

The Farewell Pilgrimage

In dhul-qidah, (the 11th month of the islamic calendar) of the year 10 A.H., Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of God, announced that he would visit Makkah to perform Hajj. The news spread in the country and an immense number of Muslims gathered in Medina to accompany him to Makkah. Their numbers are estimated at more than 100,000.

Before his departure, he appointed Abu Dujana Ansari as governor of Medina during his own absence. On the 25th of Dhul-Qidah, he left Medina, accompanied by all his wives.

The Muslims observed every move, every act, and every gesture of the Prophet on this occasion, and everything that he did, became a precedent for all time, to be imitated by all Muslims.

Maxime Rodinson

After the fall of Mecca, Muhammad performed (for the second time since his Emigration) the rite of the *Umra*, the ritual processions around the Kaaba, and the journeys between Safa and Marwa (400 yards apart). But he had not participated in the Hajj...He may have had some idea of depaganizing the Hajj.

After the capture of Mecca, in the following Dhu'l-Hijja, Attab, the governor whom Muhammad had installed in Mecca, conducted the ceremony; both Muslims and pagans took part.

The following year, Dhu'l-Hijja of the year 9 (March-April 631), Muhammad still hung back from joining the Hajj. He had not yet finalized his teaching on every detail of the pilgrimage and was unwilling to perform the rites in company with pagans. He sent Abu Bakr to preside over the ceremonies. He was overtaken on the way by Ali, who was the bearer of a brand new revelation from on high which it was his business to see implemented.

Pagans generally were to take no further part in the pilgrimage. On the expiry of the sacred truce of four months, all who had not been converted or made a special agreement with Muhammad, would be dealt with as enemies. This was the last year that pagans were permitted to join the Hajj.

One year later, in Dhu'l-Hajj of the year 10 (March 632), the Prophet announced that he would

personally conduct the ceremony, now that the temple and shrines were purified of all pagan presence. He reached Mecca on 5 Dhu'l-Hajj (3rd March). On 8 Dhu'l-Hijja, the ceremonies began. All eyes were fixed on the Prophet because his behavior during the rites would become law. (*Muhammad*)

On the 9th of Dhu'l-Hajj of 10 A.H., the Prophet gave a historic speech in the plain of Arafat in which he summed up the main points of his teachings. The Prophet first thanked God for His countless mercies and blessings, and then said:

“O Muslims! Listen to me with attention. This may be the last occasion when I am with you, and I may not be alive to perform another Hajj.

God is One and He has no partners. Do not associate anyone or anything with Him. Worship Him, fear Him, obey Him and love Him. Do not miss your mandatory prayers. Observe faithfully the month of fasting. Pay Zakat (poor-tax) regularly, and visit the House of God whenever you can.

Remember that everyone of you is answerable to God for everything you do on this earth, and very soon you will find yourselves in His presence.

I am abolishing all the customs, practices and traditions of the Times of Ignorance. I disclaim the right of retaliation for the blood of my cousin, Ibn Rabi'a; and I disclaim the interest on the loans given by my uncle, Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib.

I call upon you all to show respect to the honor, life and property of each other in the same manner as you show respect to the sanctity of this day. All believers are brothers of each other. If something belongs to any one of them, it is unlawful for others to take it without his permission.

Be sincere in your words and deeds, and be sincere to each other, and remain united at all times.

You have rights in regard to women; so also you have duties toward them. Treat them with love, kindness, respect and affection.

The slaves you own were also created by God. Do not be cruel to them. If they err, forgive them. Give them to eat what you eat and give them to wear the same kind of clothes as you wear.

The members of my family are like the pole-star. They will lead to salvation all those who will obey them and follow them. I leave among you a composite heritage – the Book of God (Qur'an) and the members of my family. Both of them are complementary to each other and are inseparable from each other. If you defer to both of them you will never go astray.

And remember that I am the last of the Messengers of God to mankind. After me there will be no other messenger or messengers of God.”

Muhammad Mustafa concluded his speech with another short prayer of thanksgiving to his Creator, and

called upon Him to be a Witness that he had discharged his duty, had fulfilled his obligations, and had delivered the message of Islam to his people.

This speech, like all other speeches of the Prophet, is remarkable for its clarity and practical commonsense. He encapsulated in it his teachings so that they would be etched on the hearts and minds of his listeners for all time.

The Prophet had demonstrated to the Muslims how to perform the rites of Hajj, and he had swept away the remnants of paganism.

In his speech, the Prophet also hinted that he had perhaps not much longer to live. It was around this time that the 110th chapter of Qur'an called "Help" (Surah Nasr), was revealed, and which reads as follows:

When comes the help of God, and victory, And thou dost see the people enter God's religion in crowds, Celebrate the praises of thy Lord, And pray for His Forgiveness: For He is oft-Returning (in grace and mercy)

Imam Bukhari reports that when this chapter was revealed, Umar bin al-Khattab asked Abdullah ibn Abbas if he could enlighten him on its meaning. Ibn Abbas said: "These verses mean that the time for the Messenger of God to part company with us is approaching."

Many latter-day historians of the East and the West have asserted that the death of the Prophet was sudden and unexpected. But his death was neither sudden nor unexpected. In fact, he was himself the first to speak on the subject, and when the chapter called "Help" was revealed, little doubt was left in the minds of the principal companions that his earthly ministry was coming to an end. The intimation of death is in the third verse in which he was called upon to "pray for His forgiveness," and the men of perception were quick to get the message.

Marmaduke Pickthall

It was during that last pilgrimage that the Surah entitled *Succour* was revealed, which he (Mohammed) received as an announcement of approaching death. (*Introduction to the translation of Holy Qur'an, Lahore, Pakistan, 1975*)

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