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The First Year of Hijra

According to the investigations of the late Mahmood Pasha al-Falaki of Egypt, the day when Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of God, arrived in Quba was Monday, 8th of Rabi-I of the year 13 of the Proclamation, a date which corresponds to September 20, 622.

On the following Friday, 12th of Rabi-I (September 24), the Messenger of God left Quba, and entered Yathrib. He was lodged at the house of Abu Ayyub, as already noted.

The Construction of the Mosque in Yathrib

The first act of Muhammad Mustafa, may God bless him and his Ahlul-Bait, upon arrival in Yathrib, was to build a mosque in which to worship Allah. In front of the house of Abu Ayyub there was a vacant lot which belonged to two orphans. The Apostle summoned them and their guardians, and told them that he wanted to buy that land. They told him that they would be very happy to make that land a gift to him. But he refused to accept it as a gift, and insisted on paying its price. They eventually agreed to accept payment for their land. Payment was made and ground-breaking was begun immediately.

Explaining the reasons why the Apostle of God did not accept the land as a gift, M. Abul Kalam Azad says in his book, *Rasul-e-Rahmet (Messenger of Mercy)*, (Lahore, Pakistan, 1970):

The Apostle did not want to take anyone's obligation. Who can claim to be more faithful to him than Abu Bakr? And he himself said that he was more grateful to Abu Bakr for his moral and material support than to anyone else. And yet, when Abu Bakr wished to make a present to him of a camel on the eve of their departure from Makkah to Yathrib, he did not accept it until he had paid Abu Bakr its price. Similarly, in Yathrib, when he wanted to buy land to build a mosque on it, its owners offered it to him as a gift. But he refused to accept it as a gift. The land was acquired only when its owners agreed to accept its price from him which he paid.

The mosque of Yathrib was the ultimate in simplicity of conception and design. The material used in its construction was unbaked bricks and mortar for the walls, and date fronds for the roof which was

supported by trunks of palm trees. The alcove of the mosque pointed toward Jerusalem in the north. Each of the other three sides was pierced by a gate. The floor of the mosque had no covering at the beginning, not even a coarse matting.

Two huts were also built on the outer wall, one for Sauda the daughter of Zama'a; and the other for Ayesha, the daughter of Abu Bakr, the two wives of the Prophet at the time. New huts were built for new wives as they came in later years. It was the first time when Muslims worked as a team in a community project. In the years to come, this team was to build the mighty edifice of Islam.

Inspired by the presence of the Messenger of God, everyone of the Companions was vying to outdo the others. Among the Companions was Ammar ibn Yasir, who, according to Ibn Ishaq, was the first man in Islam to build a mosque. Ibn Ishaq, did not specify which mosque it was that Ammar built. But Dr. Taha Husain of Egypt says that Ammar had built a mosque in Makkah itself and he prayed in it, long before he migrated to Yathrib.

When the mosque was being built, an incident took place which Ibn Ishaq has recorded as follows:

“Ammar b. Yasir came in when they had overloaded him with bricks, saying, “They are killing me. They load me with burdens they cannot carry themselves.” Umm Salama, the Prophet’s wife said: “I saw the Apostle run his hand through his (Ammar’s) hair – for he was a curly-haired man – and say, “Alas, Ibn Sumayya! It is not they who will kill you, but a wicked band of men.”

(This prophecy is said to have been fulfilled when Ammar was killed at Siffin – Suhayli, ii, p.3)

Ali composed a rajaz verse on that day (when the mosque was being built):

There’s one that labors night and day

To build us mosques of brick and clay

And one who turns from dust away.

Ammar learned it and began to chant it.

When he persisted in it, one of the Prophet's companions thought that it was he who was referred to in it, according to what Ziyad b. Abdullah el-Bakkai told me from Ibn Ishaq. The latter had actually named the man.

He said: “I have heard what you have been saying for a long time, O Ibn Sumayya, and by God I think, I will hit you on the nose!” Now he had a stick in his hand, and the Apostle was very angry and said: “What is wrong between them and Ammar? He invites them to Paradise while they invite him to hell. Ammar is as dear to me as my own face. If a man behaves like this he will not be forgiven, so avoid him.”

