarding those who fought you on account of (your) religion and drove you out of your homes and supported (others) in your expulsion that you make friends with them, and whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust. (Qur'an, 60: 1-9)

Conquest of Mecca (630 A.D.)

One of the conditions of the Treaty of Hudaibiya was that Quraish would not fight against any ally of the Muslims, nor should the Muslims fight against any ally of Quraish. In simple language, the clause of 10-years' cease-fire included the allies as well as the principals.

During the month of Ramadan of 8 A.H./December 629/January 630 A.D., following the incident of Banu Khuza'ah being attacked by Banu Bakr and their allies, the Quraishites, as explained above, the Prophet sent an emissary to Quraish to persuade them to accept any of the following terms:

- (1) Reparations should be paid for those killed of Banu Khuza'ah, or**
- (2) Quraish should break their alliance with Banu Bakr, or**
- (3) The Hudaibiya treaty should be abrogated.**

Quraish accepted the last alternative. The time had come to free the citadel of Islam from idolatry and to end the reign of oppression in Mecca. The Prophet marched with ten thousand men on the 10th of the month of Ramadan, 8 A.H., corresponding to January 4, 630 A.D. and camped a short distance from Mecca. The Meccans sent a few scouts, including Abu Sufyan, Hakim ibn Hizam, a nephew of Khadija, and a chief from Khuza'ah named Budayl ibn Warqa' (who is mentioned earlier in this book), to assess the strength of the Muslim army. Abu Sufyan was seen by 'Abbas, uncle of the Prophet, who took him to the Prophet.

In honour of the recommendation made by his uncle, the Prophet offered protection to Abu Sufyan. Then the Prophet said, "Isn't it time for you to know the creed: *La ilaha illa-Allah?!'* Abu Sufyan replied, "Why not?" Then the Prophet further asked him, "And is it not the time for you to confirm that I am the Messenger of Allah?!" Abu Sufyan said, "I have still some doubt about it." At this response, 'Abbas

rebuked Abu Sufyan thus: "Fie upon you, fellow! Confirm his prophethood or you will be killed!" So Abu Sufyan recited both declarations of the creeds of confirmation, and with him Hakim ibn Hizam and Budayl ibn Warqa' also accepted the Islamic creed. Later conduct of Abu Sufyan proved that he had accepted Islam only by tongue, never by heart. The same can be said about his son Mu'awiyah and grandson Yazid. They were both Muslims only by name, and there are many Muslims like them.

Abu al-Fida' writes the following in his *Tarikh*: "Then the Prophet asked 'Abbas to take Abu Sufyan on a tour around the valley of Mazeeq and to show him the army of Islam. 'Abbas said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Abu Sufyan is a boaster! Perhaps you should give him a distinctive order of some sort so that he may have a chance to boast about it among Quraish.' The Prophet said, 'Well, then, whoever seeks refuge in Abu Sufyan's house shall be given protection. And also he who seeks refuge in the Sacred Mosque and in the house of Hakim ibn Hizam or shuts the door of his house shall be given protection'.

'Abbas further says, 'Then I took Abu Sufyan for a review of the Islamic army. At Abu Sufyan's request, I pointed out to the eminent people from every clan who were present in the Islamic regiments. In the meantime, the Prophet passed by his army which was clad in green uniforms. Abu Sufyan cried out, 'O 'Abbas! Verily your nephew has acquired quite a kingdom!' 'Abbas said to him, 'Woe unto thee! This is no kingship! It is prophethood!'

Asides from a slight resistance offered by 'Ikrimah and Safwan, Muhammad entered Mecca almost unopposed. It took place on a Friday, the 20th of the month of Ramadan, 8 A.H., corresponding to January 14, 630 A.D.

The city which had scoffed and jeered at Muhammad's prophetic mission, ruthlessly persecuted him and his disciples and ultimately driven his disciples away, had created all types of obstacles in the way of the propagation of the faith and had waged war after war on the Muslims, this same city now lay at his feet. At this moment of triumph, he could have done anything he wished with the city and its citizens, but he had not come to the world to cause misery or bloodshed but as a benefactor of mankind, to proclaim the message of God and to guide erring humanity to the righteous course: to the worship of the One and Only God.

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud says: "Entering Al-Masjid al-Haram, the Prophet started breaking and demolishing the idols. There were three hundred and sixty idols fixed in the walls and on the roof of the Ka'ba with lead or tin. Any idol near which the Prophet went and towards which he pointed his cane as he said: 'Right has come and falsehood has vanished; verily falsehood is destined to vanish' (Qur'an, 17:81) fell headlong on the ground without anyone touching it. Lastly, there remained Hubal, an idol of Banu Khuza'ah on the rooftop of the Ka'ba. It was a huge one made of polished brass. The Prophet ordered Ali to climb on his shoulders, which Ali did, throwing that last idol down which shattered into pieces on impact.'

Then he ordered Bilal, the Ethiopian, to climb on the rooftop of the Ka'ba to call the *athan*. The wordings

of the *athan*, coupled with the fact that it was called by a freed black slave, caused much heartache among the Quraishites. After clearing the Ka'ba, the first House of God, the sanctuary rebuilt by Abraham and Ishmael, of all the symbols of idolatry, he assembled Quraish and delivered the following sermon to them:

There is no god but Allah. He has no partners. He has fulfilled His promise and helped His slave and defeated all coalitions (allied) against him. All authority, revenge and blood reparations are under my feet. The guardianship of the Ka'ba and the arrangements for the supply of water to pilgrims are exempt. O! You Quraish! The arrogance of the heathen days and all pride of ancestry God has wiped out. All mankind descended from Adam, and Adam was made of clay.

He then recited the following verse of the Qur'an:

O people! Surely We have created you of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you who is most pious; surely Allah is Knowing, Aware. (Qur'an, 49:13)

Having dwelt upon the equality and brotherhood of mankind and preached the Unity and the Omnipotence of God, he inquired from Quraish: "Descendants of Quraish! How do you think I should act towards you?" "With kindness and pity, gracious brother and nephew," beseeched they. The Prophet magnanimously declared: "I shall speak to you as Joseph (Yousuf) spoke unto his brothers:

'There is no reproach against you today; God will forgive you. He is the most Merciful and the most Compassionate (Qur'an, 12:31).'"

Then he added: "Go; you are free!"

Mecca lay conquered but not a single house was plundered, nor any woman insulted. Cruelties, insults and oppression perpetrated during a long period of twenty-one years were now forgiven. The Muhajirun were asked even to forego their houses and properties which on their migration to Medina had been occupied by the Meccans. The Prophet did the same, living in a tent for few days before going back to Mecca. His house in Mecca was seized by a squatter. Through all the annals of history, there has never been a conquest like this.

