

## The Call to Islam

### **Muhammad Receives Revelation (610 A.D.)**

Muhammad was forty years old when the first verses of the Holy Qur'an were revealed to him. They were the first verses of Surat al-Alaq (chapter 96), and they were revealed during the month of Ramadan 13 years before the Hijra, at the cave of Hira, his favourite place for isolation and meditation, a place which is now visited by many pilgrims. Muhammad went back home heavy-hearted, profoundly perplexed, deeply impressed by the sight of arch-angel Gabriel and by the depth of meaning implied in these beautiful words:

***In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful  
Proclaim (or read)! In the Name of your Lord and Cherisher Who created (everything). (He)  
created man of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. Proclaim! And your Lord is the Most Bountiful  
Who taught (the use of) the pen, Who taught man that which he knew not... (Qur'an, 96:1-5)***

He felt feverish, so he asked to be wrapped and, once he felt better, he narrated what he had seen and heard to his faithful and supportive wife. "By Allah," Khadija said, "Allah shall never subject you to any indignity..., for you always maintain your ties with those of your kin, and you are always generous in giving; you are diligent, and you seek what others regard as unattainable; you cool the eyes of your guest, and you lend your support to those who seek justice and redress.

Stay firm, O cousin, for by Allah I know that He will not deal with you except most beautifully, and I testify that you are the awaited Prophet in this nation, and your time, if Allah wills, has come." After a short while, Khadija told her husband about the prediction of the Syrian monk Buhayrah regarding Muhammad's Prophethood, and about her dialogue with both her servant Maysarah, who had informed her of what Buhayrah had said, and with her cousin Waraqah ibn Nawfal. She then accompanied her husband to Waraqah's house to narrate the whole incident. "Let me hear it in your own words,"

Nawfal said to Muhammad, adding, "O noble master!" Having heard the Prophet's words, Nawfal took his time to select his words very carefully; he said, "By Allah, this is the prediction which had been conveyed to Moses and with which the Children of Israel are familiar! [Moses] had said: 'O how I wish I could be

present when Muhammad is delegated with Prophethood to support his mission and to assist him!"

It was only natural for Khadija to receive her share of the harassment meted to him by none other than those who, not long ago, used to call him *al-Sadiq, al-Amin*. Khadija did not hesitate at all to embrace Islam.

Yahya ibn 'Afeef is quoted saying that he once came, during the period of *jahiliyya* (before the advent of Islam), to Mecca to be hosted by al-'Abbas ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib, one of the Prophet's uncles mentioned above. "When the sun started rising," says he, "I saw a man who came out of a place not far from us, faced the Ka'ba and started performing his prayers. He hardly started before being joined by a young boy who stood on his right side, then by a woman who stood behind them. When he bowed down, the young boy and the woman bowed, and when he stood up straight, they, too, did likewise."

"When he prostrated, they, too, prostrated." Then he expressed his amazement at that, saying to al-'Abbas: "This is quite strange, O 'Abbas!" "Is it, really?" retorted al-'Abbas. "Do you know who he is?" al-'Abbas asked his guest who answered in the negative. "He is Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah, my nephew. Do you know who the young boy is?" asked he again. "No, indeed," answered the guest. "He is Ali son of Abu Talib. Do you know who the woman is?" The answer came again in the negative, to which al-'Abbas said, "She is Khadija daughter of Khuwaylid, my nephew's wife."

This incident is included in the books of both Imam Ahmad and al-Tirmithi, each detailing it in his own *Sahih*. And she bore patiently in the face of persecution to which her revered husband and his small band of believers were exposed at the hands of the polytheists and aristocrats of Quraish, sacrificing her vast wealth to promote Islam, seeking Allah's Pleasure.

Among Khadija's merits was her being one of the four most perfect of all women of mankind, the other three being: Fatima daughter of Muhammad, Maryam bint 'Omran (Mary daughter of Amram), mother of Christ and niece of prophet Zakariyya, and 'Asiya daughter of Muzahim, wife of Pharaoh. Prophet Zakariyya, as the reader knows, was the father of Yahya (John the Baptist), the latter being only a few months older than Prophet Jesus.

The Prophet of Islam used to talk about Khadija quite often after her demise, so much so that his youngest wife, 'Ayisha daughter of Abu Bakr, felt extremely jealous and said to him once, "... But she was only an old woman with red eyes, and Allah has compensated you with a better and younger wife (meaning herself)."

This caused him to be very annoyed, and he said, "No, indeed; He has not compensated me with anyone better than her. She believed in me when all others disbelieved; she held me truthful when others called me a liar; she sheltered me when others abandoned me; she comforted me when others shunned me; and Allah granted me children by her while depriving me of children by other women." Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abu Hatim, al-Dulabi, al-Tabari, and many others, all quote 'Ayisha saying: "One day, the Messenger of Allah mentioned Khadija affectionately, so I was carried away by jealousy

and said about her what I should *not* have said.

It was then that his face changed colour in a way I never saw it change except when he was receiving revelation, so I realized what I had done and felt overwhelmed by regret to the extent that I could not help uttering these words: "O Lord! If You remove the anger of Your Messenger right now, I pledge not to ever speak ill of her as long as I live." Having seen that, he forgave me and narrated to me some of her merits.'

Both Muslim and Bukhari indicate in their respective *Sahih* books that among Khadija's merits was the fact that the Lord of Dignity ordered Jibreel (Gabriel), peace be upon him, to convey His regards to her. Gabriel said to Muhammad: "O Muhammad! Khadija is bringing you a bowl of food; when she comes to you, tell her that her Lord greets her, and convey my greeting, too, to her." When he did so, she said: "Allah is the Peace, and He is the source of all peace, and upon Gabriel be peace."

Khadija died of an attack of fever on the tenth or eleventh day of the month of Ramadan, ten years after the start of the Prophetic mission (in the year 620 A.D.), 24 years after her marriage with Muhammad, and she was buried at Hajun in the outskirts of Mecca. The Messenger of Allah dug her grave and buried her... Funeral prayers (*salat al janaza*) had not yet been mandated in Islam. It is reported that by the time she died, her entire wealth had already been spent to promote Islam; she left neither a single gold dinar nor a single silver dirham, nor anything more or less...

***soul that are at rest! Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him), so enter among My servants, and enter into My garden. (Qur'an, 89:27-30)***

## **The Dawn of Prophethood**

It was a man from among themselves who was to lift the Arabs from their slough of ignorance and depravity into the light of faith: devotion to one God.

Because of its geographical position and connection by land and sea routes with the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, Arabia had been powerfully influenced by the superstitious beliefs and evil ways prevailing in many parts of these continents. But once it forsook disbelief and unbecoming practices, it could, as a result of the same geographical position, easily become the center of enlightenment, radiating guidance and knowledge to the entire world.

When Muhammad was 38 years old, he spent most of his time in meditation and solitude. The cave of Hira, which overlooks the Ka'ba from a distance of about three miles north of Mecca, was his favourite place. It is there that he used to retire with food and water and spend days and weeks in remembrance of Allah. Nobody was allowed to go there except Khadija and Ali. He used to spend the whole month of Ramadan therein.

The period of waiting had come to a close. His forty years of life had varied experiences, and from the

world's point of view, he had developed a maturity of mind and judgement, although in reality he was the embodiment of perfection from the very beginning. He has said: "I was a prophet when Adam was between water and clay." His heart was overflowing with profound compassion for mankind and a pressing urge to eradicate wrong beliefs, social evils, cruelty and injustice.

It was during the month of Ramadan of the year of the elephant (610 A.D.), 13 years before the Hijra, that revelation descended on Muhammad for the first time. This event will always be immortalized in the history of the human species. It changed the history of mankind for all time to come. Nobody has ever influenced the events on our planet more than Muhammad. Nobody ever will.

The flow of the Divine message which continued for the next twenty-three years had begun with that date, and the Prophet had arisen to proclaim the Unity of God and the unity of mankind, of the human family, to demolish the edifice of superstition, ignorance, and disbelief, to set up a noble concept of life, and to lead mankind to the light of faith and celestial bliss. Revelation was received in different ways: sometimes the Almighty inspired him to do something or say something, sometimes through visions, sometimes Gabriel came to him in human form and sometimes in his angelic appearance...

## **Inception of The Mission (610 A.D.)**

The task was stupendous. The Prophet, therefore, started his mission cautiously, confining it initially to his own close relatives and friends. He was met with immediate success. His wife Khadija testified to his truth as soon as she heard the news of the revelation from God. Then his cousin Ali, and his liberated slave and adopted son Zayd ibn Harithah, readily accepted the new faith, Islam, "submission to the Will of God." The fourth was Abu Bakr, and his conversion's story is excerpted here from *Al-Seera al-Halabiyya, Ustd al-Ghaba, and Tarikh al-Chamois*:

Abu Bakr ibn Abu Quhafah was thirty-eight years old when he made a trip to Yemen where he met an old and learned sage of the Azd tribe who predicted that a prophet was to appear in the near future in Mecca. Upon his return from the trip, he paid a visit to his friend Muhammad who invited him to accept his religion, Islam, declaring himself the Prophet. Abu Bakr asked Muhammad to prove his Prophethood, and Muhammad at once related to Abu Bakr the prediction which Abu Bakr had heard when he was in Yemen. Muhammad was not there to witness the incident which involved only Abu Bakr and the sage of the Azd tribe. He was at Mecca during the entire period while Abu Bakr was in Yemen. Abu Bakr accepted Islam.

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in his book *Al-Isabah*, and 'Abdul Malik ibn Hisham in his book *As-Sifah* have written that Ali was the first male to accept Islam and pray (offer *salat*), and that he accepted whatever was revealed to the Messenger by the Lord. At that time, Ali was only ten years old and Muhammad forty. After Ali, Zayd ibn Harithah accepted the Islamic creed and prayed and then Abu Bakr embraced Islam as stated above. The companions of the Prophet, Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Qarzi, Salman the Persian, Abu Tharr al-Ghfari, al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad al-Kind, Khabbab ibn 'Arrat, Abu Sa'eed al-

Khudri and Zayd ibn al-Arqam testify that Ali was the first to proclaim Islam. These celebrated companions have given Ali preference over others.

Justice Ameer Ali writes the following in his *Spirit of Islam*:

It is a noble feature in the history of the Prophet of Arabia, and one which strongly attests the sincerity of his character, the purity of his teachings and the intensity of his faith in God, that his nearest relations, his wife, beloved cousin and intimate friends, were most thoroughly imbued with the truth of his mission and convinced of his inspiration. Those who knew him best, closest relations and dearest friends, people who lived with him and noted all his movements, were his sincere and most devoted followers.'

John Davenport writes the following:

It is strongly corroborative of Muhammad's sincerity that the earliest converts to Islam were his bosom friends and the people of his household, who, all intimately acquainted with his private life, could not fail to have detected those discrepancies which more or less invariably exist between the pretensions of the hypocritical deceiver and his actions at home.

Slowly the message spread. During the first three years, he gained only thirty followers. In spite of the caution and care exercised, Quraish were well posted with what was going on. At first they did not make much note and only jeered at the Prophet and the plight of his followers. They doubted his sanity and thought he was possessed. But the time had come for proclaiming the will of God in public.

## **Inviting The Near Ones (613 A.D.)**

After three years, the call from Allah came thus: "***And warn thy near relations' (Qur'an, 26:214)***. This ayat (verse) ended the period of secret preaching and heralded the open proclamation of Islam.

"Abu Muhammad' Husain al-Baghawi, in his *Tafsir MaAlim al-Tensile*, Shaikh 'Ala'uddin Ali ibn Muhammad al-Baghdadi, known as Khazin al-Baghdadi, in his *Lubabut-Ta'wil*, best known as *Tafsir Khazin*, Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Husain al-Bayhaqi (in his *Dala'ilun-Nubuwwah*), Jalaluddin al-Sayyuti (in his *Jam'u'l Jawami'*), 'Ala'uddin Ali Muttaqi (in *Kanzul-'Omma*), Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (in *Tarikh al-Rusul wal Muluk*), Abu Sa'dat Mubarak ibn Athir al-Jazari (in *Tarikhul-Kamil*) and Isma'il Abul-Fida' (in his history work *Kitabul-Mukhtasar fi Akhbaril-Bashar*) have quoted Ali as saying:

"When the verse *Wa anthir 'ashiratakal-aqrabin* was revealed, the noble Messenger called me and ordered me, 'O Ali! The Creator of the world has commanded me to warn my people about their doom, but in view of the condition of the people and knowing that when I give them the words of Allah, they will misbehave, I felt depressed and weakened and, therefore, I kept quiet until Gabriel came again and informed me that there should be no more delay. Therefore, O Ali, take a measure of food grain, a leg of a goat and a big bowl of milk and arrange for a feast, then call the sons of 'Abdul-Muttalib unto me, so that I may deliver to them the words of Allah.' I did what the Prophet had told me and the sons of 'Abdul-Muttalib, who numbered about forty, assembled together. Among them were the uncles of the Prophet:

Abu Talib, Hamzah, 'Abbas and Abu Lahab.