Sufyan b. Uyana mentioned on the authority of Zakariya from al-Shabi that the first man to build a mosque was Ammar bin Yasir.

(Suhayli says: Ibn Ishaq did name the man, but Ibn Hisham preferred not to do so, as not to mention one of the Prophet's companions in discreditable circumstances. Therefore it can never be right to inquire after his identity. Abu Dharr says: Ibn Ishaq did name the man and said, "This man was Uthman b. Affan." The Cairo editors say that in the Mawahib al-Laduniya, al-Qastallani, d. A.D. 1517, said that the man is said to be Uthman b. Mazun. This latter writer may safely be ignored on this point.) "

At the site of the construction of the mosque, one may witness a most touching scene in the story of the early days of Islam – Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of God, removing dust, with his own hands, from the head and the face of Ammar ibn Yasar. He did not honor any other companion with a sign of such affection, love and tenderness.

When the Apostle of God reproved his companions for meddling with Ammar, and said that he (Ammar) was inviting them to paradise whereas they were inviting him to hell, he (the Apostle) was, most probably, paraphrasing the 41st verse of the 40th chapter (Sura-tul-Momin) in Qur'an which reads as follows:

And o my people! How strange it is for me to call you to salvation while you call me to the fire.

Commenting upon this verse, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, the translator of Al-Qur'an al-Majid, says:

It may seem strange according to the laws of this world that he should be seeking their good while they are seeking his damnation; but that is the merit of Faith.

The companion who tangled with Ammar ibn Yasir when the mosque of Yathrib was being built, was no one other than Uthman b. Affan, one of the future khalifas of the Muslims. He was squeamish about working in dust and mud, and getting his clothes soiled. When the Apostle of God showed him his displeasure, he had to keep quiet but the incident rankled in his heart, and he never forgot it. Many years later when he became khalifa, and found power in his hand, he ordered his slaves to knock down Ammar ibn Yasir and to beat him up – the man who was as dear to Muhammad Mustafa, the Apostle of God, as his (the Apostle's) own face.

The claim that it was not Uthman bin Affan but Uthman bin Mazun or somebody else who, by threatening Ammar ibn Yasir, roused the anger of the Apostle of God, is only an attempt at window-dressing by the "court" historians of later times.

At this time, Ammar ibn Yasir already enjoyed four distinctions which must have made him the envy of all the other companions of Muhammad, the Messenger of God.

They were:

1.He belonged to the *First Muslim Family*.

2.He was the son of the First and the Second Martyrs of Islam. His mother, Sumayya, was the first, and his father, Yasir, was the second martyr in Islam. It was an honor not attained by any other companion of Muhammad Mustafa.

3.He was the builder of the first mosque.

4.He was the beloved of Muhammad Mustafa, the Apostle of God.

May God bless Ammar ibn Yasir and his parents.

Adhan and Prayer

It was mandatory for Muslims to pray five times a day. They had to suspend their workaday activities, and to perform this duty. But there was no way to alert them that the time had come for praying.

According to the Sunni traditions, a companion suggested to the Prophet that a trumpet should be blown or a bell should be rung to alert Muslims before the time of each prayer. He did not accept this suggestion, as he said that he did not want to adopt the Jewish or Christian customs.

Abdullah bin Ziyad was a citizen of Yathrib. He came to see the Prophet, and said that while he was half-awake or half-asleep, a man appeared before him and told him that the human voice ought to be used to call the faithful to prayer; and he also taught him the Adhan (call to prayer), and the manner of saying it.

The Sunni historians say that the idea appealed to the Prophet, and he adopted it forthwith. He then called Bilal, taught him how to call the Muslims to prayer, and appointed him the first *Muezzin* (caller to prayer) of Islam.

These stories are discounted by the Shia Muslims. They say that just as Al-Qur'an al-Majid was revealed to Muhammad Mustafa, so was Adhan. They assert that the manner of calling the faithful to prayer could not be left to the dreams or reveries of some Arab. They further say that if the Apostle could teach Muslims how to perform lustrations, and how, when and what to say in each prayer, he could also teach them how and when to alert others before the time for each prayer.

According to the Shia traditions, the angel who taught the Messenger of God how to perform lustrations preparatory to prayers, and how to say the prayers, also taught him how to call others to prayer.