The result of this magnanimity and compassion was that those very die-hards who had relentlessly opposed the Prophet and refused to listen to the Divine message converged around him in their multitudes and accepted Islam. The glad tidings given by God about the peace of Hudaibiyah came true and His injunction had been obeyed:

***In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful
When there comes assistance from Allah and victory, and when you see men entering the religion of Allah in groups, then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and implore His forgiveness; surely He is oft-returning (to mercy). (Qur'an, 110:1-3)***

Once the Meccans submitted to the faith, disciples were sent out to all neighbouring tribes to invite them, with peace and good will, to embrace Islam. Many tribes responded positively to the call. However, there was one tragic incident which must be mentioned. Khalid ibn al-Walid (who had accepted Islam a few months before the fall of Mecca) was sent to Banu Khuzaimah who had already accepted Islam. When they learned of Khalid's arrival, they came out cautiously armed. Khalid asked them who they were and in reply he was informed: "They are Muslims following the teaching of Muhammad; they pray in the recognized form of prayer, have built a mosque, recite the *athan* and the *iqamah* and gather together on Fridays for prayers.'

Khalid then asked them why they had come out to meet him armed. They said that they were on hostile terms with a fellow Arab clan and mistook Khalid's men for their enemies. But Khalid did not accept their explanation and asked them to surrender their arms. They at once surrendered. Khalid then ordered his companions to tie their hands behind their shoulders, then he placed them in the custody of his comrades. Early next morning, he ordered that the custodian of each of the prisoners should himself kill that prisoner. Thus, these innocent Muslims were all killed.

Another version of this incident says that when Banu Khuzaimah submitted their arms at Khalid's orders, he himself unsheathed his sword and killed one hundred men of that clan. Someone from Banu Khuzaimah informed the Prophet about this tyranny. The Prophet was angered and in dismay thrice repeated, "O Lord! I deplore Khalid's action!' In order to repair the damage thus caused by Khalid, the Prophet, who was very grieved at what had happened at the hands of Khalid, sent Ali on a mission to do damage control by distributing a sum of money which he gave him to compensate the families of those wrongfully killed. Ali paid each and every person who was affected by that massacre more than what he had demanded, as the Prophet had instructed him, thus pleasing everyone. When all the blood money was paid, and there was still some money left, he distributed the remnant to the poor there and then.

But the memory of that massacre lingered in people's minds. Arab tribes who had not yet accepted Islam, such as those of Banu Hawazin, Banu Thaqif, Banu Sa'd and many others had been for some time contemplating to oppose the growing power of Islam. This massacre now fueled their desire to take the offensive rather than wait to be attacked and massacred. Under the leadership of Malik bin 'Awf, Banu Thaqif and Banu Hawazin, together with other tribes, assembled four thousand fighting men at the Awtas valley between Mecca and Taif. These men would check any movement of the Muslim forces that wanted to march in their direction. They even brought with them their families and herds. Duraid, an elderly wise man, protested against that measure, but youthful Malik did not heed his words, thinking that in the presence of their families, these men would never turn their backs to their enemy but would risk their own life fighting like men till victory.

The news of this newly assembled army in the Awtas valley caused the Prophet to cut his stay in Mecca short and return to Medina on Shawwal 6, 8 A.H./January 30, 630 A.D. with his ten thousand followers in addition to two thousand more from Mecca who accepted Islam during those few days. When the sight

of 12,000 troops led by Ali paraded before the Prophet before leaving Medina, Abu Bakr was very impressed and said, "We shall not this day be harmed on account of our numbers!"

Battle of Hunain (630 A.D.)

On the 6th of Shawwal, 8 A.H./January 30, 630 A.D., a pitched battle was fought at Hunain, about ten miles from Mecca, between the Muslims and the men of Hawazin and Thaqif who had already taken up vantage positions. They almost took the Muslims by surprise, attacking them in the early hours of the morning, fighting in a spirit of desperation. The Muslims first lost ground and their defeat seemed imminent. The Prophet was riding his white mule Duldul (which had been given to him as a gift by the Coptic ruler of Egypt) as he was watching the progress of the battle from the rear of the army.

At that time, a cousin of the Prophet named Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith was holding the bridle of the Prophet's mule. The vanguard of the army was made up of the men of Banu Sulaim who were led by Khalid ibn al-Walid. They were leisurely advancing up the steep and narrow pass when suddenly Banu Hawazin attacked them, concentrating their ambush against Khalid's column. Khalid could not withstand the attack and his column staggered under the weight of the onslaught, breaking and falling back. One column after another reacted likewise. All turned to flight. Panic seized the entire army.

Those who proved to be firm in the battle of Hunain and who did not flee away included: 'Abbas, his oldest son Fazl, Ali ibn Abu Talib, Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith, his brother Rabi'ah, 'Aqil ibn Abu Talib, 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam, and Usamah ibn Zayd. Al-Halabi remarks in *Al-Sira al-Halabiyya* that only four persons remained with the Prophet, three of whom were Hashimites, i.e., Ali ibn Abu Talib, 'Abbas and Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith, and one non-Hashimite, i.e., 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud. Abu al-Fida' makes another point.

He says, "When the Muslims fled, the secret malice which the people of Mecca entertained against the Muslims was exposed. Abu Sufyan ibn Harb gleefully cried out, 'They will not stop until they reach the sea shore! Muhammad's magic spell is now broken!'" Shaybah ibn 'Uthman ibn Abu Talhah, whose father was killed at Uhud, vowed to slay Muhammad. Chaos and confusion among the ranks of the Muslims' army were increasing.

As the Prophet was witnessing his fighting men fleeing, he called out to them, "Where are you running off to?!" But nobody was paying him any attention. The Prophet then told his uncle 'Abbas to call the Muslims back. 'Abbas wondered as to how his voice would reach those fleeing. The Prophet said that Allah would cause his voice to reach them, no matter how far they might have gone. 'Abbas called them in these words as the Prophet had instructed him: "O Ansar! O people of the tree of Samrah! This is a reference to the tree under which the Bay'at al-Ridwan had taken place at Hudaibiyah two years earlier.

O people of Surat al-Baqarah!"

After the call of 'Abbas, at last the deserters returned and ultimately the Hawazin and Thaqif were

routed. About a hundred Muslims, all from the Ansar, succeeded in regaining the narrow pass and checking the advance of the enemy's army. The standard bearer of the Banu Hawazin tribe, namely 'Uthman (or Abu Jarwal), a man of extra-ordinary height, stoutly built, came forward and challenged the Muslims to single combat. Ali stepped forward and engaged him in a duel. In the meantime, the Muslim army gradually rallied around the Prophet, protecting him from the infidels. Ali succeeded in slaying his opponent and both parties closed in on each other; a fist fight broke out, and the conflict, by any standard, was horrifying. The Prophet cast a handful of gravel into the air towards the enemy saying, "May confusion seize their faces!" The reader may remember that the Messenger of Allah had done the same during the Battle of Badr. After a short while, the enemies wavered then fled away as the Muslims were in hot pursuit of them. It is to this battle that these verses of the Holy Qur'an refer:

Certainly Allah helped you in many battlefields and on the Day of Hunain, when your great numbers made you vain, but they availed you nothing and the earth became strait to you notwithstanding its spaciousness, then you turned back retreating. Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and sent down hosts (of angels) which you did not see and chastised those who disbelieved, and that is the reward of the unbelievers. Then will Allah after this turn (mercifully) to whomsoever He pleases, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (Qur'an, 9:25-27)

The men of Thaqif took refuge in the city of Taif but the families of the Hawazin, with all their flocks and herds, fell into the hands of the Muslims. Taif was besieged. Expecting this siege, the tribesmen of Hawazin and their allies had already undertaken defensive measures. The siege was prolonged for over twenty days without producing any result. On account of a dream he saw, the Prophet concluded that the military operations would not be successful and decided to lift the siege, but his army, upon receiving orders to withdraw, began to murmur in frustration.

