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Chapter 11: The Migration of the Prophet: the Source of Historical Transformation

Going Into Exile To Achieve The Divine Goal

The Holy Prophet of Islam was well aware of the fact that people who were plunged in prejudice, superstition, and ignorance would not abandon their beliefs and ways easily and that it would take extensive struggle, severe hardships, and sincere self-sacrifice to save them from the pit of corruption and guide them onto the path of virtue and monotheism. He could easily read in the faces of the people of Makkah, the opposition to Islam and their bigoted determination to fight the Muslims.

The divine foresight of the Holy Prophet of Islam had given him a dark image of the future. With such an insight and divine knowledge, he held high the banner of prophecy and adopted patience and tolerance. The Prophet struggled with the enemies of Islam in Makkah for 13 years and resisted all their torments and obstructions, but the opponents of Islam did not give up their devilish beliefs and manner and utilized all their power to destroy Islam. 1 Under such circumstances, the universal mission of the Holy Prophet of Islam necessitated his migration to a calm, suitable place and to find a new arena for his work and mission.

Yathrib – Ready To Submit To Islam

At the time of the pilgrimage to the Ka'aba, some of the men of importance of the Khazraj tribe came to Makkah and met with the Holy Prophet in the Masjid al-Haram. He explained the divine faith of Islam to them and encouraged them to believe in this religion, which is the faith of peace and fraternity. The Khazraj chiefs, who were tired of their deep-rooted disputes and conflicts with the Aws tribe, felt that Islam was exactly what they needed, and so they most willingly submitted to Islam.

When the Khazrajis, who had become Muslim, were about to return to Yathrib, they asked the Holy Prophet of Islam for a missionary, and he assigned Mas'ab ibn `Umir to accompany them. Thus, the

people of Yathrib were informed of the rising sun of Islam and hurried to gain information about the new faith.

The most effective factor in making the people ready and eager to adopt Islam was listening to the luminous verses of the Holy Qur'an. Mas'ab reported the conversion to Islam of the chiefs and leaders of both the Khazraj and Aws tribes to the Holy Prophet. Later on, a large number of the people of Yathrib who had come to Makkah to take part in the Hajj pilgrimage held a secret meeting with the Prophet at midnight and swore allegiance to support him just as they supported and protected their own families. 2

The Plot To Murder The Holy Prophet Of Islam

Dawn had hardly broken when the infidel Quraysh were informed of the allegiance of the Yathribi Muslims. They hurriedly attempted to frustrate it and hinder the advance of Islam. For this purpose, they held a council in the place where the Quraysh gathered to pass judgment and to consult each other. After a great deal of talk and consultation, it was resolved that they select one man from each tribe to rush into the house of the Prophet at night and murder him so that the basis of the propagation of Islam would be destroyed. 3

But Almighty God made the Holy Prophet aware of the intrigue of his enemies and commanded him to leave Makkah by night.⁴ The Prophet, upon receiving this revelation, decided to leave his homeland and migrate to Yathrib.

Ali's Self-Sacrifice

When the Holy Prophet of Islam was divinely commanded to migrate to Yathrib, he called 'Ali, disclosed his secret to him, gave him the people's trusts to be returned to their owners and then said, 'I have to migrate, but you must lie in my bed'. 'Ali sincerely obeyed the Holy Prophet and lay in his bed, thus devotedly exposing himself to the dangers that threatened the Holy Prophet of Islam. 5

'Ali's self-sacrifice was so sincere and significant that God praised it in the Holy Quran. 6

The Holy Prophet Of Islam Goes To The Thawr Cave

At midnight the enemies of Islam surrounded the house of the Holy Prophet to carry out their satanic plot. But since God was the supporter and protector of the Prophet, He saved him from harm at the hands of the murderous infidels.

While reading verses from Sura Yasin, the Holy Prophet of Islam came out of his house and through a by-way, went to the Thawr cave, which was situated outside Makkah. Abu Bakr was informed of the matter and accompanied the Holy Prophet." 7

The infidels rushed towards the Prophet's bed with drawn swords in their hands, but to their surprise, they found 'Ali in his place. Upset and enraged, they asked, 'Where has Muhammad gone? 'Ali answered, 'Had you assigned me to watch him? Well, you intended to expel him and he has left the city'.
8

Realizing that all their plots were frustrated, the idol worshipping Quraysh took serious measures but all in vain.

