The Message



Ja'far Subhani

Al-Islam.org

Author(s):

Ja'far Subhani [3]

Publisher(s):

Islamic Seminary Publications [4]

The study of the life of Prophet Muhammad, the greatest of all men, is thought- provoking, awe-inspiring and self-enlightening. A chain of events before and after the birth of this great man provides food for thought for anybody who has even a slight grain of intelligence and sense of proportion. The birth of the Prophet as a posthumous child and the death of his mother, Aminah, when he was only six, and his upbringing first by his grandfather and then by his uncle are something extraordinary.
After passing an eventful life, his confinement to the Cave in Mt Hira and the subsequent Divine Revelation, the invitation to the religion of Allah, the resistance of the infidels and idolaters, their oppression and persecution, his continued steadfastness in upholding the Message of Allah during the first thirteen years of his prophethood in Makkah until the time of his migration to Madina, are the events finish have no parallel in history. The last ten years of his life in Madina, his intensifying the efforts of his mission for the spread of Islam, his participating in the numerous battles with the infidels and the final conquest of Makkah are still greater events which are seemingly unbelievable, but have been recorded in history as miraculous achievements. Hundreds of books have been written on the life and mission of the Prophet but these cannot be taken as a complete treatise on his attributes and achievements. Especially the writings of the orientalists are punctuated with prejudices, errors and misinterpretations. This book not only presents an inspiring material but it is also based on authentic historical documents. One of its salient features is that the author has taken extreme care in narrating historical events and at the same time he has endeavoured as a research scholar, to approach them with an analytical mind also. Another interesting feature of this book is that it is absolutely free from heresies and concocted stories invented by vested interests. In other words, it is quite in keeping with the required standard of the historical veracity. In short, it is addressed to the Muslims in general without any bias and prejudice.

Category:

Early Islamic History [5]
Prophet Muhammad [6]

Topic Tags:

Biography of Prophet Muhammad [7]

Miscellaneous information:

Published by: Islamic Seminary Publications P O Box 5425 Karachi, Pakistan

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Since the time immemorial man has been seeking knowledge through his senses. Thus by perceiving things he tried to overcome his problems. In the process he made experiments and ultimately by trial and error he arrived at a workable solution for his problems. Based on this concept and practice, science developed enormously in dimensions and various fields of its applications.

In this modern age of science hundreds and thousands of research laboratories are engaging the attention of scientists who are making wonderful discoveries and inventions of unbelievably accurate gadgets and tools.

Yet the only things that science has failed so far to capture is the social problem. Obviously, social problems are the human problems. And human problems are such that they cannot be precipitated in a test tube. To give credence to this fact one knows it very well that for instance, science has not yet been able to offer answers to the discord and hatred that exist among the people or the class distinction that is rampant in various strata of human society.

History tells us of great civilisations that flourished in the past and ultimately perished. We are left with only the mute remains and dumb ruins which tell us the hoary past of the mankind. Science of course is discovering the facts of life through excavations, and by studying the relics and fossils embedded in the rocks. But despite all this no tangible results have come forward with regard to the man's manifold problems.

Imam Ali gave a bit of his mind to his son which is pertinent to the relevant issue. He said: "My dear son! though the span of my age is not as large as that of some other people who have passed away before me, but I took great care to study their lives; assiduously I went through their activities, I contemplated over their deliberations and deeds, I studied their remains, relics and ruins; and I pondered over their lives so deeply that I felt as if I have lived and worked with them from early ages of history down to our times, and I know what did them good and what brought harm to them."

True, history has recorded all facts, pleasant and detestable, but what is to be regretted is that nobody ever cared to go into the depth of their root causes. As to the real solution of a problem, big or small, no effort on the part of man is traceable in history. Only unimportant matters have been dwelt upon with uncanny details.

Since history is a recorded statement of events of the past, it owes its existence to its compilers. The people who wrote history were not immune from personal, racial or parochial prejudices and, therefore, its very purpose seems to have been defeated.

On the face of the misinterpretation and fabrication of facts, an ordinary reader of history is at a loss to understand the truth of the matter. It is like a doctor who, if he has no correct information about the

case-history of his patient, will not be able to diagnose the actual malady of his patient.

One bright aspect of history of course is that it carries the life sketches of great men of the ancient past. These men in fact created history as they brought about revolution and change in the life pattern of mankind.

Amongst such great personalities no one led as eventful, revolutionary and meaningful a life as Prophet Muhammad did. None of them left such a lasting impression upon the society he sprang from as the Prophet of Islam did. This is a fact which has been acknowledged by almost all the historians whether of the East or of the West.

The study of the life of Prophet Muhammad, the greatest of all men, is thought-provoking, awe-inspiring and self-enlightening. A chain of events before and after the birth of this great man provides food for thought for anybody who has even a slight grain of intelligence and sense of proportion.

The birth of the Prophet as a posthumous child and the death of his mother, Aminah, when he was only six, and his upbringing first by his grandfather and then by his uncle are something extraordinary.

After passing an eventful life, his confinement to the Cave in Mt Hira and the subsequent Divine Revelation, the invitation to the religion of Allah, the resistance of the infidels and idolaters, their oppression and persecution, his continued steadfastness in upholding the Message of Allah during the first thirteen years of his prophethood in Makkah until the time of his migration to Madina, are the events finish have no parallel in history.

The last ten years of his life in Madina, his intensifying the efforts of his mission for the spread of Islam, his participating in the numerous battles with the infidels and the final conquest of Makkah are still greater events which are seemingly unbelievable, but have been recorded in history as miraculous achievements.

Hundreds of books have been written on the life and mission of the Prophet but these cannot be taken as a complete treatise on his attributes and achievements. Especially the writings of the orientalists are punctuated with prejudices, errors and misinterpretations.

This book not only presents an inspiring material but it is also based on authentic historical documents. One of its salient features is that the author has taken extreme care in narrating historical events and at the same time he has endeavoured as a research scholar, to approach them with an analytical mind also.

Another interesting feature of this book is that it is absolutely free from heresies and concocted stories invented by vested interests. In other words, it is quite in keeping with the required standard of the historical veracity. In short, it is addressed to the Muslims in general without any bias and prejudice.

We hope that this book will serve its noble purpose of enlightening the young generation who has a keen

urge to acquire authentic and reliable information about the great Prophet of Islam, and trust our young Muslims will derive inspiration from this book in fashioning their lives in accordance with the dictates of Allah as well as the noble attributes of the Holy Prophet and his Chosen Descendants.

Arabia is a big peninsula situated in the south-west of Asia. Its area is three million square kilometres, almost double the area of Iran, six times that of France, ten times that of Italy and eighty times that of Switzerland.

This peninsula is of the shape of an irregular rectangle and is bounded by Palestine and the Syrian desert in the north, by Hira, the Tigris, the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf in the east, by the Indian Ocean in the south and by the Red Sea in the west. Hence, it is circumscribed on the western and southern sides by sea and on the northern and eastern sides by the desert and the Persian Gulf.

From olden times this territory has been divided into three regions: (1) The northern and western region which is called the Hijaz. (2) The central and eastern region which is called the Arabian Desert; and (3) The southern region which is called Yemen.

Within the Peninsula one comes across plenty of vast deserts and hot sandy tracts which are almost uninhabitable. One of these deserts is Badyah Samawah which is nowadays called Nafud. There is also another vast desert which extends up to the Persian Gulf and is now called ar-Rub'ul Khali. Formerly one part of these deserts was named Ahqaf and the other was called Dehna.

On account of the presence of these deserts about one third of the area of the Peninsula is barren and unfit for habitation. Only at times small quantities of water can be found in a few areas, as a result of rains in the heart of the deserts, and some of the Arab tribes drive their camels and cattle to those places for grazing.

The climate of the Peninsula is extremely hot and dry in the deserts and central tracts, humid in the coastal areas and temperate in some localities It is dire to its unwholesome climate that its population does not exceed fifteen million

In this territory there is a mountain range which stretches from south to north. Its maximum height is about 2470 metres

From times immemorial gold and silver mines and precious stones have been the sources of the wealth of the Peninsula. From amongst the animals the Arabs reared camels and horses. As regards birds, pigeons and ostriches were more abundant than others.

In modern times the biggest source of income of Arabia is extraction of oil and gas. The centre of oil reserves of the Peninsula is the city of Zahran, which is called Dahran by the Europeans. This city is situated in the Saudi Arabian district called Ahsa' in the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf.

