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The Caravan of the Apostle of God

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

We notice that while Ali bin Abi Talib after fulfilling his mission at Yemen was with great enthusiasm, making arrangements for his journey to Mecca. The Holy Prophet, on the other hand, was busy in the preparations necessary for performing the obligatory statute of pilgrimage.

The Prophet of God had not offered pilgrimage after his emigration to Medina. All of a sudden the good news spread that the Messenger of God was proceeding towards the sacred city of Mecca. In order to avail the opportunity of accompanying the Prophet people from every corner of Arabia thronged in multitude. Within no time tents of more than 100,000 people desirous of pilgrimage were seen planted in the environs of the city of Medina.

On Saturday, the twenty fifth of Zilqa'ad 10 A.H., corresponding with the year 633 A.D., the last Messenger of God took bath and put on some simple garments comprising of a calico mantle for lower part of the body and a wrapper. He applied perfume to the body and clothes, offered noon-prayers and accompanied by the members of his household came out of the city. The caravan was ready to start and waiting for the order of departure. Receiving the signal to move on an immense concourse of human beings was seen surging up on the horizon.

A famous companion of the Holy Prophet, Jabir bin Abdullah Al-An'sari narrates, "When I looked to the front and behind and to the right and the left and then towards the extreme end which could come within sight only heads were visible. When the Prophet uttered, 'Here I am at Thy service' thrilling voices joined in chorus chantingly echoed throughout the entire mountain and the desert".

The biographers have very cautiously quoted the figures and numbers. Their estimate is that the number of persons who set out for journey along with the Prophet of God was in no way less than ninety thousand. Besides this the Muslims who reached Mecca from other parts also numbered in thousands.

For instance, Imam Ali (a.s.) had led a large congregation of pilgrims to Mecca. Keeping this

consideration in mind the observation of the famous historian, Ibne Atheer Al-Jazari that the crowd on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage swelled to more than 140,000 seems to be quite correct.

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