When the food was brought, the Prophet lifted a piece of meat and tore it into small pieces which he scattered on the tray and said, 'Start eating in the Name of Allah.' All people present there had the food to their fill although the milk and the food were just sufficient for one man. Then he intended to speak to them, but Abu Lahab interferred and said, "Verily, your comrade has bewitched you!" Having heard this, all of them dispersed and the Messenger did not get a chance to speak to them.

"On the next day, the Messenger of the Lord again said to me: 'O Ali! Make arrangements again for a feast as you had done yesterday, and invite the sons of 'Abdul-Muttalib.' I arranged for the feast and gathered the guests as I was asked to do by the Prophet. Once they had finished eating, the Messenger addressed them thus: 'O sons of 'Abdul- Muttalib, I have brought you the best blessings of this world and of the next, and I am appointed by the Lord to call you unto Him. Therefore, who amongst you will help me in this cause so that he may be my brother, vizier, and successor?'

Nobody responded. But I, although the youngest of the congregation, said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I am here to be your helper in this task.' The Prophet then patted my neck very kindly and said, 'O my people! This Ali is my brother, my vizier and my successor amongst you. Listen to him and obey him.' Having heard it from the Prophet, they all burst laughing and said to Abu Talib, 'Hearken! You are ordered to obey and follow your own son!'

This event has also been recorded by Thomas Carlyle in *Heroes and Hero Worship*, by Gibbon in *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Davenport in *Apology for Muhammad and The Koran* and by Washington Irving in *Muhammad And His Successors*, with all its details.

## **Persecution Begins**

Then one after another came the Divine commands:

***Disclose what has been ordained to thee. (Qur'an, 15:94)***

***thou wrapped (in thy mantle)! Arise and warn, and thy Lord do magnify. And thy raiment do purify. And uncleanness do shun. And show not favour seeking gain! And for the sake of thy Lord be patient. (Qur'an, 74:1-7)***

The method to be employed was:

***Call to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and dispute with them in the best way. (Qur'an, 16:125)***

The Prophet proclaimed the Oneness of God in the Ka'ba. Quraish were aghast. Their reaction was sharp and violent. They mobbed the Prophet. Al-Harith son of Abu Halah tried to protect him but was

slashed to death. It was the first martyrdom in the cause of Islam. Till then, Quraish had held the Prophet and his followers in contemptuous disdain, but now they were genuinely alarmed. The new movement amounted to a denunciation of their forefathers. It meant the termination of their authority and privilege as the guardians of the Ka'ba.

Quraish retaliated violently. A life and death struggle for Islam ensued. The Prophet was not allowed to worship in the Ka'ba, thorns were strewn in his way, dirt and filth were thrown at him while he was engaged in prayers, and street urchins were incited to follow him, shouting and clapping their hands in derision. When he prayed, they made loud cries, hooted or sang wild songs in order to drown his voice.

To their great disappointment, they could not prevent him or discourage him. Such is the mark of great men. Such are men of God; nobody and nothing stands in their way. He and his followers were subjected to all types of calumnies and humiliation. His followers were taunted and insulted. Oppression and relentless persecution were let loose. In an effort to force the believers to renounce the new faith and to go back to the older cults, they were subjected to extremes of physical torture. They were mercilessly beaten, made to lie on burning sand while heavy blocks of stones were placed on their chests. Nooses were put around their necks and their bodies were dragged.

One of the faithful, named Yasir<sup>1</sup>, succumbed to torture and, when his wife Sumayya, an African, protested, her legs were tied to two camels, and the animals were driven to opposite directions, tearing her body in halves. The believers, under the inspiration of their great Teacher, were, however, fired with holy zeal. They braved all persecution and danger and bore up against all agonies and torture.

## **Two Hijras To Abyssinia (615 A.D.)**

In around 615 A.D., when endurance was reaching its limits and persecution became unbearable, the Prophet advised a group of his followers to migrate to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) where a benign Christian king reigned. This was the first *hijra* (migration) in Islam and fifteen people, eleven men and four women, including 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and his wife Ruqayya, took part in it:

***And those who become fugitives for Allah's sake being oppressed, verily We shall give them good abode in the world and surely the reward of the Hereafter is greater, if they only knew.  
(Qur'an, 16:41)***

What was all this tyranny and persecution for? They were just for believing in one God and for leading a chaste and pious life! Further migration of some people led to intensified persecution of those left behind. The Prophet advised a second Hijra to Abyssinia. Thirty men and eighteen women left Mecca individually or in small groups fleeing to Abyssinia. Ja'far ibn Abu Talib, the elder brother of Ali, followed them with fifty more; thus, one hundred and sixteen refugees reached Abyssinia safely. Quraish sent a deputation headed by 'Amr ibn al-'As and 'Ammara ibn Rabi'ah to the Negus (Nijashi), king, of Abyssinia, to demand the deportation of the emigrants back to Mecca to be punished by death. Having

won the favour of the clergy, the deputations tried to prejudice the king against the fugitives. Asked to explain the position of the Muslims, Ja'far delivered a speech which is a brilliant summary of the fundamentals of Islam and all that it stands for:

king! We were plunged into the depth of ignorance and barbarism; we adored idols; we lived in unchastity; we ate dead animals, and we spoke abomination. We disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood. We knew no law but that of the strong. At that time, God raised from among us a man of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity we were aware, and he called us to the Unity of God and taught us not to associate anything with Him.

He forbade us from worshipping idols and enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful, and to regard the rights of neighbours. He forbade us from speaking ill of women and from eating the subsistence of orphans. He ordered us to flee from vices, to abstain from evil, to offer prayers, to render alms, and to observe the fast. We have believed in him; we have accepted his teachings and injunctions to worship God, and not to associate anything with Him. For this reason, our people have risen against us and persecuted us in order to make us forego the worship of God and return to the worship of idols of wood and stone and other abominations. They have tortured us and injured us. Having found no safety among them, we have come to thy country and hope thou wilt protect us from their oppression.

The king refused to oblige the deputations, and the latter had to return disappointed. Muslim traditions indicate that the king later on secretly converted to Islam.

Some European critics, with the objective of assigning some ulterior motives for the migration, go to the length of saying that persecution was only slight and at worst confined to slaves and the poorer people who could find no clans to protect them. There is a mass of historical data recorded in original sources about the names and numbers of persons put to physical torture, the names of their tormentors and the manner of their physical torture and persecution. Although these critics admit that even Abu Bakr had to undergo the indignity of being bound to a clansman and to solicit the protection of a nomadic chief, they would still suggest that the persecution was limited to persons who had no clans to support them. Such people received, no doubt, the worst treatment, but when people of a clan were oppressing their fellow clansmen for accepting Islam, clan protection could not help the victims.

What protection could be expected from the clan when a father chained his son, a brother tortured his sister, or a husband injured his wife? Furthermore, the slaves and the poor people constituted the bulk of the disciples at that stage. A Western historian surmises that the migration was caused either by a rift in the Muslim ranks, as some Muslims might not have liked the attitude of the Prophet towards the Meccan opposition, or was undertaken with the goal of making Abyssinia a base of attacking Meccan trade or to solicit military help to enable the Prophet to seize control of Mecca.

If such fantastic conjectures can be made when the Muslims were yet a handful and survival was the

only consideration before them, when all along they stood solidly behind the Prophet, when no Meccan caravan was ever attacked from Abyssinia, when that country never provided any military help to the Muslims, and when the Prophet did not seize control of Mecca even when it lay at his feet, what fairness in exposition and presentation can be expected from such historians?

## **Prophet ar Al-Arqam's House**

Following the migration of such a number of his loyal followers, the Prophet realized how precarious his position in Mecca had become. Having felt insulted at the mere fact that their deputation to the Negus had failed in its mission, Quraish now is even more than ever bent on avenging their wounded pride. They intensified their persistence in opposing his preachings. The Prophet, therefore, after years of his struggle to disseminate the Islamic faith, sought refuge at the house of al-Arqam al-Makhzumi, a highly respected Meccan dignitary. The house was near the sanctuary of the Ka'ba.

One day, Muhammad was sitting outside the house as Abu Jahl happened to pass by. Abu Jahl blasted his nephew with a barrage of abusive language. Muhammad felt it very sorely but could not utter a single word. A slave gird of 'Abdullah ibn Ju'dan, who lived nearby, was very much moved by such uncalled for insults. A short while later, she narrated the incident to Hamzah, Muhammad's other uncle, who was passing by her house on his way home from a sporting excursion. Hamzah was famous among the Arabs for his great valour and chivalry, and he felt deeply resentful of Abu Jahl's behaviour; so, he proceeded straight to Abu Jahl's house.

Remonstrating with him, Hamzah hit him with his bow, striking a blow on his head. Abu Jahl's men stood up to avenge Abu Jahl who stopped them. Trying to pacify Hamzah, Abu Jahl told him that he had abused Muhammad only because he vilified their gods. Hamzah, thereupon, boldly declared that he, too, despised the stony gods and challenged Abu Jahl to do anything at all about it. Hamzah loudly recited the Islamic declaration of faith: "There is no god but the One and only God, and Muhammad is the prophet and messenger of God," thus publicly announcing his acceptance of the Islamic creed. Ever since then, Hamzah proved to be a staunch follower of Islam till the last moment of his life. When he was martyred at Uhud, which will be discussed later, he was given the title of *sayyid al-shuhada*, "Master of the Martyrs," a title which remained his till the martyrdom of Muhammad's younger grandson Husain...

Hamzah's conversion was surely a great victory for the Prophet in particular and for the small band of Muslim believers in general especially at that very juncture when they so badly needed a valiant supporter to defend them and to rally their cause. Following the conversion of Hamzah, the Prophet, accompanied by some of his followers, ventured twice to offer his prayers at the Ka'ba publicly. There was also no need any longer (at least for the time being) to conduct secret meetings at the house of al-Arqam.

## **Attempts to Kill Muhammad (615 A.D.)**

Now we have reached the sixth year after the Declaration of Prophethood (615/616 A.D.). In spite of the persecution and exodus of some people, the Prophet was laboring quietly but incessantly to wean his people from the worship of idols.

Once, on the suggestion of Abu Bakr, the Prophet came into Al-Masjid al-Haram and Abu Bakr started a lecture. Quraish violently stopped him and the Prophet had to once more take refuge in the house of al-Arqam near the hill of Safa. (Now, that house has been included into the extension of al-Masjid al-Haram where the Ka'ba, the Muslims' *qibla*, is housed). 'Omar ibn al-Khattab accepted Islam in those days. How did 'Omar accept Islam?

Abu Jahl set a reward for one hundred camels or one thousand ounces of gold for anyone who brought him the head of his nephew Muhammad. Abu Jahl was the maternal uncle of 'Omar ibn al-Khattab who aspired to win this coveted prize. He was 33 years old. Armed by his sword, he went to the house of al-Arqam where Muhammad and the Muslims used to meet. On his way, he met Sa'd ibn Abul-Waqqas to whom he confided that he intended to kill Muhammad, not knowing that Sa'd had already accepted Islam!

Sa'd first warned 'Omar against committing such a crime, reminding him that he would do better taking care of his sister and her husband who had both embraced Islam. 'Omar now decided to go after his sister and brother-in-law instead of pursuing his attempt to kill Muhammad. Having reached his sister's house, he over-heard a recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Khabbab ibn 'Arrat who was then teaching the Holy Qur'an to Amina, "Omar's sister, and to Sa'eed ibn Zayd, her husband. 'Omar abruptly entered the house and proceeded directly to Sa'eed with whom he wrestled, throwing him down on his back and sitting on his chest with the intention to kill him. It was then that Amina interceded and was slapped so hard that she bled, yet she, in a fit of anger, cried out, "O son of al-Khattab! Do what you sought to do, for verily I (too) have changed my faith!" She admitted that both she and her husband were adherents to the Islamic faith.