In order that the esteemed reader may become more acquainted with the conditions of Arabia we now proceed to give a somewhat detailed description of the three regions mentioned above.

1. The Hijaz constitutes the northern and western region of Arabia and extends from Palestine to Yemen, adjacent to the coast of the Red Sea. It is a hilly tract which embraces many barren deserts and rugged areas.

This region enjoys more fame in history than all others. It is, however, evident that this fame has been occasioned by a chain of spiritual and religious matters. For example, even during the present times the Ka'bah, the House of God which is situated in this region, is the Qiblah of hundreds of millions of Muslims of the world.

The area surrounding the Ka'bah has been reverenced by Arabs as well as non-Arabs for centuries preceding the birth of Islam. As a mark of respect to it they considered warfare within the precincts of the Ka'bah to be unlawful and even Islam has recognised the area circumscribed by these limits to be inviolable.

Makkah, Madina and Ta'if are important cities of the Hijaz. Since ages the Hijaz has had two sea-ports. One of these is Jeddah which serves the people of Makkah, and the other is Yanbu' through which the people of Madina import most of their requirements. These two ports are situated on the coast of the Red Sea.

Makkah

It is one of the most famous cities of the world and the most populous city of the Hijaz and is about 300 metres higher than sea level. As this city is located between two mountain ranges it cannot be seen from a distance. The present population of Makkah is about 200,000.

A Short History of Makkah

The history of Makkah dates from the time of Prophet Ibrahim. He sent his son Isma'il along with his mother Hajar to the territory of Makkah to settle there. His son married in a tribe which lived at a nearby place. Prophet Ibrahim constructed the Ka'bah under Allah's command and thereafter settlement at Makkah commenced.

The land in the suburbs of Makkah is somewhat saline and not at all cultivable. According to some orientalists its poor geographical conditions have no parallel in the world.

Madina

Madina is a city located at a distance of 90 leagues to the north of Makkah. It has gardens and date-palm all around it and its land is better suited for plantation of trees as well as for cultivation of crops.

Before Islam this city was called Yathrib, but after the Holy Prophet's migration to this city it was renamed as Madina tur Rasul (City of the Prophet). Later, however, the last word was dropped for the sake of abbreviation and it began to be called only Madina. History tells us that the first people who settled here were a group of Amaliqah. Those who followed them were a sect of the Jews and the tribes of Aws and Khazraj who came to be known amongst the Muslims as Ansar (helpers).

Unlike other regions of Arabia the Hijaz remained safe from the raids of the conquerors and the traces of the civilisations of Rome and Iran, two big empires of the world before the birth of Islam, cannot be observed here. This was so, because its barren and uninhabitable lands did not make it worth while for the foreigners to undertake military expeditions to occupy it and then to return empty-handed, after facing thousands of difficulties necessarily involved in gaining control over it.

In this connection the following story may be studied carefully. It has been quoted by the Greek historian, Diodore (B.C.): "When the great Greek Chief Demetrius arrived at Patra (one of the oldest cities of the Hijaz) with the intention of occupying Arabia, the residents of the city said to him, "O Greek Chief! Why should you fight with us? We live in a desert in which indigence of all sorts is the source of livelihood.

We have selected this dry and barren desert so that we may not have to obey the orders of anyone. So please accept our insignificant gifts and presents and refrain from occupying our territory. And incidentally, if you are inclined to persist in your intentions, we do hereby announce that in the near future you will be confronted with thousands of difficulties and hardships.

And be it known to you that the 'Nabtis' are not inclined to give up their way of life. In case, therefore, you held some of our people as captives by force and wish to carry them away this will be of no use to you, because they will be malevolent and misbehaving slaves only and will not be prepared to change their way of life". The Greek chief accepted their message of peace and good-will and abandoned the idea of attacking and occupying the Arabian territory ". 1

2. The central and eastern region, which is called 'The Arabian Desert' and is inclusive of the Najd Zone, is a sparsely populated plateau. After coming into power of the Saudi family the district of Riyaz, which is their capital, has become one of the important centres of Arabia.

3. The length of Yemen, the south-western region of the Peninsula, is about 750 kilometres from north to south and about 400 kilometres from west to east and its area has be estimated to be sixty thousand miles. However, formerly its area was even more than this and during the last half century part of it (Aden) remained the protectorate of Britain. Thus Najd and Aden constitute its northern and southern boundaries respectively, the Red Sea is on its west and on the eastern side it touches the ar-Rub'ul Khali desert.

The most well-known city of Yemen is the historical city of San'a and its most important sea-port is Hudaydah, which is situated on the coast of the Red Sea.

The territory of Yemen is the richest in the Peninsula and possessed a brilliant and dignified civilisation in the past. Yemen was the seat of government of Tababi'ah Kings who ruled for a very long period. Before the advent of Islam Yemen was a great centre of business and commerce and was, in fact, considered to be the 'cross-roads' of Arabia. It possessed very rich mines like gold, silver and other precious stones extracted therefrom. They were exported to other countries

The traces and relics of the civilisation of Yemen of those days are still available. During a period when means for executing burdensome tasks were not available to man the ingenious people of Yemen managed to erect attractive and lofty buildings by dint of their hard labour.

The kings of Yemen, though undisputed rulers of the territory, did not hesitate from enforcing the constitution drawn up and approved by the learned men of the land, and excelled others in the promotion of agriculture and horticulture. Minute regulations were drawn up and enforced for cultivation of farms and irrigation of agricultural lands and gardens. In this respect this country is considered to be one of the distinguished and developed countries of that age.

The famous French historian Gustave Le Bon says, "In the whole of Arabia there is no region more luxuriant and more fertile than Yemen".

Idrisi, the celebrated historian of the twelfth Century, writes thus about the city of San'a, "Here is situated the capital of Arabia and the seat of the government of Yemen. The buildings and palaces of this city are famous throughout the world. Even its ordinary buildings and houses are built of hewn stones"

These surprising monuments, which have been discovered as a result of recent excavations and investigations by the orientalists, prove the existence of a wonderful civilisation in different parts of Yemen of olden times, namely Ma'arib San'a and Bilqis.

In the city of Ma'arib (the famous city of Saba) there existed many lofty buildings with doors and arches ornamented with gold. Similarly gold and silver vessels as well as bedsteads made of metal were found there in abundance".2

One of the historical monuments of Ma'arib was its famous dam, whose traces are still available. It was destroyed by a flood which has been referred to in the Qur'an as the 'Iram flood'.

1. Tamaddun-i Islam wa Arab, pp. 93 - 94
2. Tamaddun-i Islam wa Arab, page 96

To know the conditions prevailing in Arabia before the advent of Islam we can avail ourselves of the following sources:

1. The Old Testament (notwithstanding all the alterations that have been made in it),

2. Writings of the Greeks and the Romans during the Middle Ages.

3. Islamic history as recorded by Muslim scholars, and

4. Ancient relics, which have been obtained through excavations conducted by the orientalists, which reveal facts to some extent.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned sources, numerous matters relating to the history of Arabia have not yet become fully clear and continue to remain an insoluble enigma. However, as the study of the conditions of Arabia before the advent of Islam constitutes a preamble to our discourse; but our real aim is the analysis of the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam, therefore we give below a condensed account of some particular and well known aspects of the life of pre-Islamic Arabs.

It is an admitted fact that since times immemorial the Arabian Peninsula has been inhabited by many tribes, some of which have become extinct in the course of time. However, in the history of this land, the following three tribes, which were later sub-divided into different clans, have attained greater fame than others:

1. **The Ba'idah:** Ba'idah means extinct and these people are so named, because, owing to their continuous disobedience, they were obliterated from the face of the earth, as a consequence of celestial and terrestrial calamities. Possibly these were the very tribes of 'Ad and Thamud which have been mentioned time and again in the Holy Qur'an.

2. **The Qehtaniyans:** They are the descendants of Ya'rab bin Qehtan. They inhabited Yemen and other parts of southern Arabia and are called the full-blooded Arabs. The Yemenites of today and the tribes of Aus and Khazraj, which constituted two big tribes of Madina in the early days of Islam, are of Qehtaniyan descent. The Qehtaniyans possessed many states. They made strenuous efforts for the development of Yemen and have left a number of civilisations as their memorial.

Their inscriptions are being studied now, according to scientific methods, the Qehtaniyan history has thus been revealed to some extent. Whatever is said about pre-Islamic culture and civilisation of Arabia is totally related to this group of the Arabs and is confined to the region of Yemen.