The idea of retreating did not appeal to them. The Prophet, coming to know about their attitude, permitted them to make a general assault the next day. The assault was undertaken but was repulsed, and the Muslim army suffered losses. 'Abdullah, son of later caliph Abu Bakr, received a wound that day which eventually led to his martyrdom a few years later. May Allah reward 'Abdullah ibn Abu Bakr with the best of His rewards for his services to the cause of Islam. Has there been enough room in this already too big a book, the feats and merits of this great *sahabi* would have filled many pages. May Allah forgive our shortcomings, *Allahomma Ameen*. Abu Sufyan, the Meccan chief, lost one of his eyes to an arrow. At last, the Muslim army marched back to Je'rana where the booty was kept pending distribution.

The men of Hawazin approached the Prophet and beseeched him to restore their families to them. The Prophet answered them that he could not compel his army to forego all the fruits of victory and that if they wanted their families back, they would have to forego their worldly goods. To this, the Hawazin consented. On the next day, acting on the advice of the Prophet, they approached the Prophet and repeated their request. The Prophet replied, "My own share of the captives, and that of the children of

‘Abdul-Muttalib, I give back to you at once.’ The army followed suit, and six thousand captives were set free. The Hawazin were so overwhelmed by this generosity that many of them accepted Islam there and then.

The spoils of the war, which consisted of 24,000 camels, 40,000 goats, and a considerable quantity of silver, were distributed among the army. In making the distribution, the newly converted Muslims as well as many non-Muslims of Mecca (known in history as “Al-mu’allafatul qulubuhum” (those who were helped in order to win their hearts) were given disproportionately larger shares. Some Ansar considered this as an act of partiality, and their discontent was reported to the Prophet. It was also reported that the Ansar feared that now that Mecca was conquered, the Prophet would return to it and migrate from Medina. The Prophet delivered a lecture to them wherein he said to them:

“O Ansar! I have learned about your discourse. When I came to you, you were wandering in the dark, and the Lord gave you the right direction. You were suffering, and He made you happy. You were enemies of one another, and He filled your hearts with brotherly love and concord. Was it not so? Tell me.’

“Indeed, it is even as you say,’ was the reply: “to the Lord and to His Prophet belong the benevolence and the grace.’

“Nay, by the Lord,’ continued the Prophet, “but you might have answered, and answered truly, for I would have testified to its truth myself: ‘You came to us rejected as an impostor, and we believed in you; you came as a helpless fugitive and we assisted you; you were poor and outcast, and we gave you asylum, comfortless and we solaced you.’ O Ansar! Why do you disturb your hearts because of the things of this life? Are you not satisfied that others should return with the flocks and the camels, while you go back to your homes with me in your midst? By Him Who holds my life in His hands, I shall never abandon you. If all mankind went one way and the Ansar went another, surely I would join the Ansar. The Lord be favourable to them, and bless them, and their children, and their children’s children!’

At these words, say the chroniclers, they all wept till tears ran down their beards. They all cried with one voice, “Yes, O Prophet of Allah! We are well satisfied with our share’ (meaning the presence of the Prophet in Medina). They, thereupon, felt happy and contented and went back home. Muhammad soon thereafter returned to Medina.

Islam Spreads

The fall of Mecca was the signal for an unprecedented rush to accept Islam. ‘Amr ibn Salamah, a companion of the Prophet, has stated, “The Arabs were waiting for Quraish to accept Islam. They used to say: ‘Muhammad must be left to his people. If he emerges victorious over them, he is undoubtedly a true prophet.’ When Mecca was conquered, all the tribes hastened to accept Islam.

Zakat collectors were sent into the territories under the Muslims' control. These officials not only demonstrated great fairness in collecting the *zakat* and *jizya*, but also preached effectively to the people, for most of them were pious and God-fearing people. After the fall of Mecca, teachers were sent in all directions to bring people to God's way, and they met with so much success that hordes upon hordes flocked to the Prophet. It is about such mass conversions that the Qur'an has stated:

When there comes assistance from Allah and victory, and you see men entering the religion of Allah in groups.....(Qur'an, 110: 1-2)

After an order was issued prohibiting the polytheists from entering the Sacred Mosque of the Ka'ba, the entire Hijaz was Muslim.

By the 10th of Hijra/632 A.D., Islam's influence had reached Yemen, Bahrain, Yamama, Iraq, and Syria. The Chief of the Daws, a tribe in Yemen, had accepted Islam even before the migration. In 8 A.H./630 A.D., Khalid ibn al-Walid was sent to Yemen to preach Islam but did not have much success. Then Ali went there and read the epistle of the Prophet; the entire tribe of Hamdan accepted Islam. In 10 A.H./632 A.D., Wabr was deputed to contact the leaders of the Persians residing in Yemen.

Firoz al-Daylami, Markabood and Wahb ibn Munabbih accepted Islam through him. Ma'ath ibn Jabal and Abu Musa al-Ash'ari were also sent to Yemen with the following instructions: "Be polite, not harsh; give glad tidings to the people and condemn them not. Work together. When you meet people who already follow some (other) religion, preach to them about the Oneness of God and (my) Messengership; if they accept, tell them that God has enjoined prayers five times day and night. If they agree to do so, tell them that *zakat* is also obligatory upon those who can afford it in order to help the poor. If they give *zakat*, do not pick out only items of a better quality. Beware of the curse and the supplication of victims, for they reach straight to God.'

Their efforts met with considerable success. Meanwhile, Khalid was inviting people to the faith in Najran and the tribe of 'Abdul-Madan came forward to accept it.

In 8 A.H./630 A.D., Munqir ibn Haban of the tribe of 'Abdul-Qais of Bahrain visited Medina and accepted Islam. Through his efforts and those of his father, their tribe entered the Islamic fold and sent a deputation of fourteen persons to the Prophet. In the same year, 'Ala al-Hadrami was sent to Bahrain to preach to the people. He succeeded in converting its governor, Munthir ibn Sawa, and the public followed suit.

Similarly, Abu Zayd al-Ansari and 'Amr ibn al-'as were sent to 'Oman in the same year (8 A.H./630 A.D.) with letters from the Prophet to its chieftains 'Obayd and Jaifar as stated above. When the chieftains accepted Islam, the whole tribe of Azd responded favourably to the invitation.