Feeling ashamed of having driven his sister to such impudence, "Omar stood aside and asked her to recite to him what she was learning. She recited the first 14 verses of Surat Taha (Chapter 20) with such solemnity that the very core of "Omar's heart was moved. Here are those verses:

***In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful***

***Ta Seen Meem. These are the verses of the Book that makes (things) clear. We recite to you from the account of Moses and Pharaoh with the truth for people who believe. Surely Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people into parties, weakening one party from among them; he slaughtered their sons and let their women live; surely he was one of the mischief-makers. And We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs, and to grant them power in the land, and to make***

***Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts see from them what they feared. And We inspired to the mother of Moses saying: Nurse him, then when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear, nor should you grieve; surely We will bring him back to you and make him one of the Messengers. And Pharaoh's family took him up so that he might be an enemy and a (source of) grief for them; surely Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts were wrongdoers. And Pharaoh's wife said: A refreshment of the eye to me and to you! Do not slay him; maybe he will be useful to us, or we may take him for a son, and they did not perceive. And the heart of the mother of Moses was free (from anxiety); she would have almost disclosed it had We not strengthened her heart so that she might be of the believers.*** (Quran, 20:1-10)

"Omar was quite amazed at the excellence and beauty of the language which had such a supernatural effect on him, one which he could no longer resist. Finally, he asked both of them to take him and introduce him to Muhammad. Khabbab ibn 'Arrat, the teacher who had hidden upon seeing 'Omar approaching, now came out. The whole group went to al-Arqam's house.

'Omar met Hamzah at the door. 'Omar was brought into the presence of the Prophet. "Omar was so over-awed that he could not help shuddering as he stood before the Prophet. The kind and gentle Prophet caught 'Omar by the hand and said to him, "Will you not cease, O 'Omar, till God sends upon you a calamity and a chastisement such as the one He sent upon al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah?!" He invited 'Omar to accept Islam, which he did. 'Omar's conversion to Islam took place only three days after Hamzah had embraced the Islamic creed; six years had passed since the inception of the Prophet's historic mission.

## **Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughirah**

What calamity was the Prophet referring to above and what chastisement?

Al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah, father of the famous Khalid ibn al-Walid, was a man of experience and cunning, a senior among Arab seniors of his time, a man of great wealth according to the testimony of the Holy Qur'an as we read in Surat al-Muddaththir (Chapter 74 of the Holy Qur'an). All the clans of Quraish used to collectively share the expense of the covering sheet of the Ka'ba one year, and in the next year, al-Walid would pay the entire expense all by himself. In Mecca alone, he had ten sons and ten slaves, and each one of his slaves used to trade in a merchandise valued at one thousand dinars, each dinar weighing one *qintar*, talent, of gold (equivalent to four thousand dinars).

He used to always ridicule Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet used quite often to recite the Holy Qur'an (and sometimes he would ask others to recite it in his presence). The Quraishis assembled at the house of al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah and said to him, "O 'Abd al-Shams! What is this that Muhammad is saying? Is it poetry, sorcery, or oratory?!" "Let me hear it myself," said he, going close to where Muhammad was as he recited the Qur'an. "O Muhammad!" said al-Walid, "Recite to me some of your poetry." The Prophet said, "It is not poetry; it is the speech of Allah with which He blessed His angels and prophets."

“Recite some of it for me,’ said al-Walid. The Messenger of Allah recited these verses of Surat Ha-Meem al-Sajda (Chapter 41 of the Holy Qur'an):

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

***Ha Meem. (This is) a revelation from the most Beneficent, the most Merciful, God: a Book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qur'an for a people who know: a herald of glad tidings and a warner, but most of them turn aside, so they hear not. And they say: Our hearts are under coverings from that to which you call us, and there is a heaviness in our ears, and a veil hangs between us and you, so do (whatever you please), we, too, are doing (whatever pleases us). Say: I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your God is one God; therefore, follow the right way to Him and ask His forgiveness, and woe unto the polytheists, those who do not give zakat, and they do not believe in the hereafter. (As for) those who believe and do good deeds, they shall surely have a reward never to be curtailed. Say: What?! Do you indeed disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two periods, and do you set up equals with Him?! That is the Lord of the Worlds. And He made in it mountains above its surface, and He blessed therein and made therein its foods, in four periods, alike for the seekers. Then He directed Himself (His attention) to the heavens and it is a vapor, so He said to it and to the earth: Come both willingly or unwillingly. They both said: We come willingly. So He ordained them seven heavens in two periods, and revealed in every heavens its affairs, and We adorned the lower heavens with brilliant stars and (made it) to guard; that is the decree of the Mighty, the Knowing. But if they turn aside, then say: I have warned you of a scourge like the scourge of (the people of) 'Ad and (the people of) Thamud. (Qur'an, 41:1-13)***

When the Prophet finished reciting the last verse quoted above, al-Walid shuddered and his hair stood up. He went home without giving Quraish an answer.

Quraish, therefore, went to Abu Jahl and said, “O Abu al-Hakam! ‘Abd al-Shams is inclined towards Muhammad's creed; have you seen how he did not come to us with a follow-up?’ Abu Jahl went to him and said, “O uncle! You have caused our heads to stoop down in humiliation and have exposed us and made our enemies happy on our account by you inclining towards Muhammad's creed.’ Al-Walid said, “I have not inclined to his creed, but I heard something he said which is quite weighty, a speech because of which the skins shudder.’ “Is it an address that he delivered?’ asked Abu Jahl.

Al-Walid said, “No, it is not, for an address is a continuous speech, and this is prose some parts of which are not similar to others.’ “Is it poetry?’ asked Abu Jahl. “No,’ al-Walid answered, “for I have heard all types of the Arabs' poetry; it is not poetry.’ “Then what is it?’ asked Abu Jahl. “Let me think about it,’ answered al-Walid. On the next day, he was asked again, “O ‘Abd al-Shams! What do you say about our query?’ He said, “Tell people that it is sorcery, for this will affect people's hearts better.’ It is then that the Almighty revealed the following verses to express His Wrath at what al-Walid had attributed to Him and to His Prophet:

*Leave Me and him whom I created alone and gave him vast riches, and sons dwelling in his presence, and I adjusted affairs for him adjustably; and yet he desires that I should add more! By no means! Surely he opposes Our Signs. I will make a distressing punishment overtake him. Surely he reflected and guessed, but may he be cursed how he guessed! Again, may he be cursed how he guessed! Then he looked, then he frowned and scowled, then he turned back and was big with pride, then he said: This is naught but sorcery narrated (from others); this is naught but the word of a mortal. I will cast him into hell. And what will make you realize what hell is? It leaves naught, nor does it spare aught. It scorches the mortal. Over it are nineteen (keepers). (Qur'an, 74: 11-30)*

## **Muhammad Frustrates Quraish**

Yet because of the prestige of Abu Talib, Quraish did not dare to kill the Prophet. But they were making him suffer as much affliction as possible. No less was the heartache caused to him by the sufferings of the helpless Muslims. He himself said: "No prophet was ever made to suffer such afflictions as I was."

All along, Islam was gaining adherents not only from Quraish but also from the neighbouring tribes. The oligarchy of Mecca was now desperately trying to stem the movement.

The forbearance of the Prophet was making Quraish wonder as to why a man should put himself in such a precarious situation. Their outlook was materialistic, their ideals were: wealth, beauty and power. They, naturally, ascribed the same motives to the Prophet.

'Otbah ibn Rabi'ah, father-in-law of Abu Sufyan, was sent to him to convey the message of Quraish: "Muhammad! If you want power and prestige, we will make you the overlord of Mecca. Or do you want marriage in a big family? You may have the hand of the fairest maiden in the land. Do you want hoards of silver and gold? We can provide you with all these and even more. But you should forsake your nefarious preaching which implies that our forefathers, who were worshipping these deities of ours, were fools.'

Quraish were almost certain that Muhammad would respond favourably to this offer. But the Prophet recited Sura 41 in reply which, *inter alia*, contained the following warning:

**"But if they turn away, then say: I have warned you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt of the people of 'Ad and of the Thamud" (Qur'an, 41: 13).**

'Otbah was overwhelmed with this ringing warning. He did not accept Islam (till death overtook him) but advised Quraish to leave Muhammad alone and to see how he would fare with other tribes. Quraish said that he, too, was bewitched by Muhammad.

Then a deputation was sent to Abu Talib. They demanded that Abu Talib should either persuade his nephew to desist from his mission or hand him over to suffer the extreme penalty or be prepared to fight

the whole tribe. Finding the odds too heavy against him, Abu Talib said to the Prophet: "O son! Do not put such a burden on my shoulders which I am unable to bear.' The Prophet's reply to his uncle gives an indication of his indomitable will, profound trust in God, and confidence in his Mission. Said he:

*O uncle! If they placed the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left to persuade me to renounce my work, verily I would not desist therefrom till God makes manifest His cause or I perish in the attempt.*

Having said this, he was overwhelmed with grief. Abu Talib was moved by this reply and said: "By Allah, Quraish can never reach thee in spite of their great number till I am buried in the earth. Therefore, pronounce what order thou hast; nobody can do any harm to thee; be happy with this (promise) and keep thy eyes cool (i.e. be consoled)."

In their final attempt, they took a young man, 'Ammarah ibn al-Walid, to Abu Talib, offering to exchange him with Muhammad. They said to him: "This young man is a well-known poet of the tribe; he is also very handsome and wise. You better exchange Muhammad with him. You may adopt him as your son: he will be a good helper to you. And give us your Muhammad; we will kill him. Thus, you will not suffer any loss because you will have 'Ammarah in place of Muhammad, and by eliminating Muhammad, all this strife and friction in the tribe will come to an end.'

Abu Talib was extremely furious on hearing this outrageous proposal. His voice was raised in wrath as he said: "What a worst bargain you have proposed! Why, you want me to give you my son, so that you may kill him, and are giving me your son so that I should feed him and look after him?! Go away! This bargain is nothing if not foolishness.'

## **Clans of Hashim and Muttalib Sanctioned (616 A.D.)**

Frustrated, the idolaters decided to ostracize the whole clans of Hashim and Muttalib and thus destroy them completely. Urged by Abu Sufyan, the heads of the different opposing families decided to form a league in order to sever all ties with Muhammad, his followers, and Banu Hashim altogether. An agreement, therefore, was signed seven years after the inception of the Prophet's mission (in about 616 A.D.) to implement a boycott<sup>2</sup>. It was written by Mansur ibn 'Ikrimah, signed by forty of Quraish's chieftains then sealed. In order to give it an air of solemnity, it was hung on the Ka'ba. One of the Meccan dignitaries, namely Mut'im ibn 'Adiyy ibn Nawfal ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib ibn 'Abd Munaf, refused to sign it, saying that it was unjust.

The Prophet was now 47 years old. The agreement said that they would neither take the daughters of these two clans nor will they give them their daughters in marriage; they would neither sell anything to them nor buy anything from them. Not only that, they would not have any contact with them nor even allow any food or drink to reach them.

"This boycott would continue till these clans agree to hand over Muhammad to Quraish,' it stated.

Abu Talib had no alternative but to take these two clans (who had always stood together) into the valley called Shi'b Abu Talib. All members of Banu Hashim, with the exception of Abu Lahab and his family, were now lodged there. It was a place in Mount Hajun which belonged to Abu Talib. There were 40 adults in the clans. For three long years, they were beleaguered. It had begun in Muharram, 7th year of Bi'that (Declaration of Prophethood) and continued up to the beginning of the 10th year.

They were made to undergo the most acute hardships and privations, so much so that at times they had nothing but tree leaves to sustain them. Only twice a year did they dare to come out: in the months of Rajab and Thul-Hijjah, when every type of violence was taboo according to the Arabian custom. If any relative sent them any food, and the news leaked out, that relative was publicly insulted and put to shame. Quraishites used to express their pleasure on hearing the cries of the hungry children.

During the entire time, however, Muhammad did not stop his mission. He used to go out during the pilgrimage season to meet with Arab tribesmen and to say to them, "Let me recite for you from the Book of your Lord, and your reward shall be Paradise." But Abu Lahab was always behind him. "Do not agree to listen to him," Abu Lahab would then tell those tribesmen, "He is nephew, and he is a lying sorcerer<sup>3</sup>."