3. **The Adnaniyans:** They are the descendants of Isma'il, son of the Prophet Ibrahim. A detailed account of the genealogy of this tribe will be given at a later stage, but, briefly speaking, the position is this: Prophet Ibrahim was ordained by Allah to settle his son Isma'il and his mother Hajar in the land of Makkah.

He, therefore, moved them from Palestine to a deep valley (Makkah) which was absolutely barren. Almighty Allah was kind to them and favoured them with the spring of Zamzam. Isma'il married in a tribe named Jarham, who had pitched their tents at a place near Makkah. His offspring were numerous. One of them was Adnan, who was removed a few generations from Ismai'l

The descendants of Adnan were sub-divided into many tribes. The tribe which acquired fame from amongst them was that of Quraysh, and Bani Hashim formed a part of it.

General Morals of the Arabs

What we mean by this are the social morals and manners which prevailed amongst the Arabs before Islam. Some of these customs were usually followed by all Arabs. The common and praiseworthy qualities of the Arabs may generally be summarised thus in a few sentences

The Arabs of the Age of Ignorance (period before the advent of Islam) and especially the descendants of Adnan were generous and hospitable by nature. They seldom committed breach of trust. They considered violation of promise to be an unpardonable sin. They were very much devoted to their faith and were fully endowed with the quality of eloquence.

They possessed remarkably sharp memory. They could easily learn verses and speeches by heart. In the art of versification and poetry they excelled all others. Their bravery was proverbial. They possessed great skill in horsemanship and archery. They considered fleeing from the enemy to be very odious and abominable.

We could also perhaps recount some more good qualities of theirs. However, as opposed to this, a series of their immoral and mean habits which had, to some extent, assumed the shape of second nature with them, obliterated the splendour of all their achievements and, if a window had not been opened for them from the invisible, the scroll of their human life would have been rolled up and they would have fallen precipitately into the dreadful abyss of non-existence. In other words, if the soul-nourishing sun of Islam had not shone on their hearts in the middle of the 6th century of the Christian era, you would not have seen any trace of the Arabs today and the story of Baidah Arabs would have been repeated.

On account of lack of proper guidance and instruction and prevalence of immorality and superstitions the Arabs were leading a life similar to that of beasts. History has recorded for us stories of their fifty-year wars and hundred-year wars and those, too, for very small and insignificant reasons.

This anarchy, lack of law and order and absence of an authoritative government which might control the situation and deal properly with the rebels, became the reason for the Arabs leading a nomadic life and for their migrating every year along with their animals to places in the deserts where water and fodder could be found. Whenever they came across water and greenery at any place they pitched their tents round it. However, as soon as they could locate a better place, they resumed their wanderings in the desert.

These wanderings and the state of homelessness were occasioned by two things; first of them being the unwholesome geographical conditions of the area and the other being their indulging in excessive

bloodshed which obliged them to undertake constant travelling and migration.

Were the Pre-Islamic Arabs Civilized?

As a result of his studies about the conditions of the Arabs of the age of ignorance, the author of the book entitled "Tamaddun-i Islam wa Arab', has concluded that they had been civilised for ages. According to him the dignified and lofty buildings erected by them in different parts of Arabia and their commercial relations with the various advanced nations of the world testify to their being civilised, for a people, who were in a position to construct such grand edifices even before the appearance of the Romans, and had trade relations with the great nations of the world, could not be called barbarians.

Again, at another place, he has cited the literature of the Arabs and their possessing a perfect language as evidence in support of his claim that they owned a deep-rooted civilisation. He says: "Supposing that we had not known anything about the ancient history of the Arabs we could, even then, reject the theory of their being an uncivilised people, because whatever applies to the language of a nation also applies to its civilisation and culture.

It is possible that they may make their appearance all of a sudden, but their elements are undoubtedly very ancient and take shape gradually during a long span of time. It is not possible that an excellent language related with its literature should spring up without any premise. Furthermore, establishment or relations with civilised nations is always a means of progress for a talented people".

The said author has allocated a number of pages of his book to prove the existence of an expansive civilisation amongst the Arabs of the pre-Islamic age and has placed reliance in this connection on three things namely (1) their having had an excellent language (2) establishment by them of relations with advanced nations and (3) wonderful buildings of Yemen mentioned by Herodote and Artemidor, the two renowned historians who lived before the birth of Prophet 'Isa as well as by Mas'udi and other writers of Islamic history.1

There is no doubt about the fact that there did exist civilisations of short duration in different parts of Arabia, but the arguments advanced by the said author are not sufficient to prove that civilisation and culture were present in all parts of this land.

Firstly, the perfection of a language is accompanied by other traces of civilisation, but basically Arabic cannot be treated to be an independent language, not related with Hebrew, Syriac, Assyrian and Chaldean, because, as confirmed by the philologists, all these languages were inter-connected at one time and had branched out from one language. I

n the circumstances the possibility is that Arabic attained perfection along with Hebrew and Assyrian and appeared as a separate language only after achieving such perfection.

Having trade relations with developed nations of the world is, of course, an evidence of the progress and

civilisation of the Arabs. However, the question is whether all parts of Arabia had such relations with other nations or possibly the Hijaz was devoid of them?

Furthermore, relations with Iran and Byzantium of the two provinces of 'Hira' and 'Ghassan', situated in the region of the Hijaz do not also serve as evidence of their possessing a civilisation, because their position was that of satellites, which may virtually be called colonies. Even today there are many countries in Africa which form a part of the colonies of western powers, but do not possess any trace of European civilisation and culture.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to deny that there existed a wonderful civilisation in Saba and Ma'arib in the region of Yemen. For, besides what has been said about it in the Old Testament and by Herodote and others, the renowned historian Mas'udi says thus about Ma'arib "It was surrounded on all sides by beautiful buildings, shady trees and running brooks.

The area of this region was so extensive that even an agile horseman could not cover its length and breadth within a month; and a traveller, whether riding or walking on foot did not see the sun while traversing the country from one end to the other, because the roads were covered up on both sides by shady trees. The land was developed and prosperous and water was abundant. And its stable government was well known throughout the world".2

It should, however, be kept in mind that these instances do not guide us to a civilisation which should have prevailed in all regions of Arabia and especially in the Hijaz, which certainly did not possess any trace of this civilisation.

So much so that even Gustave Le Bon says thus in this behalf 'with the exception of its northern frontiers Arabia remained immune from the raids of foreigners and none could occupy it. The great conquerors of Iran, Rome and Greece, who ransacked the entire world, did not pay the least attention to Arabia".

And even if it is supposed that these stories are true with regard to all regions of the Arabian Peninsula, all that can be said with certainty is that at the time of the dawn of Islam no trace of those civilisations was extant, as the Holy Qur'an mentions this subject and says:

O *Arabs! Before accepting Islam you were on the brink of an abyss of fire. He saved you through Islam.* (**Surah Ale Imran, 3:103**)

The pages of Nahjul Balaghah, while narrating the conditions of the pre-Islamic Arabs, bear living testimony to the effect that from the point of view of way of life, intellectual decadence and moral deterioration, they were in a very deplorable state.

Here we quote an illuminating statement of All the Commander of the Faithful. In one of his sermons he sets forth the state of affairs in pre-Islamic Arabia in the following manner "The Lord appointed Muhammad to warn the people of the world and to act as the trustee of His revelation and His Book.

And you Arabs were spending your days with the worst faith and in the worst places. You were residing in stony places and amongst deaf snakes (which did not move because of any sound). You drank muddy water and ate coarse food (e.g. lizards and flour of date-palm stones). You shed the blood of one another and sought separation from your kith and kin. You had installed idols amongst you. You did not refrain from sins" (Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 26).3

Here instances of the barbaric conditions of Arabs of the Age of Ignorance have been quoted. As a specimen we reproduce below the story of As'ad bin Zurarah, which throws light on various traits of the people of the Hijaz.

As`ad Bin Zurarah Meets The Holy Prophet

For quite a long time a furious war had been raging between the tribes of 'Aws' and 'Khazraj' (of Yathrib). During this time As'ad bin Zurarah, one of the chiefs of Khazraj made a journey to Makkah for strengthening the power of his tribe. His intention was to seek military and financial assistance from Quraysh to subdue his one hundred years old enemy (i.e. the tribe of Aws). Owing to his old relations with 'Atbah bin Rabiyyah he stayed with him. He told him the purpose of his visit and requested him for help.