By 9 A.H./631 A.D., Islam was gaining a number of adherents in Syria. Its governor, Farwah, became a Muslim. When the Roman emperor learned about it, Farwah was guillotined. He died with a couplet on

his lips saying: "Convey my message to the Muslim leaders that I sacrifice my body and honour in the way of God." In the same year, intoxicants were prohibited. Islam was preparing the believers for this prohibition for the past 5 years: It was in 4 A.H./625 – 626 A.D. that the verse "They ask you, (O Muhammad!), about wine and games of chance. Say: In both there is great sin and benefit to men, but their sin is greater than their benefit" (Qur'an, 2:219) was revealed.

As Islam started spreading to the farthest corners of Arabia, a large number of deputations from different tribes began pouring into Medina. Ibn Ishaq has given details of fifteen of them. Ibn Sa'd describes seventy deputations, and the same number is mentioned by al-Dimyati, al-Mughaltai and Zainuddin al-Iraqi. *Hafiz* Ibn Qaiyyim al-Jawzi and al-Qastalani have critically verified the accounts of these deputations and have themselves given details of thirty-four others.

It was thus, and thus alone, that Islam gradually spread. During a short period of time, it blazed in radiant splendor over the continents.

Tabuk Expedition (630 A.D.)

In Rajab of the 9th Hijri year, corresponding to November of 630 A.D., Ali was appointed by the Prophet as Governor of Medina. The Nabateans³⁷ who came from Syria to the markets of Medina spread the rumour that the indecisive battle at Mu'ta had stirred a considerable chagrin to the Roman emperor Heraclius. Elated by his victories over the Persians and apprehensive of the growing power of the Muslims, he directed his feudatories to collect a huge force to invade Arabia.

The tribes of Lakhm, Hutham, 'Amila and Ghassan gathered to help the Roman army. When news of this preparation reached Medina through a trade caravan, it caused a great deal of anxiety among the Muslims. How alarmed they were can be judged from one incident: A neighbour of 'Omar knocked at his door in the night. When 'Omar came out and inquired what the matter was, the visitor said a calamity had befallen. 'Omar asked whether the Ghassanids had come. The visitor was perturbed over another matter but the attack of the Ghassanids was considered so imminent that 'Omar's first thought went to it. In order to meet this danger, the Prophet hastily collected a force of 30,000 volunteers with 10,000 horses among them. It also included a number of the *munafiqun*, hypocrites, led by their man 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy.

In spite of the severe famine that had overtaken Najd and Hijaz and the intense heat of the weather, the Prophet's followers rallied behind him. Those who were in a position to do so generously donated large sums of money to meet the expenses of the expedition and to buy weapons and armour to those who could not afford to buy them. This was the first occasion when an appeal for public donations was made, and many Muslims responded generously.

An old and very poor woman brought a small quantity of dates as her contribution. Some hypocrites ridiculed her, but the Prophet said that her contribution was more precious in the sight of Allah than that of many people who had contributed only to show off.

The Prophet left Ali as his deputy in and governor of Medina as stated above. Ali exclaimed with dismay, "Are you leaving me behind, O Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet said, "Ali! Are you not satisfied that you have the same position in relation to me as aron had with Moses, except that there is no prophet after me?" The Prophet thereby meant that as Moses had left aron behind to look after his people when he went to receive the Commandments, he was likewise leaving Ali behind as his deputy to look after the affairs of the Muslims during his absence.

The Prophet marched at the head of this force to Tabuk, a place situated midway between Medina and Damascus. There, they came to know, to their relief, that the news of the Ghassanids' attack was incorrect. 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy and his men camped separately in the rear of the army, and when they had a chance, they left for Medina where this man claimed that the Prophet had placed him in charge of Medina. Ali did not believe it, so he had to ask the Prophet about it. The Prophet's answer came loud and clear: "These men are liars. They are the party of hypocrites who would not hesitate to foster sedition in Medina. I left you there to keep an eye on them and to protect our families (from their mischief)." This is recorded by al-Tabari, Abul al-Fida' and Ibn Athir.

Having stayed for twenty-four days at Tabuk, the Muslim army returned to Medina.

The Prophet had marched to Tabuk in order to forestall the Ghassanids and the Byzantines, but a certain Western historian has surmised that the aim of this expedition was expansion, *viz.* to capture the trade routes leading to the more prosperous cities of Syria. Had this been so, there was no sense in returning to Medina without even attempting to fulfill that objective after having taken all the trouble and the expenditure to raise an expedition of that size during the most inconvenient time of the year. But these detractors have their own mission to fulfill.

On his trip back to Medina, and when he was about an hour from reaching his destination, the Prophet received a delegation from some men of Quba who had built a mosque and who wished he would bless it by praying there. Those same men had made a similar request to the Prophet who asked them to postpone it till he had dealt with the immediate danger in Syria. But instead of going to their mosque to pray, the Prophet ordered it to be demolished. Here is why:

It was the Banu 'Amr who had the lion's share in the construction of the Quba Mosque, the first ever built in the Islamic history. There was a Christian living in their town known as Abu 'Amir belonging to Banu Ghunm ibn 'Awf who was well versed in the Scriptures and who knew that a Prophet was about to rise. Instead of recognizing Muhammad as the promised Prophet, he denied him and even became jealous of his increasing influence and power in Medina and jealous of those who had established the Quba Mosque. He, therefore, fled to Mecca after the Prophet's victory at Badr where he joined Meccan pagans against the Prophet and participated in the Battle of Uhud on their side.

When the Meccans retreated, he fled towards north-western Arabia which was under the Roman control. Some men from Quba, his likes, who were said to number no more than fifteen, contacted him and

invited him to return to his home town. Once Abu 'Amir was back there, he suggested that they should build a mosque that would rival the Quba mosque, the first built in Islam, so that they would meet and hatch plots against Muhammad and his followers. Among those who invited him, some hypocrites who professed to follow Islam, included Tha'labah ibn Hatib, Mu'attib ibn Qushayr, and Nabtal ibn al-Harith. They were the ones who built the new mosque. This is why they invited the Prophet to bless their mosque: they wanted him to legitimize what they were trying to do.

Abu 'Amir once said to his followers, "Get ready. Build a mosque. I will be going to meet the Kaiser and bring an army from him so that we would kick Muhammad out of Medina³⁸."

Muhammad received their deputation for the second time led by 'Asim ibn Awf al-'Ajlani and Malik ibn al-Dukhsham of Banu 'Amr ibn 'Awf. As soon as he received them, the Prophet also received the following verses with reference to their mosque built for ulterior motives:

And there are those who have built a mosque for a mischievous purpose, and for (propagating) infidelity and to cause division among the faithful, and to ambush whoever fought in the cause of Allah and His Messenger. Yet they swear that they intend nothing but good, but Allah bears witness that they are surely liars. (Qur'an, 9:107)

This is why the Prophet ordered their "Zirar Mosque" to be demolished to the ground. Its roof and columns were built with palm leaves and trunks, so it was first burnt then demolished.

Year of Deputations (630 A.D.)

