

In Medina – The First Year

Medina After The Migration

When the Prophet Muhammad (S) settled at *Yathrib*, this city changed its name, and henceforth was called, *Al-Medinah Al-Munawarah* (the Illuminated City) or *Al-Medinah An-Nabawiyah* or *Medina-tun-Nabi* (the City of the Prophet), or more shortly, Medina (the City). It is situated about eleven day's journey to the north of Mecca. At that time, two *Kahtanite* tribes (*Aws* and *Khazraj*) ruled it. These two tribes, however, were constantly quarreling among themselves. It was only about that time when the Prophet announced his mission at Mecca that these tribes, after long years of continuous warfare, entered a period of comparative peace. When the Prophet settled at Medina, the tribes of *Aws* and *Khazraj* forgot entirely their old feuds and were united together in the bond of Islam. Their old divisions were soon effaced and the "*Ansar*", the Helpers of the Prophet, became the common designation of all people of Medina who had helped the Prophet in his cause. Those who emigrated with him from Mecca received the title of "*Muhajereen*" or the Emigrants. The Prophet, in order to unite both classes in closer bonds, established between them a brotherhood, which linked them together as children of the same parents, with the Prophet as their guardian.

Building The Mosque

The first step the Prophet (S) took, after his settlement at Medina, was to build a mosque¹ for the worship of Allah according to principles of Islam. In addition, houses for the accommodation of the emigrants were soon erected.

This Medina mosque had social, political, and judicial functions, as well as housing Muhammad's family. It was the center of the first Islamic community and nation. It was the scene of greatest triumphs and tragedies. It was a community center, homeless refuge, university and mosque all rolled into one.

The Prophet's Mosque is the second holiest mosque in the world after *Al-Haram* in Mecca. (*Al-Aqsa* in Jerusalem comes in third.)

Welding The Inhabitant Of Medina

Medina and its suburb were at this time inhabited by three distinct parties, the Emigrants, the Helpers, and the Jews. In order to weld them together into an orderly federation, the Prophet granted a charter to the people, clearly defining their rights and obligations. This charter represented the framework of the first commonwealth organized by the Prophet. It started thus: "In the name of the Most Merciful and Compassionate Lord, this charter is given by Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah to all believers, whether of *Quraish* or people of Medina, and all individuals of whatever origin who have made common cause with them, who shall all constitute one nation."

The following are some extracts from the charter: The state of peace and war shall be common to all Muslims; no one among them shall have the right of concluding peace with or declaring war against the enemies of his co-religionists. The Jews who attach themselves to our commonwealth shall be protected from all insults and vexations; they shall have an equal right with our people to our assistance and good offices. The Jews of the various branches and all others domiciled in Medina shall form with the Muslims one composite nation; they shall practice their religion as freely as the Muslims shall. The allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom. The guilty shall be pursued and punished. The Jews shall join the Muslims in defending Medina all enemies. The interior of Medina shall be a sacred place for all who accept this charter. All true Muslims shall hold in abhorrence every man guilty of crime, injustice or disorder; no one shall uphold the culpable, though he is his nearest kin.

After dealing with the interior management of the State, the charter concluded as follows: "All future disputes arising among those who accept this charter shall be referred, under Allah to the Prophet."

Thus, this charter put an end to the state of anarchy that prevailed among the Arabs. It constituted the Prophet Muhammad as chief magistrate of the nation.

The Party Of Hypocrites In Medina

The party of the *Ansars*, or Helpers, included some lukewarm converts who retained an ill-concealed predilection for idolatry. Abdullah Ibn Ubai, a man with some claims to distinction, headed these. They ostensibly joined Islam, but in secret were disaffected. They often were a source of considerable danger to the newborn commonwealth and required unceasing watchfulness on the part of the Prophet. Towards them, he always showed the greatest patience and forbearance, hoping in the end to win them. These were known as the party of the Hypocrites (*Munafiqeen*). There are many verses (more than 100) about them in Qur'an.

Qur'an in its second chapter states a short but very expressive explanation on Hypocrites and their spiritual specialties and characteristics illustrated by their actions:

"And of people, there are some who say, "We believe in Allah and the Last Day", but they do not

really believe. They seek to deceive Allah and those who have Faith, but they deceive no one but themselves, and they are not aware. In their hearts is a disease, so Allah has increased their disease and there awaits them a painful punishment for that they were lying. When it is said to them, "Do not make corruption in the earth", they say, "Verily, we are only reformers." Indeed, they themselves are the corruptors, but they are not aware. Moreover, when it is said to them, "Believe as the people believe", they say, "Shall we believe as the fools believe?" Beware! Truly, they themselves are the fools, but they do not know. When they meet those who believe, they say, "We believe in what you believe", but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say, "Verily, we are with you; we were only mocking." Allah shall pay them back for their mockery, and He leaves them alone in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on. These are they who have bought error (in exchange) for guidance hence their transaction yields them no profit, nor are they guided aright. (Qur'an; 2: 8:16)

The Position Of The Jews Of Medina About The Prophet

The Jews who constituted the third party of the people of Medina were, however, the most serious element of danger. No kindness or generous treatment on the part of the Prophet would seem to satisfy them. They soon broke off and ranged themselves with the enemies of the new faith. They did not hesitate to declare openly that they preferred idolatry, with its attendant evils, to the faith of Islam. Thus, the Prophet had to keep an eye on his enemies outside Medina, on the one hand, and those within the city on the other. The Meccans who had sworn Muhammad's death were well acquainted, thanks to the party of the Hypocrites and of the Jews at Medina, with the real forces of the Muslims. They also knew that the Jews had accepted Muhammad's alliance only from motives of temporary expedience and that they would break away from him to join the idolaters as soon as the latter showed themselves in the vicinity of Medina.

Islamic Government

Prophet Muhammad (S) established his first government in Medina after migrating from His homeland, Mecca. It was a small state, where a government system, based upon the equality of human beings, was set up. Muhammad's followers had a strong belief in the oneness of Allah and the government set up by the Prophet in Medina was based on the teachings of Islam. All of the rules of the first Islamic government were derived from the Qur'an. According to the teachings of Muhammad, all humans have equal rights and no one is better than another human. According to the teachings of the Prophet, the only thing that makes the difference among the humans is the piousness.

¹ The word "mosque" was introduced into the English language in the late 14th or early 15th century from the French. It comes from the French word *mosquée* from the old French word *mousquaie*. The French, in turn, derived the word from the Italian word *moschea* from *moscheta*. The Italians got it either directly from the Arabic word *masjid* or from the old Spanish *mesquite*.

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