Abul-'as ibn al-Rabee', husband of Zainab daughter of Khadija and Muhammad's step-daughter, used to bring his camels laden with wheat and dates to the entrance of the Shi'b at night, telling them to proceed. They would enter the Shi'b, and Banu Hashim would unload them<sup>4</sup>.

## **Some Miracles of The Prophet (618 A.D.)**

Books have already been written detailing the miracles performed by Prophet Muhammad. One of the best references detailing the Prophet's miracles is no doubt *Bihar al-Anwar* by 'allama al-Majlisi. As many as two hundred and four pages, that is, from page 225 to page 421, Vol. 15, narrate numerous incidents involving the Prophet performing miracles. Surely there is no room here to quote all or even some of them, yet reference to the Prophet's miracles has been made throughout this book: The early childhood of the Prophet and his trips to Syria, the Prophet at the cave of Mount Thawr, the story of Umm Ma'bad, the incidents of the physicians who tried to "cure" the Prophet of his alleged "madness," and, most importantly, the miracle of the Holy Qur'an, his very greatest miracle, which concludes this Chapter and this book as a whole. Here is one more for the kind reader:

Among the earliest converts to Islam were some princes or heads of tribes. The latter's conversion spurred that of their tribesmen. Here is the summary of the story of one of those princes who accepted Islam which can be reviewed on pp. 57–60 of Washington Irving's book *Life of Muhammad*:

Habib ibn Malik, surnamed "the wise" on account of his vast knowledge and erudition, was one such convert. He was deeply versed in magic and the sciences and acquainted with all religions to their very foundations, having read all that had been written about them and acquired practical information about them. He had belonged to them all by turn: First he was a Jew, then Christian, then a Magi<sup>5</sup>. When he

died, he had reached the age of 140 years. He came to Mecca in 618 A.D. as head of a powerful host of twenty thousand men, bringing with him his young daughter Satiha for whom he was praying at the Ka'ba.

She had been struck dumb, deaf, blind and paralyzed in her limbs. Abu Sufyan and Abu Jahl thought that the presence of this very powerful, wise and, most importantly, idolatrous prince, being the head of such a formidable host, was a favourable opportunity to effect the ruin of Muhammad and his creed. They accordingly informed Habib the wise of the "heresies" of the "pretender prophet" and prevailed upon him to summon him into his presence at his camp in the Valley of Flints and challenge him to defend his doctrines. They hoped that his insistence upon error would draw upon him either banishment or death.

The men of Quraish arrayed themselves in splendid formations on horseback and on foot, having put on their best, led by Abu Sufyan and Abu Jahl. Habib the wise was seated in pomp and splendor under a tent of crimson on a throne of ebony inlaid with ivory and sandal-wood and covered with plates of gold.

When summoned to attend this formidable tribunal, Muhammad was at home with his wife Khadija (and the date was two years before her death which took place in 620 A.D.). Khadija was alarmed, and so were her daughters, who were visiting her. They hung about Muhammad's neck weeping and lamenting, thinking that he was going to a certain death. But he gently calmed their fears and bade them place their trust in Allah, their Protector and his.

Unlike Abu Sufyan and Abu Jahl, he approached the scene of trial in simple guise clad in a white garment with a black turban and a mantle which had belonged to his grandfather 'Abdul-Muttalib and which had been woven in 'Aden, southern Arabia. His hair floated on his shoulders, the mysterious light of prophecy beamed from his countenance. Although he had not anointed his beard, nor did he use any perfume at the moment<sup>6</sup> except a little musk and camphor for his moustache, yet wherever he passed, a bland of sweet smell diffused itself all around him, being the fragrant emanation from his own holy person.

A silent awe fell upon the vast assembly as the Prophet approached. Not a murmur, not even a whisper could be heard; even the very brute animals were charmed to silence. The neighing of the steed, the bellowing of the camel, and the braying of the ass were all mute.

The venerable Habib received him graciously. His first question was direct and to the point: "They say that you pretend to be a prophet sent by God. Is it so?" "Even so," replied Muhammad. "Allah has sent me to proclaim the veritable faith," he continued. "Good!" rejoiced the sage, "but every prophet has produced a proof of his mission by signs and miracles. Noah had his rainbow, Solomon his mysterious ring, Abraham the fire of the furnace that became cool at his command<sup>7</sup>, Isaac the ram which was sacrificed in his stead, Moses his wonder-working rod, and Jesus brought the dead to life and appeased the tempests with a word. If, then, you are really a prophet, show us a miracle in proof."

Muhammad's followers trembled for him when they heard this request, while Abu Jahl clapped his hands and extolled the sagacity of Habib the wise. But the Prophet rebuked Abu Jahl with scorn. "Peace! Dog of your race!" exclaimed Muhammad, "Disgrace of your kindred and of your tribe!" He then calmly proceeded to carry out Habib's wish.

The first miracle demanded of Muhammad was to reveal what Habib had inside his tent, and why he had brought it to Mecca. Muhammad bent towards the earth and traced figures upon the sand. Then he raised his head and replied, "O Habib! You have brought here your daughter Satiha, deaf and dumb, lame and blind, in the hope of obtaining relief of Heaven. Go to your tent; speak to her, and hear her reply, and come to know that God is All-Powerful."

The aged prince hastened to his tent. His daughter met him with light step and extended arms, perfect in all her faculties! Her eyes were beaming with joy, her face clothed with smiles, and she was more beautiful than the moon in an unclouded night!

The second miracle demanded by Habib was that the Prophet should cover the noontide heavens with supernatural darkness and cause the moon to appear upon the top of the Ka'ba. The Prophet prayed. Instantly, complete darkness covered the daylight and the glorious orb of the moon shone above the sanctuary. The Prophet made a sign with his finger and the orb was divided into two halves so that Mount Abu Qubays stood between them. After a while, he again made a sign and both halves were reunited.

More details can be reviewed in the famous work titled *Al-Mawahib al-Laduniyya* which includes names of eyewitnesses. As a matter of fact, the Prophet caused the moon to be rent asunder into two halves in response to his command on two different occasions. The list of eyewitnesses who saw such miracles includes: Ibn Mas'ud al-Aswad, Anas ibn Malik, Ibn 'Abbas, 'Abdullah ibn 'Omar ibn al-Khattab, Huthyafah al-Yemani, Jubayr ibn Mut'im, Ali ibn Abu Talib, and Abu Huthayfah al-Arhabi.

The prince, four hundred and seventy of his followers, and a number of Meccans, all embraced the Islamic creed there and then to the outrage of both Abu Jahl and Abu Sufyan and the infidels who rallied behind them. This incident took place five years before the Hijra, that is, in 618 A.D., two years before the death of Abu Talib, Muhammad's uncle and protector.

Imam Ali son of Muhammad has said,

Al-Harith ibn Kildah al-Thaqafi was the most skilled physician of the Thaqif tribe. He came once to the Messenger of Allah and said, "O Muhammad! I have come to heal you from your madness, for I have treated many madmen and healed them all." The Messenger of Allah said to him, "You yourself are doing what madmen do, yet you attribute madness to me!" Al-Harith asked him, "What madness have I done?" "Your own attributing madness to me," the Prophet answered, "without first examining me or putting me to the test, and without looking into my truth or falsehood." Al-Harith said, "Have I not come to know about your madness from the claim you have put forth to prophethood of which you are not

capable?’

The Messenger of Allah said, “And your own claim that I am incapable of it is another act typical of madmen! This is so because you did not ask me why I put forth such a claim, nor did you demand any proof so that you would conclude that in the lack of proof, I am incapable of it.’ Al-Harith said, “You have said the truth; I should test you by a miracle I require you to produce; so, if you are truly a Prophet, call that tree (and it was a huge one very deeply rooted) to come forth. If it comes to you, I will conclude that you are, indeed, the Messenger of Allah, and I shall testify to you to the same. Otherwise, you are the same mad person about whom I have been informed.’ The Messenger of Allah raised his hands to that tree and beckoned to it to come forward. The tree was uprooted at once, and it came to him boring a huge hole in the ground like a river canal till it came near the Messenger of Allah and spoke in an articulate voice saying, “Here I am, O Messenger of Allah! What do you order me to do?’

The Messenger of Allah said to it, “I order you to testify to my Prophethood after testifying to the Unity of Allah and then to testify to this Ali as the Imam, and that he is the one upon whom I depend, my supporter and helper, my pride and dignity, and that had it not been for him, Allah, the most Exalted and the most Sublime, would not have created anything at all.’ The tree spoke out thus: “I testify that there is no god except Allah, the One Who has no partner at all, and I further testify that you, Muhammad, are His Servant and Messenger; He sent you in truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner and a caller to Allah by His permission and a lantern of light. And I testify that Ali, your cousin, is your Brother in creed and the one who is the most informed of Allah's creation of the creed and the one whose portion of promoting Islam is the very greatest, that he is your supporter and helper, the one who subdues your foes and helps your friends, the gate of your knowledge in your nation.

And I further testify that your friends, those who befriend him and who are antagonistic towards his enemies, are the stuff of Paradise, and that his enemies who befriend his foes and who are antagonistic towards his friends, are the stuff of the Fire.’ The Messenger of Allah at that juncture looked at al-Harith ibn Kildah and said, “O Harith! Is anyone who produces such a miracle regarded as a madman?!’ Al-Harith ibn Kildah said, “No, by Allah, O Messenger of Allah! But I do testify that you are the Messenger of Allah and the master of all creation.’ His conviction proved to be firm<sup>8</sup>.

Here is another testimony by Imam al-Hasan al-’Askari:

As for the mountains, the rocks, and the stones saluting him, when the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, abandoned trading in Syria, spending all his earnings by way of charity, all what Allah Almighty bestowed upon him of wealth from those trade trips, he used to go daily to the Hira cave. He would ascend it and look from its height at the Signs of the Mercy of Allah and the norms of the wonders of His Mercy and the beauty of His wisdom. He would look at the heavens and the countries of the earth and of the seas, at the deserts and the valleys.

So he would derive wisdom from those norms and would remember his Lord through those Signs and

worship Allah as He should be worshipped. When he became fully forty years old, Allah looked at his heart and found it the best of hearts, the most honourable, the most submissive to Him the most obedient. So He opened the gates of the heavens, and Muhammad kept looking at them. He permitted the angels to descend as Muhammad looked on. And He ordered Mercy to descend upon him from the leg of the ‘Arsh to Muhammad’s head, overwhelming it. He looked at Gabriel, the trusted spirit, the one circled by light, the peacock of angels, who descended to him, and he held him and shook him saying, “O Muhammad! Read (or Recite)!” He said, “What should I read?”

He said, “O Muhammad! Read (or Recite) in the Name of your Lord Who created...” Then he inspired him whatever His Lord, the Sublime, the most Exalted One, wanted to inspire him. Then he (Gabriel) ascended. Fever overtook him and he was greatly upset that Quraish would call him a liar and would attribute madness to him, and that the demons possessed him although he was, from the very beginning, the most wise of Allah’s creation, the most honoured of His beings, and the most hated thing to him were: Satan and the deeds and statements of mad people.

Allah, the most Exalted and the most Sublime, therefore, wanted to please him and to encourage him, so He permitted the mountains, the rocks, and the rain to speak to him. Whenever he reached any of them, it would say to him, “Assalamo ‘Alaikom, O Muhammad! Assalamo ‘Alaikom, O friend of Allah! Assalamo ‘Alaikom, O Messenger of Allah! Good news to you! Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, favoured you, beautified you, showered you with His honours, and preferred you over all His creation, the first and the last! Let not Quraish’s accusation of your being mad and deviated from their creed grieve you, for virtuous is the one who is favoured by the Lord of the Worlds, and honourable is the one who is honoured by the Creator of all creation!

Do not be grieved when Quraish and the arrogant ones from among the Arabs belie you, for your Lord will bestow upon you the ultimate of all favours, and He will raise you to the most lofty of stations, and He will bring bliss and happiness to your friends and will appoint Ali ibn Abu Talib as your *wasī* who will disseminate your knowledge among the servants and throughout the lands, through your key and the gate of your knowledge Ali ibn Abu Talib! He will cool your eyes through your daughter Fatima, and out of her and of Ali He will bring into the world al-Hasan and al-Husain, the masters of the youths of Paradise!