During the ninth year of the Hijra, a large number of deputations from far-flung pagan Muslim tribes came to the Prophet to accept Islam. Among them were Banu Thaqif and Banu Hawazin of Taif who were urged by Malik ibn Awf that it was time now to enter the Islamic fold. These were the same people who had once driven the Prophet out of their city and whose siege after the battle of Hunain had been lifted by the Muslims. They had been impressed by the record of those who were accepting the Islamic creed, by the exemplary conduct of Malik and the other Muslims of his tribe, and the news of Muhammad being a true prophet was fast spreading among them.

In order to preach the doctrines of Islam, teachers were sent to different provinces. They were directed by the Prophet to "deal gently with the people, and not to be harsh. Give them glad tidings and do not condemn them. And you will meet with many People of the Book who will question you: 'What is the key to heaven?' Tell them that it is to testify to the Unity of God, and to do good deeds."

The tribe of Tay was, however, was creating some problems for the Muslims. Ali was marched with a small force to discipline them. The chief of the tribe, 'Adi son of Hatim, fled but his sister and some of his principal clansmen fell into Ali's hands. Having had regard for the great benevolence and generosity of her father, Hatim, the Prophet set the daughter free, along with all the captives, giving them many gifts.

They were so touched by this generous treatment that the entire tribe, including its chief 'Adi, accepted Islam.

Pagans Forbidden From Entering Ka'ba Vicinity (630 A.D.)

Towards the end of the year, an order was issued prohibiting non-believers from entering the Ka'ba or performing idolatrous rites and degrading ceremonies of their cults within its sacred precincts.

It is recorded that first Abu Bakr was sent with Chapter Al-Bara'ah to proclaim it before the Pagans. But Gabriel said to the Prophet, "Except for the person who is from your own family, nobody can ably preach it.' So he called Ali and charged him with the duty of preaching the relevant *ayats* of Al-Bara'ah. Abu Bakr, therefore, returned to the Prophet and asked him, "O Messenger of Allah! Did you receive any decree from Allah against me?' The Prophet replied by saying, "No, but the Lord ordered that either I or someone from my own house should preach it.'

'Abdullah ibn Ubayy, head of the hypocrites, died in the month of Thul-Qi'da of the same year.

In the next month, Thul-Hijjah, the time of the pilgrimage, the following proclamation was read out by Ali: "No idolater shall after this year perform the pilgrimage; no one shall circle (the Ka'ba) naked. Whoever has a treaty with the Prophet, it shall continue to be binding till its termination. As for all others, four months are allowed to everyone to return to his territory. Thereafter, there will be no obligation on the Prophet except towards those with whom treaties have been concluded.'

Mubahala (630 A.D.)

There is no room here to trace how Christianity was disseminated in Nejran; suffices to say that the Ethiopian invasion of southern Arabia introduced Christianity there for the first time. The incident of Abraha and his elephant demonstrates the fact that they were quite fanatical in their religious fervor. In 630 A.D., Prophet Muhammad sent a letter to Nejran's bishop the contents of which are narrated by the grandson of its recipient, namely Salamah ibn Abd Yashu', as follows:

In the Name of Allah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to the Bishop of Nejran and to the people of Nejran: If you accept Islam, I shall praise on your behalf the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I invite you to worship Allah rather than to worship the servants of Allah, and I invite you to accept the authority of Allah rather than the authority of His servants. But if you refuse, you will have to pay the *jizya*. And if you refuse to pay the *jizya*, then I warn you of war.

*Wassalam.*³⁹

Having read this letter, the bishop was terrified. He called a man of Nejran named Shurhabil ibn Wada'ah to his presence, passed the Prophet's letter to him to read, then asked him what he had to suggest. Shurhabil said, "Do you know of the promise which Allah had made to Abraham with regard to the offspring of Ishmael, that they will have a prophet rising from among them, so could this man be he?"

I cannot pass a judgment about Prophethood, but if you ask me about anything relevant to life's matters, I can make suggestions to you.' The bishop then solicited the suggestion of one man from Nejran after another, and the answer was the same. Finally, they decided collectively to send Shurhabil ibn Wada'ah, Abdullah ibn Shrhabil, and Jabbar ibn Fayz to meet the Prophet and to report to them their impressions of him. These are the same men known as the 'Aqib, Sayyid, and al-Ahtam, namely Abul-Harith, respectively.

They were considered to be leaders in all affairs, and they were joined by eleven more, making their total number fourteen. When the deputations reached Medina, they dressed themselves in silk garments, put on gold rings then went to the mosque. All of them greeted the Prophet traditionally, but the Prophet did not respond, turning his face away from them.

They left the mosque and approached 'Uthman and 'Abdul-Rahman ibn 'Awf complaining thus: "Your Prophet wrote us inviting us here, but when we came to him and greeted him, he neither reciprocated our greeting nor said a word to us. Now what do you advise us to do? Should we go back or wait here?" 'Uthman and 'Abdul-Rahman ibn 'Awf sought Ali's advice. Ali said, "These people should first remove the silk clothes and gold rings. Then they should go and see the Prophet.'

When they did as they were advised, the Prophet responded to their greetings and said, "By the Lord Who has appointed me as His own Messenger, when they first came to me, they were accompanied by Satan.' Thereafter, the Prophet preached to them and invited them to accept Islam. They asked him: "What is your opinion about Jesus?' The Prophet said, "You may rest today in this city and, after being refreshed, you will receive the reply to all your questions from me.'

On the next day, the Prophet recited to them these Qur'anic verses:

Surely the likeness of 'Isa (Jesus) is with Allah as the likeness of Adam: He created him from dust then said to him, 'Be', and he was. The truth is from your Lord, so you should not be of those who doubt (it). (Qur'an, 3:59-60)

They did not accept the words of the Lord and insisted on their own belief. Then the following verse was revealed:

But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of the knowledge, say: Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, and your women and our women, and ourselves and yourselves, then let us pray earnestly and bring about the curse of Allah on the liars. (Qur'an, 3:61)

They sought a day's respite and privately solicited 'Aqab's advice. He said, "By God! You know that Muhammad is the Messenger of the Lord and that he has given a clear and appreciable verdict. Do not enter into a maledictory trial with him or else you should be destroyed. If you wish to remain adhering to your religion, accept to pay the *jizya* and make a pact.' On the next day, therefore, they came out on one

side and on the other the Prophet came out of his house carrying Husain in his arms as Hasan was walking by his side holding his finger. Behind him was Fatima and behind her Ali. Praised be to Allah! What a time it was! What an atmosphere! How good a witness and how glorious the witnessed!

In short, the Prophet confronted the Christian delegates and said to Hasan, Husain, Fatima and Ali: “When I curse them, you say ‘Amen’ together.’ When the Christians saw the five holy Purified ones, they were awe-stricken. Abul-Harith, who was their wisest, said, “My people! At this moment, we are looking at such personalities that if they pray to God, they can move mountains. Abstain from this maledictory conflict (*Mubahilah*) or else you should be destroyed and no Christian will remain on the face of the earth.’