Yathrib Becomes Medina

The name "Yathrib" soon became obsolete. People began to call it "Medina-tun-Nabi," – the City of the Prophet. In due course, usage caused a contraction of this name to be adopted simply as "Medina" –

“the City,” and that's what the name of the city of the Prophet of Islam has remained ever since.

The Groupings in Medina

When the Prophet and the refugees from Makkah arrived in Yathrib (now Medina), they found three Jewish tribes, viz., Quainuqa, Nadheer and Qurayza, and two Arab tribes, viz., Aus and Khazraj, living in that city.

E. A. Belyaev

The basic population of Medina consisted of its three Jewish tribes, the Quainuqa, the Quraiza and the Nadhir; and of the two Arab tribes, the Aus and the Khazraj. (*Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages. 1969*)

The Jews were farmers, merchants, traders, money-lenders, landlords and industrialists. They had grown rich through the practice of usury and they enjoyed a monopoly of the armaments industry in Arabia.

The two Arab tribes of Medina, Aus and Khazraj, made their living by farming. Before the arrival of the Prophet, they had been locked up in a war against each other which had lasted for more than five generations. They had fought their last battle only four years earlier, i.e., in A.D. 618, and it had left them utterly exhausted and prostrate.

There were a few Christians also living in Medina. They did not cotton to the Prophet of Islam because he repudiated the doctrine of Trinity, and preached the Unity of the Creator.

A fourth group in Medina was to spring up a little later, made up of the “hypocrites” or the “disaffected.” During the Prophet's mission in Makkah, there were many Muslims who had to hide their true faith for fear of persecution. In Medina, the situation was reversed. These people (the hypocrites) were nominal Muslims; they outwardly professed Islam but they were not sincere. They were a potential source of subversion, sabotage and insurrection.

The Charter or Constitution of Medina

The citizens of Yathrib acknowledged Muhammad as their sovereign, and he gave them a “Citizen's Charter” which is believed to have been the first written document in Islam (other than Qur'an). The original charter as preserved by Ibn Ishaq, contains forty-seven (47) clauses. Following are the more important ones out of them:

* All disputes between any two parties in Yathrib would be referred to Muhammad for his decision on them.

* Muslims and Jews would enjoy the same rights.

* Each group in Yathrib would follow its own faith, and no one group would meddle in the affairs of any other groups.

* In the event of an external attack upon Yathrib, both groups, i.e., the Muslims and the Jews, would defend the city.

* Both groups would refrain from shedding blood in the city.

* Muslims would not go to war against other Muslims for the sake of non-Muslims.

R. V. C. Bodley

Mohammed drew up a charter with the Jews whereby, among other things, it was established that Jews and Moslems were to aid each other in all matters concerning the city. They were to be allies against all common enemies, and this without any mutual obligations toward Islam or Judaism. The main clause of this charter ran as follows: The Jews who attach themselves to our commonwealth shall have an equal right with our own people to our assistance and good offices. The Jews of the various branches domiciled in Yathrib shall form with the Moslems one composite nation. They shall practice their religion as freely as the Moslems. The clients and allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom. (*The Messenger, the Life of Mohammed, New York, 1946*)

Muhajireen and Ansar

Muhammad changed the names of the two Muslim groups now living in Medina. He called the refugees from Makkah “Muhajireen” (Emigrants); and he called the citizens of Yathrib who had welcomed them, “Ansar” (Supporters). The two groups were known by these names ever after.

Economic Conditions in Medina

The wealth of Medina was almost entirely concentrated in the hands of the Jews. The Arabs (now the Ansar) lived in poverty and perennial want. One reason why they were chronically poor, was the high rates of interest they had to pay to the Jews on their loans.

D. S. Margoliouth

Though we hear the names of one or two wealthy Yathribites, the bulk of them appear to have been poor. In Yathrib in the Prophet's time, there was only one wedding garment; ornaments had to be borrowed from the Jews. This poverty was probably aggravated by the Jewish money-lending.

(*Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, London, 1931*)

But if the Ansar were poor, the Muhajireen were even poorer. In fleeing from Makkah, they had

abandoned everything they had possessed, and when they came to Yathrib seeking sanctuary, they were penniless. In a short time, their situation became desperate. They had to do something to make a living. But since they knew nothing about agriculture, the best they could do was to work as unskilled laborers in the fields and gardens of the Jews and the Ansar.