He will disseminate your creed throughout the land and will best honour those who love you and who love your brother, and He will place in your hand the standard of praise, so you will place it in the hand of your brother Ali, so much so that each and every prophet, testifier to the truth, and martyr will be in a status lower than his. He shall be their leader, all of them, into the Gardens of bliss!” The Prophet used to wonder, “Lord! Who is this Ali ibn Abu Talib whom you have promised me? (Ali was then a child) Is he the same as my cousin?” When Ali moved a little, he asked again, “Is he this one?” Whenever he thus inquired, the Scales of greatness would descend upon him, so Muhammad and Ali would be weighed in one of them and all his nation in the other, and their scale would weigh heavier. The Messenger of Allah

then knew exactly who he was and what his attribute was. And Muhammad was addressed within thus: "O Muhammad! This Ali ibn Abu Talib is the one whom I chose to support this religion (Islam), and he weighs heavier than all members of your nation with the exception only of your own self."

This is how Allah expanded the Prophet's breast in order to carry out the Message, thus making the burden of struggling with the nation lighter, facilitating for him to combat the arrogant ones and the tyrants of Quraish.<sup>9</sup>

## **Boycott Ends (619 A.D.)**

For three long years, from 616 to 619 A.D., Muhammad, his small band of followers, and Banu Hashim, tasted the bitterness of the boycott enforced by Quraish. During all those years of sufferings, Abu Talib had only one concern: how to keep the Prophet out of harm's way. Historians unanimously say that it was the habit of Abu Talib to awaken the Prophet after all people had gone to sleep and to take him to another place and order one of his own sons or brothers to sleep in the Prophet's bed instead. This was done so that if an enemy had seen where Muhammad was sleeping, and if an attack was made on him at night, his own son or brother would be killed while the Prophet would be saved. History is unable to produce another example of such devotion and loyalty. And imagine that this continued not for one or two days or weeks, but for three long years.

One day the Prophet said to Abu Talib: "I have been informed by Allah that the agreement of Quraish has been eaten up by insects, and no writing has been left therein except the Name of Allah." Abu Talib never had any doubt about anything Muhammad said.

Thus he came out of his place at once and went to Al-Masjid al-Haram where Quraish had gathered. As luck would have it, the subject of discussion was the same boycott. Hisham, son of 'Amr, Zubayr, and a few others who were related to Khadija and the clans of Hashim and Muttalib and whose houses were near the Shi'b of Abu Talib used to hear the cries of the children day and night. So did Mut'im ibn 'Adiy, Zam'ah ibn Aswad, Abul Bakhtari, and a number of other Quraishites. These had decided to persuade Quraish to abrogate the infamous agreement. The arguments became very heated and reached a climax when they saw Abu Talib approaching.

Abu Jahl and others who opposed the idea of abrogating the boycott said: "Abu Talib is coming! It seems that now he is tired and wants to hand over Muhammad to us. Thus, the boycott would end to the satisfaction of us all. Let us keep silent and hear what he wants to say." But Abu Talib had not gone there to surrender but to challenge them. He stood before the gathering and said: "My son says that the agreement which you had written has been eaten up by insects, and that nothing remains therein except the Name of Allah. Now look at that paper. If the news given by my son is correct, then you must end your injustice and high-handedness; and if the news is wrong, then we will admit that you were right and we were wrong."

The agreement was taken out and opened, and lo! There was nothing left of it except the Name of Allah in one place!

Now Abu Talib's voice thundered on as he condemned them for their tyranny. Those who wanted that boycott ended said that now there was no agreement at all to adhere to. Abu Jahl and others tried to outwit them but failed, so the boycott ended with a total moral victory for Islam over the infidels.

## **Abu Talib and Khadija Die (620 A.D.)**

The sufferings and privations of those three years took their toll. Within nine months, Abu Talib (533 – 620 A.D.) died at the age of 87 in the middle of Shawwal or Thul-Qi'dah, ten years after the *bi'that* and shortly after him Khadija (465 – 620 A.D.) also left this world. Muhammad wept bitterly at Khadija's and Abu Talib's graves and put on black clothes as is the custom of the Arabs. He was so grieved that he called that year "amul-Huzn" (The Year of Sorrow).

With the disappearance of their protecting influence, the Meccans had a free-hand and redoubled their persecution. These two deaths, at a time when the Prophet was in dire need of both, left a very deep impression on him. How valuable their support was may be judged from the fact that Allah has counted them as two of His highest Graces and Favours upon the Prophet. He says in Surat 93:

***Did He not find thee an orphan and give thee shelter, and He found thee lost (in thy tribe) and guided (them towards thee), and found thee in need and made thee free from want? (Qur'an, 93:6-8)***

All the commentators of the Qur'an say that the first *ayat* means: "Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter with Abu Talib?", and the last *ayat* means: "He found you poor and made you rich through Khadija." If we think about the early history of Islam, without the prestigious influence of Abu Talib, we cannot see how the life of the Prophet could have been saved. And if we were to take out the wealth of Khadija, we cannot think how the poor Muslims could have been sustained, and how the two *hijras* to Abyssinia could have been financed.

It is not the place here to fully explain the share of Abu Talib in the foundation of Islam. The best tribute, therefore, would be to quote some of his poetry lines which overflow with love for, and devotion to, Muhammad. Abu Talib has said these poetic lines:

And you have called me and I know that you are truthful, and, in fact, you were truthful and trustworthy from the beginning. And I certainly know that the religion of Muhammad is the best of all the religions of the world... Did you not know that we have found Muhammad the Messenger of Allah the same as was Musa (Moses)? It is so written in the scriptures.

Compare this poetry with this *ayat* of the Qur'an:

***Verily, We have sent you a Messenger to be a witness over you as We had sent a Messenger to***

### **Pharaoh. (Qur'an, 73: 15)**

Somewhere else Abu Talib says these poetic lines:

And the Lord of the world has strengthened him with His help, so he proclaimed the religion which is true, not false. Do not they know that our son is not doubted by us and that we do not care about the false sayings (of his foes)?

Abu al-Fida', in *Kitabul-Mukhtasar fi Akhbaril-Bashar*, states that some of the poetic verses composed by Abu Talib prove the fact that he had accepted the Prophethood of the Prophet from the core of his heart. A translation of a few poetic verses of his is given here:

You have called me (to Islam) and I believe that you are truthful, straightforward and trustworthy. And there is no doubt in my belief that the religion of Muhammad is the best of all the religions of the world. By God! As long as I am alive, not a single person from among Quraish can harm you.

Abu Talib asked his son Ali once, "What is this religion which you are following?" Ali said: "I believe in Allah and in His Messenger, and I pray with him." Abu Talib said: "Surely Muhammad will not call us but to a good thing. Never leave Muhammad; follow him faithfully."

Once he saw the Prophet praying, with Khadija and Ali behind him. Ja'far was with Abu Talib. Abu Talib told Ja'far to go ahead and to join them in their prayer service.

When Hamzah accepted Islam in the sixth year of *bi'that* (inception of the Prophetic mission), Abu Talib was over-joyed and said these poetic lines:

Be patient, O Abu Ya'li (Hamzah), on account of the religion of Ahmad. And proclaim the religion with courage, may Allah help you. I was glad when you said that you were a *mu'min* (believer). So help the Messenger of Allah in the cause of Allah. And announce to Quraish your decision, and tell them that Ahmad was never a sorcerer.

If any reader wishes to examine these poetry lines, one of the references is al-Majlisi's *Bihar al-Anwar*.

It was Abu Talib's policy to keep Quraish guessing and in suspense about his true belief: Had he announced that he had accepted the religion of Muhammad, his position as a respected leader of the tribe would have been undermined, and then he could not extend his protection to the Prophet. Thus, while always declaring his firm belief that Muhammad could not tell anything but the truth, exhorting his children and brothers to follow Muhammad's religion, he assiduously refrained from declaring in so many words that he himself was a Muslim. Thus, he maintained his position with the hierarchy of Quraish, protecting the Prophet through his influence.

Even on his death-bed, while there was still a chance that he might recover, he very diplomatically announced his faith in such a way that Quraish could not understand what he meant. When they asked him on which religion he was dying, he replied: "On the religion of my forefathers." As explained before,

'Abdul-Muttalib and all his ancestors were followers of the Divine religion; hence, one cannot but admire Abu Talib's prudence and wisdom in that difficult situation.

During the last moments of his life, the Prophet advised him to recite the *kalima* loudly (as is the custom of the Muslims). 'Abbas, who had not accepted Islam yet, saw Abu Talib's lips moving. He put his ears near Abu Talib then said to the Prophet: "O nephew! Abu Talib is saying what you wanted him to say!"

'Allamah ibn Abil-Hadid, the Mu'tazilite scholar, has said the following poetic lines:

If it were not for Abu Talib and his son (Ali), the religion of Islam could not take any shape, nor could it find its feet. Thus, Abu Talib in Mecca gave shelter and protected (him), and Ali in Medina rubbed shoulders with death.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq said: "The ancestors of the Prophet will be in Paradise and 'Abdul-Muttalib will enter Paradise having upon him the light of the Prophets and the dignity of kings, and Abu Talib will be in the same group.'

There are some ignorant writers the extent of whose knowledge is very limited ("Little knowledge is a dangerous thing<sup>10</sup>") and who cast doubt about Abu Talib's faith, citing a mass of fabricated *ahadith*. Abu Talib certainly did not do anything for them to warrant such vicious and uncalled for publicity; so, in my view, their real target is not Abu Talib but his son Ali who exposed their hypocrisy to the world. Such writers are the remnant of the followers of Abu Sufyan, Mu'awiyah, and Yazid, bitter enemies of Ahl al-Bayt, the Prophet's pure and holy family. Unfortunately, there are many of them living among us even today, and most likely they will always remain so...

As for Khadija, she was so much respected that the Meccans called her *tahira* (the pure one). All the children of the Prophet were born by Khadija except Ibrahim who was the son of Muhammad and Maria (Mary) the Copt<sup>11</sup>. Khadija was the first person to testify to the truth of the Prophet. She spent all her wealth in the cause of Islam. And she was a source of comfort and consolation to the Prophet.

The Prophet said: "Four women are the supreme-most among the women of Paradise: Maryam mother of 'Isa (May mother of Jesus), Asiya wife of Pharaoh, Khadija bint Khuwaylid, and Fatima bint Muhammad."

'Ayisha said: "I never envied any woman as much as I envied Khadija. The Prophet always remembered her. Whenever any sheep or goat was slaughtered, the choicest parts were sent to Khadija's relatives and friends. I used to say, 'It appears that Khadija was the only woman in the world.' Hearing this, the Prophet was very much annoyed and said: 'Khadija had many virtues which others do not have.'

She also said: "Once the Prophet remembered her and I said, 'How long will you go on remembering a woman so old that she had no teeth in her mouth? Allah has given you a woman better than her (meaning herself).' The Prophet was so crossed that the hair of his head was raised. He said: 'By Allah, I do not have better than Khadija. She believed in me when others were steeped into infidelity. She

testified to my truth when others rejected my claim. She helped me with her wealth when others deprived me. And Allah gave me children by her.' 'Ayisha says that from then on she decided not to say any unkind word about Khadija, as we are told in Vol. 3 of al-Bukhari's *Sahih*.

Khadija was buried at Hajun. Her grave was demolished by the Wahhabi rulers of Saudi Arabia in 1925 like those of 'Abdul-Muttalib, Abu Talib and others.

## **Muhammad Visits Taif (620 A.D.)**

After the death of Abu Talib and Khadija, finding that the Meccans had turned a deaf ear to his preaching, the Prophet decided to go to Taif accompanied by Zayd ibn Harithah, perhaps its people would be more responsive. But a big disappointment was in store for him. Located about seventy miles east of Mecca, Taif was a stronghold of idolatry where the stony statue of al-Lat goddess, whom the pagans regarded as God's wife, covered with gems and jewels, was believed to be inspired with life. Muhammad spent a month in Taif only to be scoffed and ridiculed. When he persisted in his preaching, the people of Taif drove him out of their city pelting him with stones, causing him to be bruised and wounded. In this desperate situation, he prayed to God thus as his wounds kept bleeding:

Allah! I make my complaint to You regarding the feebleness of my strength, the insignificance of my devices, and my humiliation in the sight of people. O Most Merciful One! You are the Lord of the oppressed, You are my Lord. To whom would You entrust my affairs? To a stranger who would scowl at me? Or to an enemy who would control me?

If you are not displeased with me, then I do not care (about any hardship), but an ease bestowed by You will be more accommodating to me. I seek refuge in the light of Your countenance (by which all darkness is dispersed and all affairs of this world and of the hereafter are kept straight) from pouncing Your anger or the coming of Your wrath. I seek your pardon in order that you may be pleased with me. There is no power nor strength except in You.

