

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

<u>Home</u> > <u>The Message</u> > <u>Chapter 23: Journey to Ta`if</u> > Invitation To The Heads Of The Tribes During Haj Season

# **Chapter 23: Journey to Ta'if**

The tenth year of the prophetic mission came to an end with all its agreeable and disagreeable events. During this year the Prophet lost two great defenders and supporters. In the first instance the chief of the family of Abdul Muttalib, the distinguished defender of the Prophet and the prominent personality of Quraysh viz. Abu Talib breathed his last.

The pangs of this tragedy were still fresh in the heart of the Prophet when the death of his dear wife Khadijah<u>1</u> aggravated his pain. Abu Talib was the protector of the life and honour of the Prophet and Khadijah served Islam with her immense wealth.

From the commencement of the eleventh year of the prophetic mission the Prophet was spending his time in an atmosphere which was replete with enmity and grudge against him. His life was in constant danger and he was deprived of all the possibilities of the propagation of Islam.

Ibn Hisham writes2 that after a few days of the death of Abu Talib a Qurayshite threw some dust on the head of the Prophet and he entered his house in the same condition. The eyes of one of his daughters fell on his pitiable condition. Crying loudly and with tears trickling from her eyes she rose, brought some water and washed the head and face of her dear father. The Prophet consoled her and said: "Don't cry. Allah is the Protector of your father". then he said: "While Abu Talib was alive Quraysh did not succeed in doing anything unpleasant against me".

On account of the biting atmosphere of Makkah the Prophet decided to go to some other environments. In those days Ta'if was a thriving centre. He, therefore, decided to go there alone and contact the chiefs of 'Saqif' tribe and invite them to Islam so that he might possibly achieve success in this manner. After arriving at Ta'if he met the chief and elders of that tribe and explained to them the religion of monotheism, and asked for their support and assistance.

However, his words had not the least effect on them and they said: "In case you are the chosen one of Allah it will be inviting torture to refute you and if your claim is false you are not fit to be talked to".

The Prophet understood from this flimsy and childish logic of theirs that they wanted to avoid him. He, therefore, rose and took a promise from them that they would not say anything about the matter to others, because it was possible that the low and mean elements of 'Saqif' tribe might make it a pretext to harm him and might take undue advantage of his being alone and away from his home town.

However, the elders of the tribe did not keep their promise and instigated the loafers and simpletons against him. Suddenly the Prophet found himself encircled by a group of person who wanted to use all methods to tease him. He saw no alternative but to take refuge in a garden which belonged to two persons named 'Atbah and Shibah.

The Prophet entered the garden with great difficulty and then the said persons ceased to pursue him. 'Atbah and Shibah were wealthy Qurayshites who also possessed a garden in Ta'if. When the Prophet entered the garden sweat was flowing down his head and face and some parts of his sacred body had also been hurt. He sat down involuntarily under the vine which rested on the trellis and began to utter the following supplication:

"O Lord! I present my weakness and lack of strength before You. You are the kind Nourisher. You are the helper of the weak. To whom are You abandoning me?

These and many other invocations which we have briefly quoted, strongly impress the hearts, because they are supplications by a person who has spent fifty years of his life with great honour and dignity under the protection of self-sacrificing supporters, but now his circumstances have undergone such change that he has taken refuge in the enemy's garden and is waiting for his fate with an exhausted and wounded body.

The sons of Rabiyyah, though idol-worshippers and enemies of Islam, were very much touched to see the pitiable condition of the Prophet They, therefore, ordered a Christian slave of theirs, named Adas, to take to him a receptacle full of grapes. 'Adas took the grapes to the Prophet and placed the same before him and looked at his face somewhat intently.

In the meantime an interesting incident took place. The Christian slave observed that while eating the grapes the Prophet said: "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful". He was very much surprised to hear this and, breaking the seal of silence, said: "The people of the Peninsula are not acquainted with these words and I have not so far heard anyone of them uttering them. People of this area begin their work with the names of 'Lat' and 'Uzza'.

The Prophet enquired from him about his birth-place and his religion. He stated that he belonged to Naynavah and was a Christian. The Prophet then said: "Do you hail from the place to which the pious man Yunus (Jonah) son of Mata (Mathew) belonged?" He was all the more surprised to hear this and again enquired: "How do you know Yunus son of Mata?"

The Prophet replied: "My brother Yunus was Allah's Prophet like myself". The Prophet's words which

showed signs of truthfulness made a strange impression on 'Adas and he was attracted towards him involuntarily. He prostrated himself, kissed the Prophet's hands and feet and expressed faith in his religion. Thereafter he took leave of him and returned to the owners of the garden.

The sons of Rabiyyah were very much surprised to observe the spiritual revolution which had taken place in the Christian slave. They enquired from him: "What conversation did you have with this stranger and why did you show so much humility before him?"

The slave replied: "This person who has now taken refuge in your garden is the chief of the entire humanity. He has told me things which only Prophets know and he is the very Promised Prophet". The sons of Rabiyyah were very much annoyed to hear the slave's words. Apparently, however, they said benevolently: "This man should not estrange you from your old faith. And the religion of 'Isa (Christ) which you follow at present is better than his".