They pleaded to the Prophet thus: “O Abul-Qasim! We shall not have a malediction with you.’ The Prophet invited them to accept Islam. They declined again and said that they were prepared for a treaty that they would present every year two thousand pieces of garments costing 40 dirhams each. According to another tradition, it is said that they also agreed to give 30 horses, 30 camels, 30 coats of mail and 30 spears every year. Thus, a settlement was made.

When the Christians of Najran declined from resorting to a maledictory conflict against the Prophet, he said, “By the Lord Who has appointed me His Messenger in truth, had they chosen the malediction, there would have been a shower of fire upon them in this very field.’ Jabir says, “The verse (Chap. 3, verse 61) was revealed in reference to this contest. In this verse, the word “selves’ refers to the Prophet and Ali; the word “sons’ refers to Hasan and Husain, and the word “women’ refers to Fatima.’

In Tabari's *Tarikh*, it is stated that during the 10th year of Hijra, the Prophet sent Ali to Yemen. Prior to that, he had sent Khalid ibn al-Walid in order to call the people of Yemen to Islam, but nobody accepted Islam. Then the Prophet sent Ali and authorized him that he might, if he so desired, dismiss Khalid or anyone else from his party. So, Ali went to Yemen and read the Prophet's statement to the people there. As a result, in one day, all members of the clan of Hamadan were converted to Islam. Ali informed the Prophet of this success whereupon the Prophet said, “Peace be upon the Hamdani^{ites}!’ Thereafter, all Yemenites entered into the folds of Islam. Ali again informed the Prophet of the progress which he had made. The Prophet was so elated, he offered a *sajda* (prostration) to thank Allah.

During this year, the Prophet deputed Ali to go to receive the *jizya* from the Najranites. Ali obeyed the orders and joined the Prophet only during the Farewell Pilgrimage. It was on the 25th of Thul-Qi'dah/February 25, 632 A.D. that the Prophet left Medina for *hajj*.

The Farewell Pilgrimage (631 A.D.)

In this year (10 A.H./632 A.D.), the Prophet performed his last pilgrimage. During his journey back, he stopped at Ghadir Khum.

Al-Nasa'i in *Kitabul Khasa'is* narrates a tradition from Zayd ibn al-Arqam on the authority of Abu al-Tufail which runs thus: "Returning from the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet camped at Ghadir Khum. He ordered a pulpit to be made for him. Once the pulpit had been constructed, he graced it and said, "I have been called back by the Lord, and I have submitted to His orders. Now I leave among you two valuable things, one of them is the Qur'an and the other is my progeny. These shall not separate from each other till they meet me together at the Pool of Kawthar in Heaven; therefore, be careful and guard yourselves in your dealings with the Qur'an and with my progeny after me.'

Then the Prophet added, "Hearken! Allah is my Master, and I am the master of the believers.' Then he raised Ali's hand and said, "Ali is the Master of whoever accepts me as his master. O Lord! Befriend whoever befriends Ali and alienate Yourself from whoever alienates Ali!' Abu al-Tufail says, "When I heard this tradition, I inquired from Zayd ibn al-Arqam: 'Did you hear the Prophet saying these words?' Zayd ibn al-Arqam said, 'Not only did I but all those who surrounded the pulpit (did so). They had seen with their own eyes that the Prophet was speaking those words, and they heard them with their own ears.'

According to another tradition quoted by al-Nasa'i, the Prophet stood up and, having praised the Lord and en'Omara His bounties, he asked the gathering, "My people! Do you not know that I have more authority over you than you yourselves have?' All of them replied, "Yes, we bear witness to the fact that you have more authority over us than we have ourselves.' Then the Prophet held Ali by the hand and said, "Ali is the Master of anyone whose master I am.' This incident took place on the 18th of Thul-Hijjah, 10 A.H./March 19, 632 A.D.

Skeptics who have any doubt about this momentous event in the Islamic history are advised to review the *Al-Ghadir* 11-volume encyclopedia compiled by Hasan al-Amin which is dedicated in its entirety to documenting all the details of this incident. It contains the names of a large number of eye witnesses from among the *sahaba* who had witnessed the event and what happened to those who did not honour their pledge, which they swore in the presence of the Prophet, to accept Ali as the successor to the Prophet. It also contains thousands of poetry lines composed on the occasion, including a poem composed there and then by the Prophet's poet Hassan ibn Thabit. Needless to say, the text of this encyclopedia is in Arabic. Only Shi'a Muslims now celebrate Eid al-Ghadir every year in memory of that incident... They have been doing so since 12 A.H./633 A.H.

Prophet's Illness, Usamah's Expedition (632 A.D.)

In the *Tarikh* book of Abu al-Fida', it is stated that "After his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet resided in Medina till the close of the 10th year of Hijra. In Muharram of 11 A.H./April 632 A.D., the Prophet fell ill. Then he called all his wives at the residence of Maimuna, Mother of the Faithful, where he was staying at that time, requesting them to permit him to remain at the residence of any one particular wife from among them. All of them allowed him to stay during the period of his illness at

‘Ayisha’s.’

Ibn al-Wardi writes in his history work that during his illness, the Prophet commissioned an army to be led by Usamah son of the late Zayd ibn Harithah to march to Mu'ta in order to avenge the death of his father. The Prophet insisted upon its immediate departure.

On the next day, in spite of his serious condition, the Prophet personally prepared a flag and handed it over to Usamah saying, “Go in the Name of Allah and fight the infidels in His Name.’ Usamah went out and handed over the standard to Buraidah ibn al-Khusaib whom he appointed as the army's standard-bearer. Having left Medina, he stopped at a village named Jarf which is close to Medina and the army gathered there. The Prophet had also ordered that barring Ali, all other principal Immigrants and Helpers, including Abu Bakr, ‘Omar, ‘Uthman, Sa’d ibn Abu Waqqas, Abu ‘Obaydah ibn al-Jarrah and others, should accompany Usamah. Some companions felt insulted at the Prophet’s appointing a son of a freed slave to lead the senior Immigrants and Helpers, so they started grumbling and criticizing. When the news reached the Prophet, he felt dismayed. Despite his pain of fever and headache, he angrily came out of his residence, mounted the pulpit and declared:

O people! What is this you are saying on Usamah’s appointment as the commander of the army? You talked in a similar manner when Usamah’s father was commissioned to lead the army in the battle of Mu'ta. By Allah, Usamah deserves to be a commander and his father also deserved the leadership of the army.

Al-Shahristani, in his book *Kitabul Milal wan Nihal*, and Nawwab Siddiq Hasan Khan in his book *Hujajul Karamah*, state that the Prophet ordered his companions thus: “Make haste in joining Usamah's legion. May Allah curse whoever lags behind Usamah's army.’

In *Madarijun-Nubuwwah*, the following is stated: “Then, in accordance with the orders of the Prophet, Usamah went to the camp and ordered the army to march. When he was about to mount his steed, his mother informed him that the Prophet was in the agony of death. Receiving this news, Usamah and other companions went back. Abu Bakr and ‘Omar were still in Medina; they did not join the army...’