His old friend ('Atbah), however, replied in these words: "Just at present we cannot accede to your request because we ourselves are in a strange fix. A man has risen from amongst ourselves. He insults our gods, considers our ancestors to have been frivolous and stupid. With his sweet words he has attracted some of our young men and has thus created a deep cleavage amongst us. Except the Haj period he spends most of his time in Sha'b (Mountain Pass) of Abu Talib. During Haj period, however, he emerges from there and takes his place in Hajar-i Isma'il. There he invites people to his faith.

As'ad decided to return home without contacting other chiefs of Quraysh. However, in keeping with the old Arab custom, he decided to perform the pilgrimage of the House of Allah (the Ka'bah) before his departure. But 'Atbah warned him lest, while he was going round the Ka'bah, he should hear the bewitching words of the new Prophet and be attracted to him. To solve this problem 'Atbah suggested to As'ad to thrust cotton in his ears so that he might not hear the Prophet.

As'ad slowly stepped into Masjidul Haram and began going round the Ka'bah. During the first round he glanced at the Holy Prophet and saw him sitting in Hajar-i Isma'il, while a number of Hashimites were guarding him. Fearing the magic of the Prophet's words he (As'ad) did not go to him.

Eventually, however, while going round the Ka'bah, he reflected within himself and felt that he was doing a very foolish thing in avoiding the Prophet, because people might question him about this affair on his return to Yathrib and it would be necessary for him to give them a satisfactory reply. He, therefore, decided to obtain first-hand information about the new religion without any further delay.

He came forward and saluted the Prophet with the words An'am Sabahan (Good Morning), according to the custom prevalent in the Age of Ignorance. The Holy Prophet, however, said to him in reply that Allah had prescribed a better form of salutation. He said that when two persons meet each other they should say, ***Salamun Alaykum***. Then As'ad requested the Holy Prophet to explain and clarify to him the aims and objects of his religion. In reply the Holy Prophet recited for him two verses:

Muhamad, say, Let me tell you about what your Lord has commanded: Don't consider anything equal to God; Be kind to your parents; Don't murder your children out of fear of poverty (***for We give sustenance to everyone***)***, Don't even approach indecency either in public or in private. Don't murder for no reason, anyone whom God has considered respectable. Thus, your Lord guides you so that you may think. Don't handle the property of the orphans except with a good reason until they become mature and strong. Maintain equality in your dealings by the means of measurement and balance.*** (***No soul is responsible for what is beyond it's ability***)***. Be just in your words even if the party involved is one of your relatives; and keep your promise with God. Thus, does your Lord guide you so that you may take heed.*** (Surah An'am, 6 152 – 153)

which, in fact, draws a true picture of the mentality and ways of life of the Arabs of the age of ignorance. These two verses, which mention the ailment as well as the remedy for a people who had been at logger–heads with one another for as many as one hundred and twenty years, made a very deep impression on As'ad. He embraced Islam immediately and requested the Holy Prophet to send some one to Yathrib in the capacity of a missionary of Islam.

We feel that if we go deep into these two verses it will be sufficient to make us dispense with discussions and studies about the conditions of the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance, for they abundantly clarify the extent to which chronic moral ailments were threatening the very existence of those people. We give below the contents of those verses with very brief explanation:

1. I have been sent on my Prophetic Mission to obliterate polytheism and idol–worship.

2. Goodness to parents occupies the top–most place in my message.

3. According to my sacred law, killing of children due to fear of poverty is the worst possible deed.

4. I have been appointed to restrain human beings from doing bad deeds and to keep them away from every uncleanliness, whether it be open or hidden.

5. My law provides that man–slaughter and bloodshed, without just cause, are absolutely forbidden.

6. Misappropriation of property belonging to orphans is prohibited.

7. My law is based on justice. Hence, according to it, selling under–weight is unlawful.

8. I do not charge anyone with more than he can bear.

9. The tongue and speech of man, which are a resplendent mirror reflecting his mentality, should be utilised in support of truth and reality and a person should speak nothing but the truth, even though it may cause him loss.

10. Be true to the covenants which you have made with Allah. This has been ordained by your Lord and it is essential for you to follow it.4

From the contents of these two verses and the manner in which the Holy Prophet conversed with As'ad, it can very well be realised that the Arabs had developed all these base qualities and for this very reason the Holy Prophet read but, at the very outset, these two verses for As'ad, as the aim of his mission. In the circumstances is it possible to agree to the claim made by some persons that an expansive civilisation existed for ages in all parts of Arabia?

Religion in Arabia

When Prophet Ibrahim hoisted the standard of the worship of Almighty Allah and raised the foundations of the Holy Ka'bah with the assistance of his son Isma'il some people gathered round him and the rays of his sun-like personality illuminated their hearts. However, the extent to which this great soul could combat with idol-worship and form compressed rows of the worshippers of Allah, is not known for certain.

During many periods, and especially amongst the Arabs, belief in the worship of God was mostly accompanied by polytheism and by the faith that idols were manifestations of the Deity. Out of their various beliefs the Holy Qur'an has mentioned one such belief saying,

If you ask them who created the heavens and the earth they are bound to answer: "The Almighty the All-knowing, created them," (Surah al-Zukhruf, *43:9*).

We serve them (***i.e. idols etc.***) ***only that they may bring us nearer to God.*** (Surah al-Zumar, *39:3*).

Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, describes the religious conditions of the Arab peoples in the following words

"People of those days possessed various creeds and different heresies and were divided into many sects. One group likened Allah to His creatures (and believed that He possessed limbs). Others brought about changes in His names (for example the idol-worshippers who had adopted 'Lat' from Allah and 'Uzza' from Aziz). There was also a group who pointed to those other than Him. Later He guided them through the Holy Prophet and made them conversant with the knowledge of Divinity"5

The enlightened people amongst the Arabs worshipped the sun and the moon. The renowned Arab historian Kalbi who died in the year 206 A.H. writes thus "The tribe named Bani Malih worshipped the genii, and the tribes of Humayr, Kananah, Tamim, Lakham, Tai, Qays and Asad, worshipped the sun,

the moon, the Dabran (a star in the sign of the zodiac named Taurus), the Jupiter, the Canopus, the Dog-star and the Mercury respectively.

However, the degraded section of the society which formed majority of the inhabitants of Arabia, besides worshipping the idols of their own families and tribes, worshipped another 360 idols and ascribed the daily happenings to one of them".

The reasons for the birth of idol-worship in the areas of Makkah after the passing away of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim will be discussed later. However, it is an admitted fact that in the early days this practice was not so perfect.

In the beginning the Arabs considered the idols to be mere interceders and gradually imagined them to be possessing power. The idols arranged round the Ka'bah were entitled to affection and respect by all tribes, but the idols of the tribes were adored by a particular group only. Every tribe allocated a specified place to its idols to ensure their safety. The office of custodian of the keys of the temples in which idols were installed was hereditary and was handed down from one person to another.

Family idols were worshipped by the members of a family every day and night. While proceeding on journey they rubbed them with their bodies. While travelling they worshipped the desert stones. When they reached a halting place they selected four stones. Out of these they worshipped the most beautiful one and used the remaining three as a stand for the fire-place to cook food.

The people of Makkah had great attachment for the sanctuary. While proceeding on a journey they picked up stones from its precincts and installed and worshipped them, whenever they broke the journey. Possibly these were the very 'ansab' (the installed ones) which have been interpreted as smooth and amorphous stones. As opposed to these were the 'awthan' which meant well shaped and painted idols made from hewn stones.

As regards 'asnam', however, they were idols made with moulded gold or silver or carved out of wood.

Humility of Arabs before the idols was really surprising. They believed that by offering sacrifices they could win their good-will. And after offering sacrifice of an animal they rubbed its blood on the head and the face of the idol. They also consulted the idols in big and important matters. This consultation was through sticks on one of which they wrote 'Do' and on the other 'Don't do'. Then they stretched their hand, picked up one of the sticks and acted according to the writing on it.

Thinking of The Arabs about Man After Death

The Arabs explained away this difficult philosophical problem in this manner: After the death of a person his soul comes out of his body in the shape of a bird called `Hamah wa Sada' which resembles an owl and it laments continuously by the side of the corpse, its lamentations being very dreadful and frightening.

When the dead person is buried, his soul takes up its abode, in the aforesaid manner, by his grave and stays there for ever. At times it goes and sits on the roof of the house of his children to get itself acquainted with their conditions.

If a person dies an unnatural death the said bird incessantly cries ***"Asquni Asquni"*** (i.e. quench my thirst with the blood of my murderer) and does not become quiet till revenge is taken on the murderer.

