

Chapter 54: The Deputation of Thaqif Goes to Madina

The Battle of Tabuk, with all the difficulties and sufferings terminated, and all the mujahids returned to Madina, very exhausted. The soldiers of Islam did not encounter any enemy on the way and gained no booty. For this reason some short-sighted persons considered this expedition to be useless. They were not, however, aware of its invisible benefits.

Soon afterwards these benefits became distinct and the most obstinate Arab tribes, who were not prepared to surrender themselves or to embrace Islam at any cost, sent their representatives to the Prophet and proclaimed their readiness to accept Islam, opened the gates of their forts so that the idols fixed there might be broken, and the standard of Islam, the Divine religion might be installed in their place.

As a matter of principle the silly and short-sighted people always attach importance to patent results. For example, if, during this journey, the soldiers of Islam had encountered an enemy and having routed him, had confiscated his property, these people would have said that the results of the battle had been very brilliant. However, far-sighted persons analyse the events and consider good and fruitful the facts, which help in the achievement of the real aims and objects.

By chance, the Battle of Tabuk was very fruitful in the achievement of the real target of the Prophet of Islam viz. attracting the Arab tribes to the religion of Islam. It was so, because the news spread throughout the Hijaz that the Romans (the same Romans, who had, during the last war with the Iranians (who had for long ruled over Yemen and the adjoining areas) defeated them and had taken back the cross from them and brought it to Jerusalem) had been frightened of the military power of the Muslims and dared not fight with them.

The circulation of this news was sufficient to make the obstinate Arab tribes, who had not, till the previous day, agreed at any cost to remain on peaceful terms with the Muslims, think of co-operating with them and to join them to keep themselves safe from the transgression of the Rome and Iran, the

two super powers of the world of that time. Here is an example of the changes which took place amongst the most obstinate tribes of Arabia.

Dissensions Amongst The People Of Thaqif Tribe

The people of Thaqif were well-known amongst the Arabs for their obstinacy and stubbornness. They opposed the army of Islam for full one month under the protection of the strong fort of Ta'if and did not agree to surrender before them.¹

'Urwah bin Mas'ud Thaqafi was one of the chiefs of Thaqif tribe. When he came to know of the great victory of the army of Islam in Tabuk, he met the Prophet before his arrival in Madina, embraced Islam and sought his permission to go back to his tribe and to preach the Divine faith amongst them. The Prophet warned him about the result of this mission and said: "I am afraid you may lose your life in this path". He replied, 'They love me more than their own eyes'.

His tribe and other chiefs of Thaqif had not yet realized the greatness which 'Urwah had acquired by means of Islam and took pride in themselves. They, therefore, decided that when the first missionary of Islam was busy inviting people to Islam they should shower arrows on him and kill him. Consequently 'Urwah was attacked and when he was about to die he said: "My death is a blessing of which the Prophet had informed me".

The Deputation Of Thaqif Meets The Prophet

The people of Thaqif tribe regretted the killing of 'Urwah and realized that it was impossible for them to live in the heart of the Hijaz when the standard of Islam was fluttering round them and all their pasturages and trade routes were threatened by the Muslims.

In a meeting which they called to find out a solution of the problem it was decided that a representative might be sent to Madina to meet the Prophet and communicate to him their willingness to embrace Islam under certain conditions.

They unanimously asked one of their elders named 'Abd Yalayl to go to Madina and convey their message to the Prophet, but he declined to undertake the responsibility and said: "It is not improbable that after my departure you may change your minds and then I too may meet the fate of 'Urwah"; and added: "I am prepared to act as your representative on the condition that five other elders of Thaqif should also go with me and all of us should be equally responsible for the developments".

The suggestion made by 'Abd Yalayl met the approval of all concerned. All the six persons, therefore, left for Madina and halted at the bank of a spring situated near the city.

Mughirah bin Sh'obah Thaqafi who had brought the horses of the companions of the Prophet for grazing saw the chiefs of his own tribe at the bank of the spring. He approached them immediately and came to

know the purpose of their visit.

Then he entrusted the horses to them and proceeded to Madina as quickly as possible so as to inform the Prophet about the decision taken by the obstinate Thaqafi. While he was on his way he met Abu Bakr and informed him of the position. He requested Mughirah to permit him to communicate the news of the arrival of the representative of Thaqif to the Prophet himself.