On The Way To Yathrib

After staying in the Thawr cave for three days, the Holy Prophet of Islam proceeded towards Yathrib. 9 One of the Makkans, Saraqa ibn Malik, attempted to pursue him, but his horse's hoof sank into the ground three times and threw him down, so he repented and returned to Makkah." 10

On the 12th of Rabi al-Awwal, the Holy Prophet of Islam reached a place called Quba, 11 where he stayed for a few days." 12Abu Bakr insistently asked the Prophet to begin travelling towards Yathrib, but the Holy Prophet refused to go without 'Ali. He said to Abu Bakr, 'Ali has endangered his own life to save mine. He is my cousin, my brother, and the dearest among the family to me. I will not leave here until he joins me'. 13

After fulfilling the mission assigned to him, 'Ali joined the Holy Prophet in Quba, but his legs were so bruised that he could hardly walk. The Holy Prophet embraced him most affectionately, blessed his hurt legs with the saliva from his own mouth which healed 'Ali's swollen legs. Thus together they started towards Yathrib. 14

Yathrib Eagerly Awaiting The Holy Prophet

Yathrib had taken on an extraordinary air and intense excitement and eagerness had overtaken the whole city. In every alley and neighbourhood people impatiently awaited the Holy Prophet of Islam.

He entered Yathrib on Friday. 15People were overjoyed and could not stop looking at the resplendent countenance of the Prophet.

The Holy Prophet of Islam settled in Yathrib and there laid the foundations of Islam and a magnificent culture based on justice and faith.

After the blessed entrance of the Holy Prophet of Islam into Yathrib, its name was changed into Medinat ul-Nabi, meaning 'the City of the Prophet'." 16That year, the year the Holy Prophet of Islam migrated from Makkah to Yathrib, was recognized as the origin of history, due to this significant historical event, the triumph of righteousness and justice. The illuminating sun of Islam gave new life to the people. They discarded all the old superstitious beliefs and thoughts and all the wrong deeds and manners of the past, replacing them with the perfect life-giving culture of Islam.

A Lesson From The Hijra

14 centuries have now passed since the momentous historical event of the Hijra – the migration of the Holy Prophet from Makkah to Medina. A careful study of history reveals the sincere and indefatigable efforts of the Muslims in the cause of the migration and laying the foundation of Islam.

After migration to Yathrib, the migrant Muslims had obviously rid themselves of the torment and torture of the infidel Quraysh and found a peaceful, agreeable environment. Nevertheless, they showed no tendency towards self-indulgence and pleasure seeking. Rather they ceaselessly endeavoured to establish an Islamic civilization and to spread the divine faith of Islam.

It was these very sacrificial efforts and hard work of the Muslims that rescued them from slavery and so many miseries and brought them honour, prosperity, and glory.

It is indeed necessary for the Muslims all over the world to be constantly reminded of the devotion and incessant efforts of the Muslims in the early days of Islam, who relied on their faith in God and, through obeying the instructions of the Holy Prophet, managed to make a holy revolution and attained great achievements.

It is of vital significance to Muslims in all places and at all times to take a lesson from the lives and sacrificial endeavours of those truly devoted Muslims. Each year, on the occasion of the anniversary of the migration, sincere reflection on the lives of these godly men and women will effectively serve this purpose.

It is also incumbent upon us to teach posterity the fact that the Muslims of the beginning of Islam owed their glory and greatness to their faith and their sincere efforts and that we must try to adopt their manners if we want to regain the honour and greatness that devoted Muslims really deserve.

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1. Ibid., p. 108.
 2. A'lam Alwari, pp.55–61.
 3. Tarikhi Tabari, Vol. 3, p.i229; A'lam Alwari, pp.61–62.
 4. Tarikhi Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 1231; Bihar ul–Anwar, Vol. 19, p.60.
 5. Sirihi ibn Hishim, Vol. 1; p.481; Tarikhi Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 1232.
 6. Bihar ul–Anwar, Vol. 19, p.78.
 7. Tarikhi Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 1234.
 8. A'lam Alwari, p.63.
 9. Sirihi ibn Hisham, Vol. 1, p.486; Bihar ul–Anwar, Vol. 19, p.69.
 10. Ibid., p.489; p.88.
 11. Kamil, p. 106. Quba is a place near Medina.
 12. Tarikhi Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 1245.
 13. Bihar ul–Anwar, Vol. 19, p. 116.
 14. Kamil, Vol. 2, p. 106.

15. Sirihi ibn Hisham, Vol. 1, p.494; Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 9, p.122.

16. Mu jim ul-Buldan maddihi Yathrib and Majma' ul-Bahrin Maddihi Tharb.

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