Death and Burial (632 A.D)

In Muslim's *Sahih*, there is a famous tradition narrated by Ibn ‘Abbas in which the latter says, Three days before the Prophet's death, ‘Omar ibn al-Khattab and other companions were present by his side. The Prophet said, “Now let me write something for you whereby you shall not go astray after me.’ ‘Omar said, “The Prophet is overcome by illness; you have the Qur’an, the Book of Allah, which is sufficient for us.’ ‘Omar’s statement caused a furor among those present. Some were saying that the Prophet’s command should be obeyed so that he might write whatever he desired to write for their guidance. Others sided with ‘Omar. When the tension and uproar intensified, the Prophet said, “Get away from me!’ Therefore, Ibn ‘Abbas used to say, “It was a calamity, an absolutely great calamity, that

the conflict of opinion and noise made by the people came in the way of the Prophet's writing a will and, because of it, the Prophet could not leave behind what he wanted to put on paper.'

Sa'eed ibn Jubayr's narrative is thus recorded in Bukhari's *Sahih*:

Ibn 'Abbas said, "What a miserable day it was that Thursday!," and he wept so bitterly that the pebbles lying there became wet with his tears. Then he continued, "On a Thursday, the Prophet's sickness intensified. He said, 'Get me the things to write with so that I may write something by which you may never be misguided after me.' People differed and quarreled over the matter, although quarreling in the presence of the Prophet was unseemly. People said that the Prophet was talking in delirium. The Prophet cried out, 'Go away from me! I am more sound than you are.'"

It is stated in *Rawdatul-ahbab* that the Prophet said to Fatima, "Bring your sons to me." Fatima brought Hasan and Husain to the Prophet. Both of them greeted the Prophet, sat by his side and wept at witnessing the agony of the Prophet in such a manner that the people who saw them weeping could not hold their tears. Hasan rested his face upon the Prophet's face and Husain rested his head upon the Prophet's chest. The Prophet opened his eyes and kissed his grandsons lovingly, enjoining the people to love and respect them.' In another tradition, it is stated that the companions who were present there, having seen Hasan and Husain weep, wept so loudly that the Prophet himself could not hold his tears at their grief. Then he said, "Call my beloved brother Ali to me.'

Ali came in and sat near the head of the Prophet. When the Prophet raised his head, Ali moved to the side and, holding the Prophet's head, he rested it on his own lap. The Prophet then said, "O Ali! I have taken a certain amount from so-and-so Jew for the expenditure on Usamah's army. See that you repay it. And, O Ali! You will be the first person to reach me at the heavenly reservoir of al-Kawthar. You will also be given a lot of trouble after my death. You should bear it patiently, and when you see that the people prefer the lust of this world, you should prefer the hereafter.'

The following is quoted in *Khasa'is* of Nasa'i from Umm Salamah: "By Allah, the closest person [to the Prophet] at the time of the Prophet's death was Ali. Early on the morning of the day when he was going to die, the Prophet called Ali who had been sent out on an errand. He asked for Ali three times before his return. Ali, however, came before sunrise. So, thinking that the Prophet needed some privacy with Ali, we came out. I was the last to be out; therefore, I sat closer to the door than the other women. I saw that Ali lowered his head towards the Prophet and the Prophet kept whispering into his ears (for sometime). Ali, therefore, is the only person who was near the Prophet till the last.'

Al-Hakim, moreover, remarks in his *Mustadrak* that the Prophet kept confiding in Ali till the time of his death. Then he breathed his last.'

Ibn al-Wardi points out that the persons who were responsible for giving the Prophet his funeral bath were: Ali, 'Abbas, Fadl, Qutham, Usamah and Shaqran. 'Abbas, Fadl and Qutham turned the body. Usamah and Shaqran poured water, and Ali washed the body.

Tarikh al-Khamis adds the following: “‘Abbas, Fadl and Qutham turned the body from one side to the other as Usamah and Shaqran poured water over it. All of them were blind-folded.’

Ibn Sa’d narrates the following in his *Tabaqat*: “‘Ali narrated that the Prophet had so enjoined that if anyone except himself (‘Ali) had given him the funeral bath, he would have gone blind.’

‘Abdul-Barr, in his book *Al-Isti’ab*, quotes ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas as saying, “‘Ali had four exceptional honours to his credit which none of us had: 1) Of all the Arabs and non-Arabs, he was the first to have the distinction of saying prayers with the Prophet. 2) In all the battles in which he participated, he alone held the Prophet's banner in his hand. 3) When people fled from the battle-fields (at Uhud), leaving the Prophet alone, ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib stood firmly by the Prophet's side. 4) ‘Ali is the only person who gave the Prophet his funeral bath and lowered him in his grave.’

Both Abu al-Fida’ and Ibn al-Wardi indicate that the Prophet died on Monday and was buried the next day, i.e. Tuesday. And in one tradition, it is said that he was buried in the night between Tuesday and Wednesday. This appears to be more factual. But according to some others, he was not buried for three days after his death.

In *Tarikh-al-Khamis*, however, it is mentioned that Muhammad ibn Ishaq stated the following: “The Prophet died on Monday and was buried on the night of Wednesday.’

Estimating his age, Abu al-Fida’ writes: “Although there is a difference of opinion about the Prophet's age, yet calculated from famous traditions, he appears to have lived for 63 years.’

The Prophet departed from this world on the 28th of Safar, 11 A.H./May 28, 632 A.D.

Thus ended the life of the Final Prophet sent “***As a witness and a bringer of glad tidings, a warner and a summoner to Allah by His permission, and a lamp that gives light***’ (*Qur’an, 33:45-46*), the one who was sent “***As a mercy and blessing to mankind***’ (*Qur’an, 21:10*).

He left the temporal world, but the message he brought to mankind is eternal.

Now has come to you light from Allah and a clear book whereby Allah guides him who seeks His pleasure to the paths of peace. He brings them out of the darkness into the light by His decree and guides them to a straight path.. (*Qur’an, 5:16*)

A Book which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad!) so that you may thereby bring forth mankind from darkness to the light, by the permission of their Lord, to the path of Him, the One Exalted in power, the One worthy of all praise. (*Qur’an, 14:2*)

O people! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord which is a healing for what is in the breasts, and a guidance and mercy for the believers. (*Qur’an, 10:57*)

Accept what the Messenger gives you and stay away from whatever he forbids you. (Qur'an, 59:7)

Surely Allah says the truth.