Eventually Abu Bakr informed the Prophet about the arrival of the deputation of Thaqif and added that they were prepared to embrace Islam provided some of their conditions were accepted and a pact was concluded with them.

The Prophet ordered a tent to be pitched near the mosque for the representatives of Thaqif and that Mughirah and Khalid bin Sa'id should receive them.

The members of the deputation came to the Prophet of Islam. Mughirah had advised them that they should refrain from all sorts of salutations of the Period of Ignorance and should wish Salam like the Muslims.

As, however, pride and self-conceit was the second nature of this tribe they saluted the Prophet in the manner used before the advent of Islam. They then communicated to him the message of the Thaqif tribe and their readiness to embrace Islam and added that this was subject to certain conditions which they would state during a later meeting. The discussions of the representatives of Thaqif continued for some days and Khalid kept the Prophet informed of their gist.

The Conditions Of The Deputation

The Prophet accepted many of the conditions put forward by them, so much so that he agreed to conclude a security pact with them and guaranteed their lands. However, some of their conditions were so improper, repulsive and indecent that the Prophet felt annoyed. The conditions were as mentioned below:

The members of the deputation said that the people of Ta'if would accept Islam on the condition that the big idol-temple of Ta'if might remain in the same condition for three years and the big idol of the tribe named Lat should continue to be worshipped. However, when they realized that this suggestion had annoyed the Prophet they amended it and requested that the idol-temple might be allowed to remain as it was for one month.

Making such a request to the Prophet, whose basic aim was to introduce the worship of One Allah and to destroy the idol-temples and the idols, was very shameful. It showed that they wanted an Islam which should not affect their interests and inclinations, and if that was not so this religion was not acceptable to them.

When they realized the repulsiveness of their request, they began putting forward excuses and said: "We have made this request just to keep our women and foolish persons quiet, and thus to remove all impediments in the path of the arrival of Islam in Ta'if. Now that the Prophet does not agree to this he may kindly excuse the people of the tribe from breaking the idols with their own hands and may appoint some other persons to perform this job".

The Prophet agreed to this, because his object was that the false gods and ignorance should be eradicated and it was immaterial for him whether this task was accomplished by those people themselves or by someone else.

Another condition was that the Prophet might excuse them from offering prayers. They were under the impression that like the leaders of the people of Scriptures (of course, as supposed by them themselves) the Prophet of Islam could also interfere with the Commands of Allah and thus apply certain rules to one group and exempt others from complying with them. They did not realize that he had to obey the Divine revelations and could make no alteration in them.

This condition showed that the spirit of absolute surrender to the Will of Allah had not yet taken root in their minds and their acceptance of Islam was a mere show. Otherwise there was no justification for their making distinction in the commands of Islam and to accept some of them and to reject others. Islam and faith in Allah is a condition of total surrender under which all Divine commands are obeyed unhesitatingly and no distinction is made between them.

The Prophet said to them in reply: "There is no good in a religion which does not contain prayers". In other words a person, who does not bow his head before Allah during daytime as well as at night, and does not remember his Lord, is not a true Muslim.

Thereafter, when the conditions were settled finally, an agreement incorporating the same was signed by the Prophet and he then bade farewell to the members of the deputation, who were returning to their tribe.

Out of the six persons he selected for leadership the youngest of them who had, during his stay in Madina, evinced great interest in learning the Qur'an and the commands of Islam. He appointed him his own religious and political representative amongst the people of Ta'if and advised him that while leading congregational prayers he should also be mindful of the weak persons and should not prolong the prayers.

Then Mughirah and Abu Sufyan were appointed to accompany the members of the deputation to Ta'if and to destroy the idols found there. Abu Sufyan, who himself was till the previous day a protector of the idols and had occasioned a good deal of bloodshed for their protection, now picked up an axe and a hatchet and broke them to pieces which assumed the shape of a mound of fire-wood. He sold the ornaments of the idols and, as directed by the Prophet, paid the debts of 'Urwah and his brother Aswad, out of their sale proceeds.[2](#)

- [1.](#) An account of the siege of the Fort of Ta'if has already been given in connection with the events of 8 A.H.
- [2.](#) Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 542 and Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, p. 243.

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