D. S. Margoliouth

It had originally been arranged that the Refugees should assist the Helpers (Ansar) in their field-work; but knowing nothing of palmiculture, they could only perform the most menial services; thus some literally hewed wood and drew water; some were employed in watering palms, carrying skins on their backs; and Ali, at least on one occasion, earned sixteen dates by filling buckets with water, and emptying them over mould for brick-making at the rate of a date a bucket; which hardly earned a meal he shared with the Prophet. (*Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, London, 1931*)

To integrate the Muhajireen into the economic life of Medina, was an extremely complex problem, and it taxed all the ingenuity of the Apostle. He did not want any member of the Muslim society, much less all the Muhajireen, to be a burden to anyone else, and did all that he could to curtail their dependence upon the Ansar.

The Brotherhood of the Muhajireen and the Ansar

One of the gambits in the efforts of the Apostle to rehabilitate the homeless Muhajireen in Medina, and to integrate them into the economic and social life of the city, was to make them “brothers” of the Ansar. A few months after his arrival in Medina, he told the Muhajireen and the Ansar that they had to live as “brothers” of each other, and paired them off as follows:

Muhajir Brother of Ansari

Ammar ibn Yasir “ Hudhayfa al-Yamani

Abu Bakr Siddique “ Kharja bin Zayd

Umar bin al-Khattab “ Utban bin Malik

Uthman bin Affan “ Aus bin Thabit

Abu Dharr el-Ghiffari “ Al-Mundhir b. Amr

Mas'ab ibn Umayr “ Abu Ayyub

Abu Obaidah Aamer al-Jarrah “ Saad ibn Maadh

Zubayr ibn al-Awwam “ Salama bin Waqsh

Abdur Rahman bin Auf “ Saad ibn Rabi

Talha bin Obaidullah “ Ka'ab ibn Malik

Ali ibn Abi Talib alone was left without a “brother.” He was wondering why when the Apostle of God held him by his arms and said to him: “You are my brother in this world and in the next.”

Muhammad ibn Ishaq

The Apostle himself took Ali by hand and said: “This is my brother.” So God's Apostle, the Lord of the sent ones, and leader of the God-fearing, Apostle of the Lord of the worlds, the peerless and unequaled, and Ali ibn Abi Talib became brothers. (*The Life of the Messenger of God*)

Edward Gibbon

After a perilous and rapid journey along the sea-coast, Mohammed halted at Koba, two miles from the city, and made his public entry into Medina sixteen days after his flight from Mecca. His bravest disciples assembled round his person; and the equal, though various merits of the Moslems were distinguished by the names of Mohajireen and Ansar, the fugitives of Mecca, and the auxiliaries of Medina.

To eradicate the seeds of jealousy, Mohammed judiciously coupled his principal followers with the rights and obligations of brethren; when Ali found himself without a peer, the Prophet tenderly declared that *he* would be the companion and brother of the noble youth. (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*)

Muhammad Husayn Haykal

The first idea to occur to him (Muhammad) was that of reorganizing Muslim ranks so as to consolidate their unity and to wipe out every possibility of a resurgence of division and hostility. In the realization of this objective, he asked the Muslims to fraternize with one another for the sake of God and to bind themselves in pairs. He explained how he and Ali ibn Abi Talib were brothers... (*The Life of Muhammad, 1935*)

Muhammad, may God bless him and his Ahlul-Bait, had made the Muhajireen and the Ansar “brothers” of each other. But Ali, like himself, was a Muhajir (Emigrant), and yet he (Muhammad) chose him (Ali) to be his brother. In doing so, he was accenting the extraordinary position and special status of Ali in Islam. Ali, though still young, already outranked everyone else in service to Islam and devotion to duty toward God, and His Messenger. He won this high position by dint of his ability and character.