Grief-stricken, the Prophet returned to Mecca.

## **Jinns Accept Islam (620 A.D.)**

Jinns are surely hidden from human eyes, but not from the eyes of prophets and friends of God, and certainly not from the eyes of the master of the prophets of God, Muhammad. We have written about the jinns earlier in this book; so, the reader may refer to that part.

On his way back home, Muhammad halted one night at a grove at Nakhla, where he recited some verses of the Holy Qur'an after having finished his prayers, as was his habit. A party of seven or nine jinns happened to pass by as they were en route to Yemen. They were deeply impressed by the melodious tone of the Prophet, the excellence of the language of the recitation, and the depth of the meaning in those verses. Appearing before the Prophet, they accepted his doctrines, and when they

reached their destination, they disseminated them among their folks who also embraced Islam. Let us shed more light on this incident by referring to the books of exegesis (*tafsir*) of the Holy Qur'an where we read the following in *Tafsir al-Qummi*:

The Messenger of Allah was reciting the Qur'an in the depth of the night when a group of jinns happened to be passing by. When they heard the recitation by the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, they listened to it attentively. Having seen that he finished his recitation, they came to the Messenger of Allah, accepted Islam, believing in him. The Messenger of Allah taught them Islam's legislative code (the *Shari'a*), whereupon the entire Chapter (titled "al-Jinn," the jinns) was revealed. They used to always return to the Messenger of Allah from time to time; therefore, the Messenger of Allah ordered the Commander of the Faithful (Ali) to teach them and to explain everything to them.<sup>12</sup>

## **Da'wah Beyond Mecca**

After his return from Taif, Muhammad reached the cave of Hira where he stopped, sending Zayd to negotiate with a number of sympathetic Meccans for protection. He could not venture to enter the city where he knew fully well that his pagan opponents would not welcome his return. After prolonged negotiations, Zayd successfully secured the help of Mut'im ibn 'Adiy, one of those who had sided with Abu Talib in demanding an end to the sanctions against the Hashemites. He personally went to Muhammad, offered him security and escorted him to his house in Mecca. Now the Prophet could appear in public only during the months of Rajab and Thul-Hijjah to preach the doctrines of Islam to the pilgrims and to the stubborn Meccans.

Yet despite all these disappointments and persecutions, Islam was spreading in other tribes too, although very slowly and not on a grand scale. Its simplicity and rationality were such that it only needed to reach the ears of the people to stir their souls. For thirteen years, Quraish did their very best to stifle the new religion, but their opposition itself provided the necessary publicity. Tribes from all corners of Arabia flocked to Medina during the time of the annual pilgrimage.

Lest they should be influenced by Muhammad's message, Quraish, particularly Abu Lahab and Abu Jahl, used to post themselves outside the city to warn the pilgrims that: "An infidel has been born in our city who dishonours our idols; he even speaks ill of Lat and 'Uzza; do not listen to him." People naturally became curious and wanted to know more about this man. A disciple of the Prophet, recalling his earlier days, stated: "When I was young, I used to hear from the people going to Mecca that a person claiming Prophethood had been born there."

When the news spread, most people laughed and jeered at Muhammad, yet there were a few seekers of the truth who listened to his message and were influenced by it. Hafiz Ibn Hajar, in his book *Al-Isabah*, mentions the names of several companions who had come from Yemen and other distant places and, after secretly accepting Islam, had gone back to work among their tribes. The clan of Abu Musa al-

Ash'ari of Yemen accepted Islam in this manner.

Tufail ibn 'Amr, of the tribe of Daws, was a famous poet who could by his poetic fervor sway the feelings and attitudes of the Arabs. He had come into contact with the Prophet and was so enthralled by the marvelous diction of the Qur'an recited to him that he accepted Islam instantly. He was able to win some converts in his tribe, but in general the tribe did not listen to him. He came back to the Prophet and requested him to curse the Daws, but the Prophet prayed thus: "O God! Guide the Daws and send them to me (as Muslims)!" It was not long before the entire tribe had accepted Islam.

Dhamad ibn Tha'laba was a chief of the Azd tribe and a childhood friend of the Prophet. He came to Mecca and was told that Muhammad had gone mad. He approached the Prophet and said that he could cure him. The Prophet replied, "All praise be to God; I praise Him and seek His forgiveness. If God were to guide anyone, he cannot go astray, and if He leaves anyone to stray, none can guide him. I declare that there is no god but Allah. He is one and has no partner, and further (I declare) that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.'

It is almost impossible to reproduce the vibrating force and captivating charm of the Arabic text which so much impressed Dhamad that he accepted Islam immediately and through him his entire tribe submitted to it. Another physician, namely al-Harith ibn Kildah al-Thaqafi, the most skilled physician of the Thaqif tribe, attempted to likewise "cure" the Prophet of his alleged madness. The reader will come across what went on between him and the Prophet later in this book *Insha-Allah*.

Abu Tharr of the tribe of Ghifar was one of those who were disgusted with idol-worship. When he heard about the Prophet, he went to Mecca and incidentally met Ali with whom he stayed for three days. Ali introduced him to the Prophet and Abu Tharr accepted Islam. The Prophet advised him to go back home, but in his zeal he publicly announced in the Ka'ba: "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet."

He was given a sound thrashing by Quraish and was rescued by 'Abbas who reminded Quraish that their trade caravans passed through routes under the control of Abu Tharr's tribe. Returning to his tribe, he invited it to accept Islam. About half of his tribesmen accepted Islam and the rest followed suit after the Prophet's migration to Medina. Since the Ghifars were on very friendly terms with the tribe of Aslam, the latter were influenced by the former and also accepted Islam.

Quite a number of persons had incidentally heard the Qur'an being recited and were captivated by it. Jubayr ibn Mut'im had come to Medina to pay ransom for the prisoners of the Battle of Badr. He happened to hear the Prophet reciting the following verses:

***Or were they created out of naught? Or are they the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the Earth? Nay, but they have no certainty. (Qur'an, 52:35-36)***

Jubayr later stated that when he heard these verses, he felt that his heart was about to soar.

## **'Ayisha Engaged to Muhammad (621 A.D.)**

Abu Bakr could sense the impact of the great loss the Prophet suffered at the death of his first loving and supportive wife Khadija. He noticed how his friend Muhammad looked forlorn and depressed, and he was awaiting an opportunity to cheer him up and to cement his friendship with him. Abu Bakr, therefore, offered to marry his daughter 'Ayisha, who was born in 613 A.D., to Muhammad, an offer which Muhammad first politely declined. But Abu Bakr was not to give up easily.

He kept persuading him till he consented on the condition that the wedding should be postponed for the time being. 'Ayisha was thus formally engaged to Muhammad in 621 A.D. and the wedding took place two to three years later in 2 A.H./623 A.D. Having seen how his friend Abu Bakr succeeded in marrying his daughter to Muhammad, "Omar ibn al-Khattab now expressed his desire that the Prophet should marry his daughter Hafsa, a desire which was fulfilled a few years later: in 624 A.D. to be exact, as it will be discussed later.

The news that a Prophet had arisen was spreading. A deputation of about twenty Christians from Nazareth came to meet him and embraced Islam. In the same year, that is, 621 A.D., when the Prophet was preaching at Aqaba, a place between Mina and 'Arafat, six men belonging to the tribe of al-Khzraj and residing in Yathrib happened to come to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage. They listened to him attentively. Hearing the fundamental principles of his faith and discerning his own sentiments, they were captivated by the truth of his words and immediately embraced Islam. Upon their return to Yathrib, they disseminated the doctrines of Islam among their people and announced their conversion to the Islamic creed, praising Muhammad greatly for his truth, character, affectionate nature, high moral conduct and attractive personality.

## **First Pledge of 'Aqaba (622 A.D.)**

Similarly, in the next year (622 A.D.), at the time of the annual pilgrimage, twelve Yathribites, who were drawn by curiosity at the reports given by those six Yathribite converts, came along with five of the same six Yathribites and undertook a pledge known as the First Pledge of 'Aqaba (mountain-pass), so named because it was done in an out of the way mountain-pass outside Mecca. The pledge was: "We will not associate anything with God; we will neither steal nor commit adultery nor fornication; we will not kill our children; we will abstain from calumny and slander; we will obey the Prophet in everything, and we will be faithful to him in weal and sorrow.'

Mus'ab ibn 'Omair, a grandson of Hashim, and 'Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum, who were two of the Prophet's disciples, were sent along with them to teach them the Qur'an and the fundamentals of Islam. These men were required to inform the Prophet of their success in their efforts at the same place in the following pilgrimage season. It is worth mentioning here that before accepting Islam, Mus'ab ibn 'Omair used to enjoy a life of luxury with his family, being the favourite of his parents. But when he accepted

Islam, his parents and the rest of his family severed all ties with him, rendering him in all reality without a family. This is a typical case of most of the early converts to Islam. They were disowned by their families and tribes and deprived of the most basic needs from the latter who treated them as though they were now enemies.

On the same day after having accepted Islam at the hands of Mus'ab ibn 'Omair, Sa'd ibn Ma'ath, a Meccan dignitary, went to the quarters inhabited by the offspring of 'Amr ibn 'Awf and shouted as loudly as he could: "O Banu 'Amr! O Banu 'Awf! Let no man or woman or a virgin or a married woman or an old man or a young one stay without coming out! This day is not the day of a veil or a curtain! Come out!" When they all came out of their houses to see what he had to say, he asked their crowd the following question: "What is my status among you?!"

They said, "You are our master and the one whose word is obeyed among us; we shall never disobey you; so, order us whatever you please." Sa'd ibn Ma'ath then said, "I shall never speak one word to your men or women or children unless you testify that: There is no god except Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Praise be to Allah Who has bestowed upon us such a blessing. It is a blessing about which the Jews used to talk to us." Not a single person in the crowd hesitated to pronounce this sacred testimony, becoming Muslims, each and every one of them. Holding and turning Mus'ab ibn 'Omair to face him, he said to him, "Manifest your affair, and invite people to Islam publicly."<sup>13</sup>

The period between the First and the Second Pledges was one of anxious waiting. The Meccans were sternly adamant, the people of Taif had rejected Muhammad, and the mission was making a slow progress. Yet hope had been engendered by its diffusion to the distant city of Yathrib and the conviction was very much there that the truth would ultimately prevail.

Describing this period, Muir says:

"Mahomet, thus holding his people at bay, waiting, in the still expectation of victory, to outward appearance defenseless, and with his little band, as it were, in the lion's mouth, yet trusting in his Almighty's power whose messenger he believed himself to be, resolute and unmoved, presents a spectacle of sublimity paralleled only in the sacred records by such scenes as that of the prophet of Israel, when he complained to his Master, 'I, even I only, am left.'

## **Mi'raj: Ascension of The Prophet (622 A.D.)**

The date is the 27th of Rajab, twelve years after the inception of the Prophetic mission. It was then that God Almighty, in His infinite Mercy and Benevolence, bestowed upon the Prophet the unique distinction of being lifted to the furthest limit of heaven and of being shown the gorgeous splendor of the heavens and the universe:

***Glory to (Him) Who took His servant for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque (Ka'ba) to the Furthest Mosque (Jerusalem) whose precincts We have blessed, in order that We might show***

***him some of Our signs, for He is the Hearer and the Seer.* '(Qur'an, 17:1)**

There has been a good deal of controversy over the question whether the ascension (*mi'raj*) was only a vision or an actual bodily journey. The majority of the traditionists agree that it was a real physical journey, much like the bodily ascension of Jesus to heaven and the descent of Adam to earth.

The fact is that this controversy was created by Banu Umayyah whose interest in Islam was based not on faith but on politics and who did not like the idea of any miracle of the Prophet gaining ground in the Muslims' minds. Their department of forgery obliged them in this respect also. Both Abu Bakr and his daughter 'Ayisha did not believe in the Prophet's bodily ascent to heavens, and the Umayyads' department of fabrication coined *ahadith* casting doubt about such a physical ascension. The cadre of this department of fabrication forgot that 'Ayisha was not married to the Prophet when the ascension took place; she was still living with her family; the Prophet did not marry her except two years later.

Two "traditions" from that department are repeatedly cited by the Christians, the Ahmadis, and a group of Sunnis; these are:

'Ayisha is supposed to have said that during the whole night of the Ascension, the body of the Prophet was on the bed.