It is here that the real position becomes crystal clear to the esteemed reader and he learns that the history of Arabia before Islam and that after the dawn of Islam are antithetical to each other. Whereas the former is the tale of killing and burying alive of female children, plundering, woe and misery and idol–worship, the latter tells us about kindness to orphans, generosity and sympathy for humanity and worship of the One.

Of course, a group of the Jews and the Christians also lived in the same society but displayed aversion to idol–worship. The principal seat of the Jews was Yathrib, whereas the Christians resided in Najran. Unfortunately these two communities had also become involved in deviations with regard to the Oneness of Allah.

Literature or The Stereoscope of The Mentality of a Nation

The best means of analysing the spirit and intellect of a nation is the literary works and stories inherited by it. The literature, poetry and stories of every community represent its beliefs, serve as criteria for its culture, and display its way of thinking. Literature of every nation is like a painted tableau which makes us visualise the life of a family as well as a chain of natural scenes and tumultuous multitudes or theatres of war and plunder.

The poetry of the Arabs and the proverbs current amongst them can, more than anything else, show the real character of their history. A historian desirous of becoming fully acquainted with the real spirit of a nation should not, as far as possible, ignore its various intellectual monuments like poetry, prose, proverbs, stories etc. Fortunately the Muslim scholars have, as far as possible, recorded the literature of the Arabs pertaining to the age of ignorance.

Abu Tamam Habib bin Aws (died 2 31 A.H.) who is reckoned to be one of the Shi 'ah men of letters and has to his credit verses in praise of Shi'ah leaders of faith, has collected a large number of poems composed during the age of ignorance and has arranged them in ten sections as Epic poems – Threnodies Literature – Lyric poems pertaining to the period of youth – Satires of individuals and tribes – Verses appropriate for hospitality and generosity – Eulogies – Qualities, natural disposition and character – Wit and humour; and Maligning women.

The Muslim scholars and literary men have written many commentaries on this book to explain the meanings of the words and the intent of the poets. The book itself has been translated into many foreign

languages, some of which have been mentioned in Mu'jamul Matbu'at (page 297).

Position of Women amongst The Arabs

The tenth section of the above-mentioned book makes it abundantly clear that women were subjected to a peculiar degradation amongst these people and led the most tragic life. In the Holy Qur'an also verses have been revealed condemning the actions of the Arabs, and throwing light on their moral degradation. It mentions their loathsome practice of killing the girls, and says

When the infant girl, buried alive, is asked for what crime she was slain. (Surah al-Takwir, 81:8).

i.e. the girls buried alive will be asked this question on the Day of Judgement. Evidently it is the height of moral debasement that when one's own child has grown up or has just arrived in the world one should bury it under tons of dust and should not be moved in the least by its cries and lamentations.

The first people who resorted to this practice were the tribe named Bani Tamim. No'man bin Munzir, the ruler of Iraq, attacked his enemies (including Bani Tamim) at the head of a big army and routed them. He confiscated their properties and took their girls as captives. Representatives of Bani Tamim approached him and requested for the return of their girls.

However, as some of the girls had contracted matrimonial alliances during the period of their captivity, No'man gave them the option either to sever their connections with their parents and stay on with their husbands or to obtain divorce and return to their homes.

One of the representatives of Bani Tamim was an old man named Qays bin 'Asim. His daughter preferred to stay on with her husband. The insult cut the old man to the quick and he decided that, in future, he would finish his daughters as soon as they were born. Gradually this practice penetrated into other tribes also.

When Qays bin 'Asim had the honour of presenting himself before the Holy Prophet, one of the Ansar enquired from him about his daughters. Qays said in reply "I buried all my daughters alive and was not touched in the least while doing so (except once!). At one time I was journeying and the time for my wife being delivered of a child had drawn near. By chance my journey was prolonged.

On return home I enquired from my wife about the issue. she replied that owing to some illness she had been delivered of a still-born child. In fact, however, she had given birth to a female child and fearing me had entrusted it to her sisters. Years passed by and the girl attained her youth. I did not have the least information about it.

However, one day, while I was sitting in my house, a girl stepped in all of a sudden and inquired about her mother. It was a very beautiful girl. Her tresses were knit together and she wore a necklace round her neck. I enquired from my wife as to who the lovely girl was. With tears in her eyes she replied, "She

is your own daughter. She is the same girl who was born while you were journeying. Fearing you I had concealed her". My silence was taken by my wife to be a sign of my acquiescence and she thought that I would not besmear my hands with the blood of the girl.

Hence, one day, she left the house with a confident mind. Then, according to my solemn promise and vow, I caught the hand of my daughter and took her to a far-off place. There I began digging a pit. When I was engaged in this task my daughter asked me repeatedly as to why I was digging the earth. Digging over, I caught the hand of my daughter, pushed her into the pit and began throwing dust on her head and face without paying any heed to her heart-rending cries.

She continued groaning and saying. "Dear father! Are you burying me under earth? Will you return to my mother after leaving me here alone?" But I continued pouring the dust till it enveloped her completely. It was only on this occasion that I had some scruple of conscience".

When the narrative of Qays came to an end tears were flowing from the eyes of the Prophet and he remarked: "This is an act of hard-heartedness and a nation which does not possess feelings of pity and kindness is not entitled to Divine mercy".6

Social Position of Women Amongs The Arabs

Amongst the Arabs, woman was just like merchandise which could be bought and sold and did not possess any individual or social rights – not even the right of inheritance. The enlightened persons among them put woman under the category of animals and for this very reason considered her to be one of the chattels and necessities of life. On account of this belief the proverb: 'Mothers are only as good as vessels and have been created to serve as receptacles for sperm' was fully current amongst them.

Usually on account of fear of famine and occasionally dreading embarrassment they beheaded their daughters on the very first day of their birth or hurled them down from a high mountain into a deep valley or, at times, drowned them in water. The Holy Qur'an the great heavenly Book which is admitted even by non-Muslim orientalists at least to be a historical and instructive document which has not been tampered with contains a strange narrative on the subject. It says

When the birth of a girl was announced to one of them, his f*ace *grew dark and he apparently swallowed his anger. Because of the bad news he hid himself from his kinsmen and did not know whether he should keep the new-born with disgrace or bury her under dust? How ill they judge? (**Surah al-Nahl, 16:60**).

Most deplorable of all things was their marriage system which was not based on any law in vogue in the world of that time. For example, they did not believe in any limit in the number of wives. To avoid payment of dowry they maltreated women and in case a woman ceased to be chaste she lost the dowry in toto.

At times they took undue advantage of this rule and calumniated their wives to be able to refuse the payment of dowry. In the event of the death of a person or his divorcing his wife it was treated to be lawful for his son to marry her and the story of Ummayyah bin Shams in this regard is preserved in the pages of history.

When a woman obtained divorce from her husband her right of second marriage was dependent on the permission by the first husband and such permission was usually accorded on her surrendering her dowry! In the event of the death of a person his successors took possession of the woman like other household chattels and declared themselves to be her owners by throwing a head–dress on her head.

A Brief Comparison

If the esteemed reader takes notice of the rights of woman in Islam and ignores the quarrels and disputes which at times crop up all of a sudden, he will certainly acknowledge that the rules and regulations and the effective steps for the improvement and normalisation of the rights of woman, which were taken through the Holy Prophet of Islam, are themselves a glaring testimony of his truthfulness and communication with the world of revelation.

For what sympathy and good treatment could be greater than that (besides proclaiming the rights of women in various verses of the Holy Qur'an and in Ahadith (traditions) and also setting practical examples in this behalf for his followers to act upon) in the sermon of the last Haj performed by him, whereby, as ordained by God Almighty, he reiterated his message in a concise form, nominated his successor and at that very time also recommended women to men in the following words:

"O people! You have rights over your women and they too have rights over you. Enjoin them to do good, for they aid and assist you. Give them to eat such as you eat yourself and give them to wear such as you wear yourself".

Arabs as Warriors

There is no doubt about the fact that the Arabs possessed extraordinary martial spirit and excelled many other nations in the art of warfare. This spirit was certainly commendable and worthy of appreciation, so much so that even Islam made wide use of this tendency of theirs after harmonising it. And it is a matter of great honour for Islam that after making proper adjustments in the tendencies of various nations it utilised them for the achievement of very noble aims and objects.

However, before the appearance of Islam, this spirit of the Arabs was always put into action to destroy the structure of life of different tribes and did not produce any result except bloodshed, murder and plunder.