This was not, however, the first time that the Apostle of God had declared Ali to be his brother. Earlier, while still in Makkah, he had made his leading companions the “brothers” of each other. The pairs of “brothers” in Makkah were made up by Abu Bakr and Umar; Uthman bin Affan and Abdur Rahman bin Auf; Talha and Zubayr; Hamza and Zayd bin Haritha; and Mohammed Mustafa ibn Abdullah and Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Imam Nooruddin Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Shafei'i has quoted the Messenger of God in his book, *Seeret Halabia* (vol. II, p. 120) as saying: "Ali is my brother in this world as well as in the world Hereafter."

An Assessment of the Roles of the Muhajireen and the Ansar

The Muhajireen had lost all their material possessions in Makkah, and all of them entered Yathrib (Medina) empty-handed. They consisted of two distinct groups. One group was made up of those men who were merchants and traders by profession, and they were very rich. When they went to Medina, they entered business, were successful at it, and they became rich again.

The other group comprised the "ascetics" of Islam. They were poor in Makkah, and when they migrated to Medina, they still chose to be poor. They spurned worldly riches, and they never held economic power in their hands at any time. Representatives of this group were men like Abu Dharr el-Ghiffari; Ammar ibn Yasir and Miqdad ibn al-Aswad. God paid them His tributes in His Book as follows:

(some part is due) to the indigent Muhajirs, those who were expelled from their homes and their property, while seeking grace from Allah and (His) good pleasure, and aiding Allah and His Apostle: such are indeed the sincere ones. (Chapter 59; verse 8)

The Ansar treated the Muhajireen from Makkah better than the real brothers of the latter would have done. They lodged them in their own homes, gave them household effects; made them partners in farming, or gave them half of their land. Those Ansars who were in business, made the Muhajirs their partners in business.

History cannot produce a parallel to the generosity of the Ansars. They were "hosts" not only to the homeless and destitute Muhajireen but also to Islam itself. Islam, uprooted in Makkah, struck new roots in Medina, burgeoned and soon became viable.

The Ansar were indispensable for the physical survival of Islam. Where would Islam be and where would the Muhajireen be if the Ansar had not given them sanctuary? When hostilities with the idolaters began, it were the Ansar, and not the Muhajireen, who bore the brunt of fighting. Without the massive and monolithic support that they gave to the Prophet, the battles of Islam could not have been fought, much less victory won. They were also the recipients of Heaven's compliments and recognition, as we read in the following verse of Al-Qur'an al-Majid:

But those who, before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the faith, – show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire, in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot). And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls, – they are the ones that achieve prosperity. (Chapter 59; verse 9)

The Muhajireen, at the beginning, had no way of repaying the Ansar for their generosity and kindness.

But did they ever acknowledge their gratitude? It appears that with the exception of two Muhajirs, no one else ever did. The two exceptions were Muhammad Mustafa, the Apostle of God, and Ali, his vicegerent.

They acknowledged their debt of gratitude to the Ansar both by word and by deed, and they never missed an opportunity of doing so. After all, both Muhammad and Ali, as the only guardians of the ethos of Islam, were aware that it (Islam) had found a haven in Medina with the Ansar. The latter, therefore, held a very special place in their hearts.

The rest of the Muhajireen, i.e., the rich ones among them, did not share the solicitude of Muhammad and Ali for the Ansar. When power came into their hands, they pushed the Ansar into the background, and relegated them to play only minor roles. In the beginning, they merely ignored the Ansar. But being ignored was not so bad compared to what was to befall them in later times.

(Between the period covered by the Sira and the editing of the book itself loom two tragedies of Kerbela, when Husayn and his followers were slain in 61 A.H., and the sack of Medina in A.H. 63, when some ten thousand of the Ansar including no less than eighty of the Prophet's companions were put to death). – Quoted in the *Introduction to the biography of the Prophet* by Ibn Ishaq).

The Muhajireen foisted the crypt-pagans of Makkah – the Umayyads – upon them. The Umayyads were the arch-enemies of the Ansar. If the generosity of the Ansar to the Muhajireen has no parallel in history, the ingratitude of the latter toward their benefactors also has no parallel. When the Muhajireen came to Medina, the Ansar were its masters.

It was only through the courtesy of the Ansar that the Muhajireen could enter and live in Medina. But as soon as Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of God, and the friend and patron of the Ansar, died, they ceased to be masters in their own home. His death was the signal for the abrupt reversal in their fortunes.

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