### The Prophet Returns To Makkah

The intensity with which the people pursued the Prophet ended with his taking refuge in the garden of the sons of Rabiyyah. However, he had to return to Makkah now, and even this return was not free from difficulties, because his only defender had since departed from the world and it was possible that at the time of his arrival in Makkah he might have been captured and killed.

The Prophet decided to spend a few days in Nakhlah (a place situated between Makkah and Ta'if). His idea was to send some one from there to one of the chiefs of Quraysh so that he might procure 'security' for him and then he might enter his birth–place under the protection of some such person.

However, he could not find at Nakhlah anyone who might go to Makkah on his behalf. Later he left Nakhlah for Mount Hira. There he met a Khaza'i Arab and asked him to go to Makkah and speak to Mut'am bin Adi, who was one of the towering personalities of Makkah, for his (i.e. the Prophet's) 'security'.

The man went to Makkah and conveyed the message of the Prophet to Mut'am. Although Mut'am was an idol-worshipper he accepted the request of the Prophet and said: "Muhammad should come straight to my house. My sons and I shall protect his life".

The Prophet entered Makkah at night and went direct to the house of Mut'am and spent the night there. Next morning Mut'am said to the Prophet: "Now that you are under my protection it will be in the fitness of things if Quraysh should also know about it. Hence, to proclaim this it is necessary that you should accompany me to Masjidul Haram". The Prophet accepted the idea and got ready to go there. Mut'am ordered his sons to arm themselves and encircle the Prophet. Then they entered the mosque.

Their arrival in Masjidul Haram was very impressive. Abu Sufyan who had been lying in wait for the Prophet since long was very much annoyed to observe this scene and abandoned the idea of molesting

him. Mut'am and his sons sat down and the Prophet started performing 'tawaf'. After performing 'tawaf' he left for his house.3

Soon afterwards the Prophet left Makkah for Madina and the beginning of the year of 'migration' Mut'am passed away in Makkah. The news of his death reached Madina and the Prophet remembered him for his goodness. The poet of Islam, Hassan bin Thabit, recited some verses in memory of his services. The great Prophet remembered him on various occasions.

So much so that when, after the Battle of Badr, Quraysh were returning to Makkah after having sustained great loss and leaving behind a number of persons, who were captured by the Muslims, the Prophet remembered Mut'am and said: "If Mut'am had been alive and had asked me to release all the captives or to gift them to him, I would not have rejected his request".

#### **A Point Which Deserves Attention**

The tedious journey to Tatif undertaken by the Prophet makes abundantly clear his steadfastness and forbearance and the fact that he never forgot the services rendered by Mut'am at a particular time tells us about his sublime habits and high morals.

However, over and above these two qualities of the Prophet, we can well imagine how appreciative he must have been for the valuable services rendered him by Abu Talib. Mut'am lent support to the Prophet for a few hours or for a few days, but his noble uncle defended him throughout his life. Mut'am did not suffer even one–thousandth part of the hardships and tribulations which Abu Talib suffered.

And when the Prophet was willing to release all the captives of Badr or to gift them away to Mut'am for the sake of services rendered by him for a few hours what would he do in lieu of the services rendered by his dear uncle?

It is necessary that the person, who supported the Prophet for full forty two years and risked his own life during the last ten years to protect him, should enjoy a very high position in the eyes of Muhammad, the leader of humanity. And then there is a clear difference between these two persons. Mut'am was a polytheist and an idol–worshipper, whereas Abu Talib was considered to be one of the great personalities of the world of Islam.

## **Speeches In The Famous Bazaars Of Arabia**

During Haj season the Arabs assembled at various places like 'Ukaz', 'Majannah' and 'Zil-Majaz'. Great poets and speakers sat at elevated places and entertained the people with their verses and speeches which depicted bravery, self-praise and love The Prophet availed of this opportunity like the Prophets of the past. And on account of being secure from molestation by the idol-worshippers owing to fighting being unlawful during the prohibited months he mounted a high place, turned to the people and

addressed them thus:

"Acknowledge the Oneness of Allah so that you may attain deliverance. With the strength of faith you can control the entire world, can make the people obey your orders and can find place in Paradise in the next world".

## Invitation To The Heads Of The Tribes During Haj Season

During Haj season the Prophet contacted the chiefs of Arabia and saw all of them in their respective lodgings and presented the reality of his religion before them. At times, when the Prophet was busy conversing with them Abu Lahab appeared on the scene and said: "O people! Don't believe in what he says, because he is campaigning against the religion of your ancestors and his words are baseless".

The opposition of the Prophet's uncle reduced the effect of his sermons amongst the heads of the tribes and they said to themselves "If his religion were true and profitable members of his own family would not have opposed him".4

- 1. Ibn Said says that the death of Khadijah took place one month and five days after that of Abu Talib. (Tabaqat, vol. I, page 106). Others like Ibn Athir, however, believe that she died earlier than him. (Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 63).
- 2. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 25.
- 3. Tabagat Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, pp. 210-212 and al-Bidayah wan Nihayah vol. III, page 137.
- 4. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, page 216 and Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 422 -442.

Source URL: https://www.al-islam.org/message-jafar-subhani/chapter-23-journey-taif#comment-0