The Arabs had developed the habit of bloodshed and pillage to such an extent that at the time of self–glorification they counted plunder as one of their honours. This fact is quite evident from their poetry and

literature.

One of the poets of the Age of Ignorance, while observing the lowly condition and humbleness of his tribe in the matter of murder and plunder, felt very much aggrieved and expressed his aspirations in these words: "O' that instead of belonging to this weak and worthless tribe I had been the member of a tribe, whose men, whether mounted or on foot, always indulged in pillage and plunder, and put an end to the lives of others".

Conclusion

We have now acquired a general idea of the civilisation of the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance. In the meanwhile it has also become clear that no just and well-informed person can accept the view that the social conditions of the Hijaz, with all the chaos, savagery and general moral degradation, could give birth to such a great universal movement which should assimilate all the apparent intellectual powers of the world of that time and should restore peace and order in that troubled area by means of a sublime programme.

And it has also become evident that the assertion made by some short-sighted persons that Islam was a natural outcome of that society is really surprising. Such a view would, of course, have been justified if this great movement had made its debut in some civilised regions, but it would be mere wishful thinking to make such a claim about the Hijaz.

Now with a view to complete our discussion on the subject we give below an account of the beliefs and thinking of the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance about different matters.

Superstitions and Myths of Arabs

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned the objectives of the prophetic mission of the Holy Prophet of Islam in short sentences. One of those precise sentences, which deserves careful scrutiny, is this:

He shall relieve them of their burdens and of the shackles that weigh upon them. (Surah al-A'raf, 7:151)

The Prophet of Islam relieved them of difficult exercises and removed the chains with which their hands and feet were tied. Now it should be clearly understood as to what is meant by the chains with which the hands and feet of the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance were tied at the time of the dawn of Islam.

Certainly they do not mean iron chains and shackles, but denote the very groundless beliefs and superstitions which had restrained their intellects from making any advancement. And the fact is that the chains and cords which are tied to the intellect of man are more dangerous and harmful than the iron chains themselves, because after some time has passed the iron chains are removed and the imprisoned man emerges into life once again with a healthy mind, free from all extravagant ideas, but

the chains of superstitions and futilities which wrap up human intellect and reason, like tangled thread, keep man fastened till his very death and prevent him from making any effort – even an effort to remove these ties and shackles.

And whereas a man with a healthy mind can contrive to break any iron chains or bars with the help of his reason and intellect, the activities and efforts of one devoid of healthy reasoning and imagination come to nought and remain absolutely futile.

One of the greatest honours and distinctions of the Holy Prophet is that he fought against superstitions, extravagant beliefs and myths, and cleansed the human intellect and reason of the disgusting faith of superstitions. He used to say "I have come to strengthen the intellectual power of human beings and to put up a strong fight against all types of superstitions, even though they may be helpful for the advancement of my mission".

Politicians of the world who have no aim or object other than ruling over the people always use every occurrence to their own advantage. So much so that if ancient myths or superstitious beliefs of a nation are helpful for their state and government they do not hesitate about propagating them. And if they are reflective and logical persons, then they lend support to irrational myths and superstition under the presence of appreciation of common thinking and respect for the beliefs of the majority.

However, the Holy Prophet of Islam not only repressed the superstitious beliefs which were harmful for himself and for the society but even if a local myth or a baseless idea was helpful for the advancement of his mission he campaigned against it with full force and endeavoured that people should follow truth and not myths and superstitions.

Ibrahim, a male child of the Holy Prophet passed away. The Prophet was sad and grieved on account of his demise and tears trickled from his eyes involuntarily. Solar eclipse took place on the day the child died. The superstitious and myth–loving Arabs considered the eclipse to be a sign of the greatness of the affliction of the Holy Prophet and said "The sun has been eclipsed on account of the death of the son of the Prophet".

The Holy Prophet happened to hear these words. He mounted the pulpit and said: 'The sun and the moon are two great signs of the Omnipotence of Allah and obey His orders. They are not eclipsed on account of the death or life of anyone. Whenever solar or lunar eclipse takes place offer signs prayers". Having said this he dismounted the pulpit and offered signs prayers along with others."7

Although the idea that the solar eclipse had taken place on account of the death of the son of the Holy Prophet could strengthen the belief of the people in him and could consequently help in the advancement of his mission, he did not at all like that his position should be strengthened in the hearts of the people by means of a superstition.

His campaign against myths and superstitions, an outstanding example of which is the fight which he put

up against idol-worship and all kinds of spurious divinity, was not peculiar to the period of his prophetic mission. He had fought against superstitions throughout his life – even during his childhood days.

One day, when the age of the Holy Prophet Muhammad did not exceed four years, and he was spending his days with his foster-mother Halimah, he expressed a desire to accompany his foster-brothers to the jungle.

Halimah says "On the following day I bathed Muhammad, oiled his hair and put collyrium in his eyes. I also put round his neck, for the sake of his safety, a Yemen bead, which had been fixed in a thread, so that he might remain immune from the evil spirits. Muhammad removed the bead from his neck and spoke thus to me: "Dear mother! Be comforted. My God who is always with me is my Protector and Preserver!"[8]

Superstitious Beliefs Of The Arabs Of The Age Of Ignorance

At the time of the dawn of Islam the beliefs of all the nations and societies of the world were entwined with different sorts of superstitions and myths and the Greek and Sasanian mythologies ruled the minds of the nations which were considered to be the most advanced in those days. And even now many superstitions are in vogue amongst the developing nations of the East and the modern civilisation has not been able to eradicate them from their minds.

However, the growth of myths and superstitions is in proportion to the extent of knowledge and learning in a society. The more backward a society is in the matter of education and learning the larger would be the number of superstitions prevalent in it.

History has recorded a large number of myths and superstitions pertaining to the Arabs and Sayyid Mahmud Alusi, the author of the book "Bulughul adab fi ma'rifat ahwalil 'Arab"[9] has collected many of them in that very book, along with a chain of authorities who have referred to them in their verses.

Going through this and other books one comes across a multitude of superstitions. This baseless train of groundless beliefs was one of the reasons for this nation lagging behind others. It was absolutely natural that a nation, the number of whose literate persons in the centre of the region of the Hijaz did not exceed seventeen,[10] should be preoccupied with superstitions and myths.

These myths were the greatest impediment in the way of the progress of Islam and for this reason the Holy Prophet endeavoured his best to eradicate the signs of 'ignorance' which consisted of these superstitions and myths. While sending Mu'az bin Jabal to Yemen he gave him the following instructions:

"O Mu'az! Remove from amongst the people the signs of ignorance and the superstitious ideas and beliefs and revive the traditions of Islam which call upon us to reflect and be reasonable."[11]

As against the great masses of Arabs who had been ruled for ages by superstitious beliefs, the Holy

Prophet used to say: "All the traces of ignorance are under my feet" i.e. by the advent of Islam all the baseless customs, beliefs and means of distinction have been annihilated and have been trampled under my feet.12

Now, in order to elucidate the worth of the teachings of Islam, we give below a brief account of the beliefs of the Arabs of the age of ignorance:

1. Burning fire for the coming of rains

Many areas of the Arabian Peninsula are usually faced with drought. To ensure coming of rains the people of such places used to procure the branches of the trees named ***Sala'*** and ***'Ushr*** which catch fire easily. They tied these branches to the tail of a cow and drove it to the top of a mountain. Later they set fire to these branches. On account of the presence of inflammable material in the branches of ***'Ushr*** flames rose from the fire and burnt the body of the cow.

Owing to the pain caused by burning, the cow began running and crying. These people committed this foul act treating it as a token of resemblance with the celestial thunder and lightning. They treated the flames of fire and the cries of the cow as representing lightning and thunder respectively and considered this act as effective for rainfall.

2. If a cow did not drink water they beat the Ox

The Arabs took the cows and the oxen to the bank of a stream for making them drink water. At times it so happened that the oxen drank water but the cows did not. Thereupon they thought that this was due to the evil spirits which had accommodated themselves between the horns of the oxen and which did not permit the cows to drink water. In order, therefore, to drive away the bad spirits they hit on the faces of the oxen.

3. They branded healthy camels so that the others might recover

If a disease appeared amongst the camels or ulcers or blisters were observed on their lips or throats a healthy camel was procured and its lips, upper leg and thigh were branded so as to prevent the disease spreading to other camels.