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1. It is an Arab measure of weight equaling, according to Richardson, a dram (one-eighth of an ounce) and three-seventh of a dram.
 2. Remember that Prophet Muhammed's uncles numbered eleven; so, he had quite a few cousins.
 3. Al-Miqdad ibn `Amr is very well known in history as al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad al-Kindi (of Banu Kindah). His date of birth is unknown, but he died in 33 A.H./653 A.D. He was one of the earliest converts to Islam who received a great deal of persecution and torture at the hands of pagan Meccans. He is so famous that writers use only his first name when they write about him. He participated in the battles of Badr, Uhud, al-Khandaq (moat), and in all expeditions. He is one of those who boycotted the "election" of Abu Bakr as the successor to the Prophet, knowing, having been there, that Ali had already been appointed by the Prophet for the job.
 4. He is one of the greatest figures in early Islamic history, one of the pillars upon which Islam was erected although he was in the company of the Propher for a short period of time (only 5 years). An entire volume can be written about his merits. His full name is Abu `Amr Sa`d ibn Mu`ath ibn Imri'ul-Qays (the famous poet) ibn Zayd ibn `Abdul-Ashhal ibn Jasham ibn al-Harith ibn al-Khazraj ibn al-Thubayt. The full name of his last ancestor (al-Thubayt) is: `Amr ibn Malik ibn al-Aws al-Ansari al-Awsi al-Ashhal. His mother's name was Kabsha daughter of Rafi'.. She was one of the companions of the Prophet. The date of his birth is unknown, but he died in 5 A.H./626 A.D. He is one of the dignitaries of Medina who participated in the Battle of Badr, and he is famous for his love for the Prophet's Progeny (Ahl al-Bayt), so much so that even Imam Hasan al-`Askari praises him. He accepted Islam at the hands of the great sahabi Mus`ab ibn `Omayr after the first Pledge of Aqaba, that is, in 622 A.D. The Prophet loved him so much that he cursed his murderer, Haban ibn al-`Arqa (al-Arqa being the name of his mother; his father's name is unknown), who shot him with an arrow during the Battle of the Khandaq. He died one month after being shot under the weight of his wound. He is the one who arbitrated the Muslims' conflict with Banu Qurayzah, the Jews of Medina. The Prophet once said about him after his death, Each mourner lies save one that mourns Sa`d ibn Mu`ath. This is recorded in Al-Isiti`ab where we are told that the Prophet ordered a tent erected for Sa`d inside the Medina mosque after his receiving the injury from the arrow so that he would visit him every day. Surely Sa`d deserves more space in this book, but we pray the Almighty to forgive us for our shortcomings and to reward Sa`d on our behalf with the best of His rewards, Allahomma Ameen.
 5. The Muslims of today, with rare exceptions, are helpless and spineless because they abandoned their creed and became the friends, servants, stooges and allies of the Western enemies of Islam. This is why they cannot face force with force. This is why when our Muslim sisters in Bosnia were raped and their children and men massacred, the reaction of the Muslim world was almost totally muted; Muslims are toothless; they are Muslims only in name. It is only when Muslims are able to meet force with force that they will earn the respect of the world community. There is no room for weaklings except in the cemetery. Might is still right; it has always been so, and it will always remain so...
 6. According to a number of references, including the history books by al-Maqrizi, al-Ya`qubi and Ibn Hisham, the Prophet sent `Amr ibn al-`as al-Sahmi as his ambassador carrying his letters to invite two brothers then ruling Oman: Jayfer and `Iyath sons of al-Jalandi al-Azdi to accept Islam.
 7. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 20, p. 148.
 8. Ibid., Vol. 20, p. 152.
 9. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 15, p. 206.
 10. Shaikh Abu Ja`fer Muhammed ibn Ali ibn al-Husain ibn Babawayh al-Qummi al-Saduq, Al-amali (or Al-Majalis), pp. 323-324.
 11. He was the late Sassanian king of Persia under whom the empire achieved its greatest expansion. He ascended the throne in 590 A.D. following the assassination of his father Hormizd IV and remained the emperor till his death in 628 A.D. His wife was an Armenian Christian named Shirin. He received Prophet Muhammed's letter shortly before his death.

12. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 20, p. 384.
13. Sayf ibn Thee Yazun (or Thee Yazin) (d. 574 A.D.) was one of Himyar's kings who kicked the Ethiopians out of Yemen assisted by the just Sasanian Persian emperor Kisra Anushirwan, better known as Khosrow I (d. 579 A.D.). Sayf is praised in a poem by Umayyah ibn Abu al-Salt.
14. Sayf ibn Thee Yazun (or Thee Yazin) (d. 574 A.D.) was one of Himyar's kings who kicked the Ethiopians out of Yemen assisted by the just Sasanian Persian emperor Kisra Anushirwan, better known as Khosrow I (d. 579 A.D.). Sayf is praised in a poem by Umayyah ibn Abu al-Salt.
15. Sheroe is also known in Persian history as Qobad II. He was Khosrow's eldest son. He assassinated his father in Khurasan.
16. A mound is a measure of weight varying from a few pounds to 84 pounds according to the custom of the area.
17. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 17, pp. 318-319.
18. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 17, pp. 319-320.
19. According to Al-Munjid fil lugha wal a`lam, however, Abu Hurayra's name is recorded as `Abd al-Rahman ibn Sakhr al-Azdi, and that he died in 59 A.H./678 A.D. The same reference indicates that this man spent a long time in the company of the Prophet, which is not true at all; he accompanied the Prophet from time to time for only 3 years. The Publisher of this Munjid, namely Dar al-Mashriq of Beirut, Lebanon, is sponsored by the Catholic Press of Beirut. Undoubtedly, the information about Abu Hurayra in this Arabic-Arabic dictionary must have been furnished by some Sunnis who try their best to elevate the status of Abu Hurayra even at the risk of sacrificing historical facts and data.
20. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 4, p. 175, where the author quotes Abu Hurayra talking about himself in a chapter dealing with the characteristics of Prophethood.
21. This paragraph and the ones that follow are excerpted from my translation of Dr. Muhammed al-Tijani al-Samawi's book Shi`as are the Ahl al-Sunnah (New York: Vantage Press, 1996), pp. 207-215.
22. Refer to the book titled Abu Hurayra by the Egyptian author Mahmoud Abu Rayyah.
23. Ibn Abul-Hadeed, Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 4, p. 28.
24. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 2, p. 232, in a chapter dealing with a fasting person who wakes up finding himself in the state of janaba. Malik, Mawta', Vol. 1, p. 272.
25. This is stated in al-Thahbi's book Siyar A`lam al-Nubala.
26. Ibn Abul-Hadeed, Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 4, p. 68.
27. Ibn Katheer, Al-Bidaya wal Nihaya, Vol. 8, p. 108..
28. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 7, p. 31.
29. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 6, p. 190, in a chapter dealing with spending on the wife and children.
30. Ibn Abul-Hadeed, Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 4, p. 67.
31. Ibn Sa`d, Tabaqat, Vol. 2, p. 63.
32. al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 1, p. 38, in a chapter dealing with learning.
33. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 37.
34. al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 1, p. 30.
35. Ibid.
36. Abu Hurayra was bi-lingual. He spoke Arabic (his mother tongue) and Amharic. Historically speaking, during Abu Hurayra's time, Amharic was the language of aristocrats due to the fact that the Ethiopians had for many years colonized Yemen till they were kicked out of it at the hands of Sayf ibn Thi Yazun (or Yazin), Himyar's king who died in 574 A.D.
37. Nabatea was an Arabian kingdom in present day Jordan. It flourished from the 4th century B.C. till the Roman occupation in 106 A.D. Its capital was Petra.
38. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 21, p. 253.
39. al-Tabatabai, Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Vol. 3, pp. 269-270.

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