Mu'awiyah said that the *mi'raj* was a "true dream."

Now the fact is that the *mi'raj* (whatever its interpretation) took place in Mecca before the Hijra.

'Ayisha did not enter the house of the Prophet till one year after the *hijra*. How could she say that she did not miss the body of the Prophet at that time?!

There is only one possible explanation: This "tradition" was forged by someone who did not know the chronology of Islamic history. Otherwise, he could not have attributed this "tradition" to 'Ayisha.

Mu'awiyah was such an enemy of the Prophet that 8 years after the *hijra*, Mecca was conquered without bloodshed and Abu Sufyan, his father, seeing no alternative, pretended to have accepted Islam.

Mu'awiyah fled to Bahrain and wrote a very nasty letter to his father condemning him for his acceptance of Islam. It was not till the 9th year of Hijra that Mu'awiyah brought himself to profess Islam, yet his deeds belied his words. And the *mi'raj* took place several years before then. How could he know what the facts of the *Mi'raj* were?! He does not mention his source of information, and the inference is that there was no such source.

If you want to witness how politics controlled the version of Islam professed by the Umayyads, read one more 'tradition' invented in their laboratory:

The king on the throne of Damascus is 'Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan. Iraq and Hijaz are in the hands of 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr. 'Abdul-Malik does not like the idea of the pilgrims of his domain being obliged to go to Mecca (which is in the enemy's hands); so, he wants to enhance the prestige of Baitul Maqdis (Jerusalem), which lies within his domain and plans to establish "hajj" to Baitul Maqdis. As part of that plan, all previous declarations that the *Mi'raj* was a dream are forgotten, and a tradition is forged that the

final destination of the journey of *the mi'raj* was Baitul Maqdis.

Soon thereafter, 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr is defeated and Hijaz comes under Syrian control; otherwise, we would surely have seen two centers of *hajj* in the Muslim world!

The footprint of the Prophet is still visible on the stone of a rock at Jerusalem where the Prophet ascended to heaven. A mosque was built by caliph "Omar to preserve the memory of the footprint on the stone which still stands at the same place.

## **Second Pledge of 'Aqaba (622/623 A.D.)**

On their return to Yathrib, the converts to the faith spread the doctrines of Islam and a large number of Yathribites became adherents to the faith. In the following year, seventy-three men and two women from among the converts of Yathrib's Aws and Khazraj tribes, including the twelve who took the first pledge, accompanied Mus'ab ibn 'Omayr to the Prophet together with a Jewish caravan of three to five hundred men headed by Ibn Ubay in order to accept Islam and to invite the Prophet to their city. They all swore allegiance to him. This pledge is known as the Second Pledge of 'Aqaba. The Prophet took with him his uncle 'Abbas, now the head of the family and formally his protector, although not a Muslim yet. 'Abbas exhorted the Yathribites to protect the Prophet.

In the Spring of the same year, 13 years after the inception of the Prophetic mission, an exodus of the believers to Yathrib had already started. This immigration went on quietly. Within two months, about one hundred and fifty Meccan Muslims succeeded in reaching Yathrib. Finally, the open departure of "Omar ibn al-Khattab in the company of twenty other converts alarmed Quraish a great deal. Fearing none in Mecca, "Omar departed in broad daylight. Both Ali and Abu Bakr, however, remained with the Prophet in Mecca to keep him company.

## **Another Attempt to Assassinate The Prophet**

When the Meccans realized how Islam had struck roots in Yathrib and was fast spreading there, their animosity knew no bounds. Their chiefs, such as Abu Jahl, Abu Lahab, Abu Sufyan, and 'Otbah, gathered at Dar al-Nadwa and, after rejecting suggestions to imprison or banish Muhammad, they planned to assassinate him.

***And remember when the unbelievers plotted against you to imprison you, or to kill you, or to drive you out, they plotted and planned and Allah, too, planned. (Qur'an, 8:30)***

In order to escape the vendetta of Banu Hashim, it was decided that every clan should provide one man, and that they should collectively assault the Prophet as soon as he came out of his house. But God had apprised His Prophet of this plan well in advance through arch-angel Gabriel who revealed to him these verses:

***And when those who disbelieved devised plans against you that they might confine you or slay you or drive you out (of their city), and they devised plans and Allah, too, had arranged a plan, and Allah is the best of planners.*** (Qur'an, 8:30)

Gabriel conveyed the Almighty's order to Muhammad to leave Mecca and to go to Yathrib where the Almighty, as the verse above implies, had already had a plan for him; surely Allah is the best of planners. Muhammad informed Ali of this divine command, ordering him to sleep in his (Prophet's) bed. When Ali heard that his life was to be the ransom for the Prophet's, he prostrated before Allah to thank Him for this unique honour. It was the first *sajda* of "shukr" (prostration of gratitude) in Islam. The Prophet covered Ali with his own green sheet. Thus, Ali slept soundly on the Prophet's bed as the Prophet walked out of the house under the infidels' very noses.

The moment Muhammad stood at his house door, he heard the infidels saying, "Muhammad claims that if you swear the oath of allegiance to him, you will rule the Arabs and the non-Arabs. Then, after your death, you will be resurrected to reside in gardens like the earthly gardens. And if you do not swear it, you will be slaughtered, then, after your death, you will be resurrected where there will be a fire for you to burn you!" The Prophet responded by saying, "Yes, I say so," but they did not hear him, being busy chatting with each other. Then he took hold of a handful of dust as he recited the first eight verses of Surat Ya-Sin. He threw the dust over their heads. None of the enemies saw him going out. The verses he recited are:

***In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful***

***Ya-Sin. I swear by the Qur'an (which is) full of wisdom, (that) most surely you are one of the prophets, on a right course. (This is) a revelation of the Mighty, the most Merciful. So that you may warn people whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless. Certainly the word has proved true of most of them, so they do not believe. Surely We have placed chains on their necks, and these reach up to their chins, so they have their heads raised aloft.*** (Qur'an, 36: 1-8)

Muhammad had also ordered Ali to return the things which people had entrusted to him for safe keeping (since burglaries were quite common) to their respective owners.

The polytheists of Quraishite clans all the time thought that it was the Prophet who was sleeping and were anxiously waiting to kill him.

According to *Usudul Ghabah* of Ibn Athir al-Jazri, *Ihya' ul 'Oloom* (of al-Ghazali) and *Tarikhul Khamis* of *qadi* Husain al-Diyarbakri, when Ali slept in Muhammad's bed, God said to arch-angels Gabriel and Michael, "I establish brotherhood between you two and increase the life of one of you over that of the other. Having done so, I ask which of you is prepared to sacrifice his life for his brother?" Both Gabriel and Michael heard this address from the Lord but each held his life dearer than the other's and was not prepared to help his brother by sacrificing his own life.

God then addressed them again, "Can you not be like Ali ibn Abu Talib? See, I created brotherhood

between Muhammad and Ali, and now Ali is sleeping in Muhammad's bed determined to sacrifice his own life for his brother. Now you both go to earth and guard Ali from the mischief of the enemies.' Then the two nearest-to-God angels came down and took their positions near the head and the feet of Ali. Gabriel said: "Hail to thee! Hail to thee! Who can be like thee, O son of Abu Talib, so that the Lord is proud of thee and exalts thy virtue before the angels?!" And so it happened. When the Prophet was on his way to Yathrib, God revealed to him the following verse in praise of Ali:

***And amongst men there is one who sells his life seeking the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is most benevolent to His slaves.* (Qur'an, 2:207)**

The Prophet went to the mountain of Thawr in the dead of night accompanied by Abu Bakr and hid in a cave near its summit. This place is about 5 miles from Mecca.

There are two versions as to how Abu Bakr came to accompany the Prophet. One narrative says that the Prophet himself went to the house of Abu Bakr and told him to accompany him.

The other narrative says that when the Prophet went away, Abu Bakr came there and asked Ali as to where the Prophet was. Ali told him that he had already left for Yathrib. Abu Bakr went out looking for the Prophet. The night was dark; therefore, when he came nearer, the Prophet thought that an infidel was pursuing him. He started going faster and faster, till his shoe-lace was broken and his toes were badly wounded. Then Abu Bakr called him. Recognizing his voice, the Prophet stopped. Abu Bakr caught up with him and asked permission to accompany him. Thus, they went together till they reached Thawr.

At dawn, the infidels, including Meccan dignitaries such as Abu Jahl, al-Hakam ibn Abul-'as, 'Oqbah ibn Mu'eeet, al-Nadir ibn al-Harith, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, Ibn al-Ghaytalah, Zam'ah ibn al-Aswad, Tu'mah ibn 'Adiy, Abu Lahab, Ubayy ibn Khalaf, and both Nabeeh and Munbih sons of al-Hajjaj, broke into the Prophet's house.

They were flabbergasted upon finding Ali in the bed instead of the Prophet. "Where is Muhammad?" they asked Ali who told them that he did not know. It is said that they beat and confined Ali for about an hour then released him. At once they started looking for Muhammad, tracking him right up to the mouth of the cave. The searching party was headed by one Suraqah ibn Malik who was motivated by greed rather than by zeal for paganism and its man-made gods.

Still, they never thought of looking into the cave. Why?

As soon as the fugitives entered the cave, a spider wove cobweb at the entrance and a pair of pigeons built their nest at the mouth of the very cave in the darkness of the night and laid eggs at once. It was that cobweb and the nest with the eggs that made the blood-thirsty enemies believe that Muhammad could not be in that cave; otherwise, the cobweb would have been destroyed and the nest and the eggs broken! It was at this moment that they got so near to the cave that Abu Bakr started weeping, being afraid of the possible discovery. But the Prophet consoled him saying,

**“Grieve not; surely Allah is with us’ (Qur'an, 9:40).**

Having seen how the pigeons and the spider helped save his life, the Messenger of God supplicated to the Almighty for them, praying that He reward them on his behalf. As a token of his appreciation, Muhammad prohibited Muslims ever since from killing spiders or pigeons.

Both men<sup>14</sup> left Mecca on the first night of Rabi'ul-Awwal, reaching the cave of Thawr before dawn and remaining therein up to the 4th of Rabi'ul-Awwal. On the 5th, they started their journey to Yathrib. 'Abdullah ibn 'Orayqit al-Daylami was hired to show them the way. Abu Bakr offered one of his she-camels to the Prophet for the journey. The Prophet accepted it on the condition that Abu Bakr accepted its price. Thus, Abu Bakr sold one she-camel (which had cost him 200 dirhams) to the Prophet for 900 dirhams.

Seeing how they missed the opportunity to kill Muhammad, Abu Jahl announced a prize of one hundred camels for anyone who brought Muhammad to them alive or dead. He hired a crier to cry out throughout the city saying, “O Meccans! Whoever brings Muhammad or leads us to his hiding place will receive one hundred camels! And whoever brings us the son of Abu Quhafah (Abu Bakr) or leads us to his hiding place will receive one hundred camels!”

Lured by the promise of such a generous reward, “Abu Sahl” Buraydah ibn al-Hasib al-Aslami rode in command of seventy of his tribesmen seeking to capture Muhammad. Having left the cave a short while ago, Muhammad found himself face-to-face with Buraydah! “Who are you?” asked Muhammad. “I am Buraydah,” the man answered without asking about the identity of the inquirer. Muhammad turned to Abu Bakr and said, “Our affair is made easy (*barada*<sup>15</sup>) and is amended!” Then the Prophet asked Buraydah, “Who do you belong to?” Buraydah said, “From Aslam (Banu Aslam, the offspring of Aslam<sup>16</sup>).”

The Messenger of Allah then said, “We sure are now safe (*salimna*)!” “From whom?” asked Buraydah. “From Banu Sahm! Your arrow (*sahm*) is now out<sup>17</sup>!” “And who are you?!” asked Buraydah. “I am Muhammad son of 'Abdullah, the Messenger of Allah,” answered the Prophet. “I testify,” responded Buraydah, “that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.” All those who were in Buraydah's company embraced Islam there and then, having been impressed and captivated by the Messenger of Allah.