However, the reason for such action is not clear. It may be considered probable that this action has a preventive aspect and was a sort of scientific treatment, but in view of the fact that out of many camels only one was selected for being subjected to such affliction it may be said that this too was a superstitious practice and was resorted to on fictitious grounds.

4. A camel was confined by the side of a grave

When a person of distinction died a camel was confined in a pit near his grave and was not given any water or fodder so that it might die and the dead person might be riding on it on the Day of Judgement

and might not rise on foot.

5. They cut off the feet of a camel near a grave

Keeping in view the fact that a person, while alive, used to slaughter camels to entertain his kinsmen and guests and as a mark of respect and recompense to him his successors cut off the feet of a camel near his grave in a manner very painful to the animal.

Islam Combats With Superstitions

Such acts (besides the fact that none of them conforms with logic and scientific reasoning, because rains do not fall by kindling fire, striking an ox does not have any effect on a cow, branding a healthy camel does not cure sick camels etc.) are a sort of cruelty to animals. If we compare these beliefs and actions with firm rules prescribed by Islam for the protection of animals we shall certainly say that this religious law had declared an open war against the thinking of the society.

There are numerous Islamic regulations regarding the protection of animals and it may be mentioned in this behalf that the Holy Prophet has said "An animal for riding has six rights on its master:

(1) When he breaks his journey he should provide the animal with fodder.
(2) If and when he passes by water he should let the animal drink it.
(3) He should not strike the animal on its face.
(4) When he indulges in a lengthy conversation with someone else he should not remain seated on the back of the animal.
(5) He should not load excessive burden on the animal.
(6) He should not compel the animal to traverse a distance which is beyond its capacity".13

6. Treatment of the sick

If a person was bitten by a snake or by a scorpion, gold ornaments were put round his neck. They believed that if such a person carried copper or tin on his body he would die. As regards rabies (i.e. the ailment which is caused by dog-bite) they treated it by rubbing a small quantity of the blood of the chief of the tribe on the wound. And in case signs of madness appeared in anyone, he took refuge in dirt and dirty rags and bones of the dead were hung round his neck to drive away the evil spirit.

To ensure that their child should not sustain injury from the evil spirits they tied the teeth of a fox and cat to a thread and put it round his neck. As and when a child developed boils or pimples on his body, his mother put a sieve on her head and went round the houses of the tribe to collect bread and dates, which she gave to the dogs, so that the boils and pimples of her child might be healed. Other women of the tribe took care that their own children did not eat those dates and bread lest they too should contract the same ailment.

If a person contracted a skin disease (for example, a disease which had a rasping effect on the body) he

used to treat it by rubbing his saliva on the spot.

If the illness of a person was prolonged they imagined that the patient had killed a snake or some other animal having connections with the evil spirits. In order to beg forgiveness of the evil spirits, therefore, they prepared clay images of camels and loaded them with barley, wheat and dates. They left all these things opposite a hole in a mountain and then visited that place on the following day.

If they found that the said things had been consumed they considered it a sign of the acceptance of the presents by the evil spirits and concluded that the patient would be cured. If, however, the position was otherwise they thought that the presents being insignificant the evil spirits had not accepted them.

How Islam Campaigned against these Superstitions

Islam campaigned against these superstitions in various ways. There were some nomadic Arabs who used to treat their sick with magical appendages and collars studded with stones and bones. When they appeared before the Holy Prophet and endured the treatment of the sick with herbs and medicines, the Holy Prophet said "It is necessary for every sick person to find out the medicine, because Allah who has created an ailment has also created a medicine for it.14

And when S'ad bin Abi Waqqas developed heart trouble the Holy Prophet said to him "You should go and see Harith Kaldah, the famous physician of Thaqif". Later the Holy Prophet himself suggested a particular medicine to him.15

There are other narratives also declaring the magical appendages to be devoid of any effect whatsoever. Here we quote two of them:

"A person whose son was suffering from pain in his throat came before the Holy Prophet with magical appendages. The Holy Prophet said to him, "Do not frighten your children with these magical appendages. You should treat this ailment with aloe-wood oil".16

Imam Sadiq has said "Most of the amulets and appendages amount to polytheism".17

By guiding the people to the use of numerous medicines (the particulars of all of which have been collected by the great Muslim narrators of Hadith under the headings ***Tibur Rasul*** (Medicine of the Prophet), ***Tibur Rida*** (Medicine of Al-Rida, etc.) the Holy Prophet and his Holy successors once again hit out against these superstitions and had, so to say, collared the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance.

7. Some Other Superstitions

They employed the following means to ward off anxiety and fear:

Whenever they arrived in a village they were afraid of some contagious disease or evil spirits. To get rid of this fear they brayed ten times like a donkey at the gate of the village. At times they also hanged the

bones of a fox round their necks. If they lost their way while travelling in the desert, they wore their shirt after turning it inside out.

While travelling they feared immorality on the part of their women. To gain assurance in this behalf they tied a thread to the stalk or branches of a tree. If the thread was intact at the time of their return they were satisfied that their women had not been guilty of immorality. If, however, they found the thread untied or missing they slandered their women.

If the teeth of their children fell they caught them with two fingers and flung them towards the sun saying "O sun! Give him better teeth than these".

In case the children of a woman did not live (i.e. died during infancy) they believed that her children would live if she walked seven times over the slain body of a distinguished person.

This is a brief account of the innumerable superstitions which had darkened the lives of the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance and had restrained their intellects from flying high.

1. Tamaddun–i Islam wa Arab, pp. 78 – 102
2. Murujuz Zahab, vol. 111, page 373
3. This book is published in English by the Islamic Seminary under the caption: Peak of Eloquence.
4. A'lamul Wara', pp. 35 – 40 and Biharul Anwar, vol.XIX, pp. 8 –11
5. Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon 1
6. In 'Usudul Ghaba' Ibn Athir quotes Qays as saying that the Holy Prophet asked him as to how many daughters he had buried alive and he replied that they were twelve in number.
7. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXII, page 155.
8. Biharul Anwar, vol. VI, page 92
9. Biharul Anwar, vol. II, pp 286 – 369
10. Vide 'Futuhul Buldan' Balazari' page 458
11. Tuhaful 'Uqul, page 29
12. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. III, page 421
13. Man la Yahzaruhul Faqih, page 228
14. at–Taj, vol. III, page 178. The Holy Prophet meant to say that the appendages were not an effective treatment.
15. at–Taj, vol. III, page 179
16. at–Taj, vol. Ill, page 184
17. Safinatul Bihar, root word raqa

It is very important to study the following two phenomena in order to evaluate the sacred Islamic movement:

1. The revelation of the Holy Qur'an i.e. the area in which Islam originated and developed.

2. Way of thinking of the people who inhabited the most civilized areas of that age and whose thoughts, manners, morals and civilisations were considered to be the most developed and the best. History tells us that the most enlightened spots of those times were the Roman and the Iranian Empires.

To complete the discussion, it is necessary that we should study the conditions of these two Empires separately, so that it may become possible to make an estimate of the value of the civilisation introduced by Islam.

In those days Rome did not enjoy a better position as compared with its rival viz. Iran. Internal strife and continuous external wars with Iran over Armenia etc. had prepared its people for accepting a revolution. More than anything else, diversity of religious opinions had made these differences much wider. Strife between the Christians and the idolaters did not subside.

When the dignitaries of the Church took reins of government in their hands they pressed their opponents hard and this by itself paved the path for the creation of a dissatisfied minority; and the thing which could be counted to be the great factor for the acceptance of Islam by the Roman nation and warm welcome accorded by them to this movement was the deprivation felt by different groups on account of the harshness of the dignitaries of the Church.

Day after day the awe and power of the Roman Empire was diminishing owing to differences amongst the priests on the one hand and existence of various religious orders on the other. Besides, the white and yellow nations of the north and the east respectively were always very keen to acquire the fertile areas of Europe and at times they did great harm to each other by their mutual warfare. This in itself became the reason for the division of the Roman Empire into two blocs viz. the eastern bloc and the western bloc.

The historians believe that the political, social and financial conditions of Rome in the sixth century were very much disturbed. So much so that they do not consider even the supremacy of Rome over Iran to be an evidence of its military power. They attribute the defeat of Iran to the maladministration of the Iranian Government.

These two Empires, which had been the leaders and rulers of the world, were in a state of chaos and anarchy at the time of the advent of Islam. Evidently such conditions create an unusual longing and desire in the hearts of the people for a proper law which may ensure their welfare.