In the morning, Buraydah advised the Prophet thus: “Do not enter Yathrib without carrying a standard.” Buraydah took off his own turban, tied it to a post and carried it in front of the Prophet. Since they were still in the outskirts of Mecca, Buraydah asked the Prophet, “O Prophet of Allah! Would you like to be my guest?” Muhammad said, “My she-camel receives her own orders [as to where the Prophet should spend the night].” Buraydah said, “Praise be to Allah! The Banu Sahm have submitted to the will of Allah willingly, not unwillingly!”<sup>18</sup>

During the first day of the trip to Yathrib, the Prophet halted for a short while at a place called Qadid where he and his companions met a virtuous lady named Umm Ma'bad of the tribe of Khuza'ah. Her

tribe is actually an ally of Quraish. The men asked her as she sat in the shade of her tent to sell them some dates and meat, but she did not have any. The Messenger of Allah saw a she-camel tied next to the tent. "What is this she-camel, O Umm Ma'bid?" asked the Prophet. She told him that was a worn-out she-camel that could not produce any milk. "Do you permit me to milk her?" was the Prophet's next question.

The old woman told Muhammad that he was welcome to milk the she-camel only if he could find any milk in her udders at all. Muhammad supplicated to his Lord then passed his holy hands on the she-camel's udders. He asked for the largest container with which the woman could provide him. He milked the she-camel till the container was completely full. First he let the old woman drink of that milk, then he let Abu Bakr and his slave drink, then the road guide. He was the last to drink of it... Such humbleness is typical only of the prophets of God. Before leaving, he milked the she-camel again and left the container full with the old woman.

When Abu Ma'bad, the old woman's husband, came back from the pasture with his animals suddenly fattened, another miracle, he listened to his wife describing the person of the Prophet, whereupon he was very excited and wished he had been at home to pay him homage. He then spontaneously composed verses of poetry describing both miracles: the milking of the she-camel that had no milk at all before Muhammad touched her udders, and that of his own herd suddenly becoming healthy and fat. These poetic verses can be reviewed on pp. 42–43 of Vol. 19 of al-Majlisi's work *Bihar al-Anwar*. As a matter of fact, when the great poet Hassan ibn Thabit came to know about these miracles and about the poetry composed by Abu Ma'bad, he was inspired to compose poetry of his own on the same theme, using the same rhyme and meter employed by Abu Ma'bad. His poetic lines are cited on the same page...

When the Prophet got up to resume his journey, he performed the ablution in preparation for his afternoon prayers, throwing some water over a plant near the tent. The plant was found the next day to have miraculously grown into a tree laden with fruits. Its leaves were larger than they had ever been. People who tasted its fruit found it very delicious and aromatic. The tree was henceforth considered blessed, and soon the sick from various parts of Arabia went there to be cured by its fruit and leaves. It soon acquired fame all over the Arabian Peninsula. People from distant places thronged around it. Exactly ten years later (in 11 A.H./632 A.D.), it suddenly shed all its fruit.

The incident coincided with the day when the Messenger of Allah died. About thirty years later (42 A.H./662 A.D.), on the day of Imam Ali's martyrdom in Kufa, Iraq, the fruits of the tree again fell down all at once. It never produced any fruit ever since, yet people kept going there in order to be cured by its leaves. Finally, on the day of the martyrdom of Imam Husain, grandson of the Prophet, in Kerbala, Iraq, a red fluid was found flowing profusely from its trunk and the tree dried up. Reference to this tree and to its miraculous benefits is recorded in al-Hakim's book titled *Al-amali* and also on p. 41, Vol. 18, of al-Majlisi's work *Bihar al-Anwar*.

As a matter of fact, a voluminous book can be written about the miracles performed by the Prophet of Islam, and there are books already written about this subject. If the reader wishes that I write one such book, then I request him/her to supplicate to Allah to enable me to do so; his/her supplication will *Insha-Allah* be answered. If you thus supplicate, I plead to the Almighty to grant you a handsome share of the rewards of writing it, one that will last as long as you live and beyond that till the Day of Judgment; He is the most Generous of the generous ones; nobody can ever surpass Him in His generosity; He surely can do anything at all; He hears the supplication, and He responds...

On the second day of the trip to Yathrib undertaken by Muhammad, Abu Bakr and the two other men, and just when they thought that they were out of danger, they saw in the distance behind them a man in hot pursuit of them. It was Suraqah ibn Malik who was tempted by the one hundred camels' prize; he had not yet given up the search. At the sight, Abu Bakr again began to tremble for fear of being captured. "We are lost!" he cried out.

Muhammad comforted him again by repeating what he had said to him when they were inside the cave: "Do not be afraid; Allah is with us." Saying so, the Prophet prayed God for protection. As the pursuer advanced, his charger reared and sank motionless in the sands. Both the rider and his mount were now helpless. Bewildered and astounded, Suraqah became convinced of the interference of Divine Providence on behalf of Muhammad, so he entreated the forgiveness of the Messenger of God, promising never to betray him again. The Prophet prayed for him, and his charger got up. He rode back home to Mecca, and Muhammad was once again free to pursue his course along the sea coast.

Journeying by unfrequented routes, the men safely reached Quba (2 miles south of Yathrib) one week later, on the 12th of Rabi'ul-Awwal, 1 A.H. (September 27, 622 A.D.). The Prophet's camel sat down on its own at the place called Al-Taqwa where the Prophet alighted and was hosted by Sa'd ibn Khath'amah. Abu Bakr proceeded to Yathrib and became the guest of Zayd ibn Kharj who lived at Sonh, a suburb of Yathrib.

There, the Prophet, now 53 years old, halted at Quba for four days waiting for his right hand Ali to join him before proceeding to Yathrib. He did not want to triumphantly enter the city without Ali, his main supporter and confidant. There, he laid the foundations of the first mosque in Islam, the mosque of Quba which has been mentioned in the Qur'an as "the Mosque founded on piety (*taqwa*)," hence it is also referred to as "Masjid al-Taqwa." After four days, Ali joined the Prophet and his party at Quba after having journeyed, all by himself and on foot, travelling at night and hiding during daytime, the entire distance of about 250 miles. His feet were sorely lacerated and bleeding. Upon his arrival, the Prophet expressed his thrill to see him, received him with open arms and, finding him tired, exhausted and his feet bleeding, he shed tears out of his affection for him. Muhammad subsequently applied the moisture of his mouth to Ali's wounds and prayed for him. That was sufficient to bring him an instant relief by the power of God.

Then the Prophet and his band of faithfuls proceeded to Yathrib shortly before noon, entering it on

Friday the 16th of Rabi'ul-Awwal corresponding to October 1, 622 A.D. with a group of followers who had come from Yathrib to welcome the Prophet. This was the Hijra from which dates the Islamic (*hijri*) calendar.

***Whoever obeys the Prophet surely obeys Allah.' (Qur'an, 4:80)***

## **Why the Persecution?**

Let us stop here for a minute to analyze the reasons behind the persecution to which Prophet Muhammad and his followers were exposed.

The Prophet of Islam and his devoted band of followers had patiently endured untold hardships, tyranny and oppression for thirteen years and ultimately had to abandon their hearths and homes, sacrificing whatever worldly possessions they had. They did not pursue any worldly gains, nor had they aspired for any position of worldly eminence or share in any authority.

The Prophet had unequivocally told the Meccans, "I desire neither riches nor eminence nor dominion. I am sent by God Who has ordered me to announce glad tidings to you. I convey to you the words of my Lord. I admonish you. If you accept the message I bring you, God will be favourable to you both in this world and in the next. If you reject my admonition, I shall be patient and leave God to judge between you and me.'

The early Muslims were harassed and persecuted simply because they believed in One and the Only God, the Lord of the universe, and worshipped Him without ascribing to Him any partner or colleague. They had not exercised any compulsion, for the Qur'an had said:

***There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the rebels (false deities) and believes in Allah, he indeed has laid hold of the strongest handle which shall not break off. (Qur'an, 2:256)***

The Qur'an only appealed to the inner consciousness of man, to his reason and intellect. Nevertheless, the new religion was in sharp contrast with the cults practiced by Quraish which ages of observance and belief had sanctified for them. The Prophet preached the equality of man and stressed that in righteousness alone lay the superiority of one over the other. Quraish saw in this leveling of distinctions the end of their authority and privileges as the guardians of the Ka'ba, of their political and social hegemony, and of their vested interests at large.

The new religion placed restraints upon the promiscuous and unbridled license wherein the society indulged. It heralded the end of licentious ways, of sensual pleasures and drunken orgies to which Quraish were, by and large, espoused. It imposed spiritual discipline in the form of prayers, fasting and charity and frowned upon avarice, greed, slander, falsehood, indecency and other vices with which the society was permeated. In short, it meant the giving up of old ways and the taking to a new life of

austere piety and chastity. The opposition of the Meccans was, therefore, sharp and violent.

They relentlessly persecuted the followers of the new faith and made life so difficult for them that ultimately the Prophet and his followers had to abandon their hearths and homes for more congenial surroundings. The Prophet did not even invoke the wrath of God on them. When once he was requested by Khabbab son of ‘Arrat<sup>19</sup> to curse Quraish, the Prophet pulled him up saying, “People have gone by who were sown and torn to pieces in the cause of God, but they did not desist from their duties. God will accomplish His plan till a rider will go from Sinai to Hadramaut fearing none except God.’ What a true prophecy!

1. Yasir's son, ‘Ammar, is very well known in the history of Islam. His full name is “Abul-Yaqzan” `Ammar ibn Yasir al-Ansi, one of the foremost to accept Islam at the house of al-Arqam ibn Abu al-Arqam al-Makhzumi, “the house of Islam” where those who wished to embrace Islam would then go. ‘Ammar was martyred during the Battle of Siffeen at the age of 94 after having participated in both migrations to Ethiopia. He also participated with great courage in the Battle of Badr and was one of those who took part in “Bay`at al-Ridwan” to be discussed later in this book.

2. This boycott reminds me of the suffering of my people in Iraq at the hands of “Muslims” and non-Muslims who joined ranks in their satanic effort to starve and kill our people.

3. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 19, p. 2. According to this reference, the boycott continued not for three but for four years.

4. Ibid., p. 3.

5. A Magi is a Zoroastrian priest, a possessor of magic powers.

6. Prophet Muhammed was legendary for his passion for perfume! He would prefer to buy perfume when he went to the marketplace rather than food, opting to fast instead. Once he said, “I have enjoyed of your life only three (pleasures): prayers, perfume, and women!”

7. Actually, it did not become cool at his (Abraham's) command; rather, the Almighty ordered it, as the Holy Qur'an tells us, “We [Allah] said: O fire! Be a comfort and peace to Abraham” (Qur'an, 21:69). Habib did not know any better!

8. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 17, pp. 316–317.

9. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 17, pp. 307–311. The pages following these ones narrate numerous other miracles of the Prophet.

10. Alexander Pope, Essay on Man.

11. Mary the Copt was one of two Christian bondmaids, the other being her sister Sirin, presented to Muhammed, who freed her then married her, by the Roman governor of Egypt who had received a letter from Muhammed inviting him to accept Islam. The Prophet gifted Sirin to Hassan ibn Thabit, the famous poet and companion of the Prophet.

12. Abul-Hasan Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi, Tafsir al-Qummi, Vol. 2, pp. 274–275 (Beirut, Lebanon: Al-A`lam Foundation for Publications, 1412 A.H./1991 A.D.). The original text is, of course, written in Arabic.

13. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 19, p. 11.

14. According to al-Majlisi, they were not two but four men: The Prophet, Abu Bakr, the latter's slave `Amir ibn Faheerah, and their road guide `Abdullah ibn al-`Urayqat.

15. The name “Buraydah” spurred the Prophet to be optimistic. Literally, it means “easy” or “cool.” It is a noun derived from the verb barada (past), yabradu (present); barid, easy, cool or cold, is the adjective. The reader can easily sense the Prophet's confidence in his Maker's protection as well as his courage and sense of humor even in the most critical of situations.

16. 2The word “aslama” means “became Muslim.”

17. 3This is a figure of speech in Arabic meaning: “You have now won.”

18. These details and many more can be reviewed on p. 40, Vol. 19, of al-Majlisi's voluminous book Bihar al-Anwar.

19. The reader remembers Khabbab from the incident detailing the conversion of `Omer ibn al-Khattab. His nickname is Abu `Abdullah, and he was one of those who were persecuted by Quraish for accepting Islam. He participated in the Battle

of Badr then went to reside in Kufa where he died in 37 A.H. (some say in 39 A.H.). The Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abu Talib praised him at the time of his death saying, “May Allah have mercy upon Khabbab; he willingly accepted Islam, obediently migrated, lived as a mujahid, and supported Islam with his might. Surely Allah rewards the doers of good.”

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