Seasonal Discussions in Rome

In some countries some idle and sensual persons put forward for discussion a number of meaningless and futile problems with the object of keeping back people from all sorts of scientific and industrial progress and thus render the precious lives of the people useless. In this context we have a large number of specimens and precedents in many Muslim countries which it is not possible to recount at present.

It so chanced that Rome of those days was, more than anything else, entangled in problems of this kind. For example, the emperors and the statesmen held, under the influence of some religious institutions,

the belief that Prophet 'Isa had two natures and two wills, whereas some Ya'qubi Christians were of the view that he had only one nature and one will. This baseless proposition hit out the independence and harmony of Rome and created a deep cleavage amongst those people, for the government was obliged to defend its beliefs and, therefore, subjected its opponents to severe persecution.

As a consequence of pressure and mental aversion some of them took refuge in Iran. These were the very people who, on encountering the Muslim army, quitted their trenches and greeted the Muslims with open arms. Rome of those days was just like the Europe of the Middle Ages. The famous French astronomer Camile Flammarion relates this story about the level of learning in Europe in the Middle Ages:

"The book entitled 'Majmu'a–i Lahutiah' (Theological Collection) was a perfect manifestation of the scholastic philosophy in the Middle Ages and was taught in Europe for four hundred years as a text book. A part of that book discusses whether it is possible for a few angels to settle themselves on the point of a needle or how many leagues apart the pupils of the right eye and of the left eye of the Heavenly Father are?".

How unfortunate for Rome! Just at the time when it was entangled in foreign wars, torrents of internal differences, most of which were manifested in the garb of religion, were drawing it, day after day, nearer to the precipice. When the Jews, who were a wicked and intriguing people, saw that the pressure by the Christian Emperor of Rome had crossed the bounds they drew up plans to topple down the Roman Government and even occupied the city of Antakia at one time and cut off the ears, nose and lips of the Archbishop. After some time the Roman Government avenged itself by massacring the Jews of Antakia.

Such merciless slaughtering was repeated in Rome a number of times between the Jews and the Christians and at times this revengeful feeling had its repercussions even beyond the frontiers of the Empire. For example, once the Jews purchased eighty thousand Christians from the Iranians and slaughtered them like sheep with the object of taking revenge on the Christian community.

It is here that the learned reader can visualise the dark and chaotic background of the world contemporaneous with the dawn of Islam and acknowledge that these sublime teachings, which ensured deliverance of mankind from that dark atmosphere, are not the outcome of human brain and this exhilarating breeze of unity and unanimity and this message of peace and sincerity, which is the object of Islamic religion, has no source other than the occult one. How can it be said that Islam, which has given right of existence even to the animals, is the child of such a blood thirsty environment?

Islam set aside all these baseless and frivolous discussions about the will of 'Isa and introduced him in the following words:

'Isa the son of Maryam,was no more than a Prophet. Other Prophets passed away before him. His mother was a chaste and truthful woman. They both ate earthly food and were human beings. (Surah al–Ma'dah, 5:75).

By means of this verse Islam put an end to a large number of silly discussions of the dignitaries of the Church about the spirit, blood and individuality of 'Isa. At the same time it dissuaded man from disputes and bloodshed by imparting sublime teachings to him and reviving his excellent human attributes.

Iran, or The Cradle of Civilisation of that Age

The scholars of sociology are of the view that the weak point about the government of the Iranians of that age was its despotic nature and the rule of an individual over the masses. The ignorant Arabs, with all their savagery and barbarism, possessed a sort of democratic government. With the establishment of ***'Darul Nadwah'***, which enjoyed the position of the National Consultative Assembly, they had, to some extent, eliminated the defects of despotic rule.

Although a government, whether constitutional or despotic, cannot solve the difficulties without the rule of religion and faith and the protection of secret police and cannot also maintain law and order which is the aim of every government, but it is an admitted fact that the wisdom and prudence of one person cannot equal the sagacity of a group of persons.

Collusion and violence are comparatively lesser in a democratic government. It is for this reason that the grandeur and supremacy or weakness and humiliation of the Iranians have been closely related with the weakness or strength of their one-man government. A study of the Sasanian period of government and the oscillations which took place during that period fully justifies this statement.

General Conditions of Iran Simultaneous with The Dawn of Islam

The advent of Islam and the appointment to the prophetic mission of the Holy Prophet (611 A.D.) was concurrent with the reign of Khusro Pervez (590-628 A.D.). The Holy Prophet's migration from Makkah to Madina also took place during his time (Friday, the 16th July, 622 A.D.) and this event became the beginning of the history of the Muslims.

In those days two big and powerful states (Byzantium and Sasanian) Iran ruled a large part of the civilised world of that time. They had been quarrelling and fighting with each other for long in order to dominate and rule the world.1

The prolonged wars which the Iranians fought against the Romans started during the reign of Anushirwan (531-589 A.D.) and continued for twenty four years i.e. till the time of Khusro Pervez. The great losses and enormous expenditure which Iran and Rome had to bear on account of these wars dealt severe blows to both of these powerful states and nothing except only form, without any substance, was left of them.

In order that we may understand clearly the conditions of Iran from different angles it is necessary for us to study briefly the conditions of various governments from the end of the rule of Anushirwan onwards till

the time when the Muslims made their appearance.

Fondness for Luxuriousness during Sasanian Period

Sasanian kings were usually fond of luxuries and voluptuousness. The pomp and gradiloquence of the Sasanian court dazzled the eyes.

During the Sasanian period the Iranians had a flag which was called ***'Dirafsh-i Kavyani'***. This flag was hoisted in the battlefield or was installed at the top of the palace at the time of ceremonial celebrations by the Sasanians. It had been decorated with very precious gems. According to a writer this peerless flag was studded with gems and other precious things, whose cost has been estimated to be 1,200,000 dirhams (or 30,000 pounds).2

In the fabulous palaces of the Sasanians so many gems and other precious articles and wonderful drawings and paintings had been collected that the eyes of the onlookers were dazzled. If we wish to become with the wonders of these palaces it would suffice if we have a look on a big white carpet which they had spread in the hall of one of the palaces.

This carpet, which was called ***'Baharistan-i Kisra',*** had been got made by the Sasanian rulers for the purpose that at the time of merrymaking they might be in good pirits and might always have the beautiful and enlivening scenes of spring before their eyes.3

It has been said that this carpet was 150 cubits long and 70 cubits wide. Its entire wrap and wool had been woven with gold, and gems were embedded in it.4

Amongst the Sasanian monarchs the one who was most fond of luxuries was Khusro Pervez. He had thousands of wives, slave-girls, singers and musicians in his palace. In his book entitled 'Sanii Mulukul Arz' (grand kings of the earth) Hamza Isfahani describes the luxurious life of this King in these words:

"Khusro Parvez had three thousand wives and twelve thousand slave-girls who were musical performers. He had six thousand men who served as guards. As many as 8,500 horses were earmarked for his riding. He had 960 elephants and 12,000 mules for carrying the baggage. He also had one thousand camels".5

Then Tabari adds to this "This king was more fond of gems and valuable vessels etc. than anyone else".6

Social Conditions in Iran

The social conditions in Iran in the days of the Sasanians were in no way better than the political conditions prevailing in the royal court. Class rule, which had existed in Iran since long, assumed the most acute shape during the Sasanian period. The aristocracy and the clergy were absolutely superior to

other classes. All the important public offices and vocations were reserved for them. The craftsmen and peasants were deprived of all social rights and privileges. Except making payment or revenue and taking part in wars they had no other function to perform.

Nafisi writes thus about class distinctions during the period of the Sasanians: "The thing which was mostly instrumental in sowing discord amongst the Iranians was the very harsh class distinction which was established by the Sasanians in Iran. It had its roots in the past civilisation. but was much more tightened during the Sasanian period ".

Originally seven aristocratic families and after them five other classes enjoyed privileges and the common man was deprived of them. Almost the entire 'ownership' was confined to the seven families. The population of Iran during the Sasanian period was about 140 million persons.

If we suppose the number of each of these families to be one hundred thousand persons their total number would cone to seven hundred thousand. And if we assume that the frontier officials and proprietors, who too enjoyed possessory rights to some extent, were also seven hundred thousand in number, the position would be that out of a population of 140 millions, only a million and a half possessed rights of ownership and all others were deprived of this natural right granted to man by Allah.7

The craftsmen and peasants, who were deprived of all rights and privileges but had to bear on their shoulders the heavy burden of the expenses of the aristocracy, did not consider it worthwhile to preserve these conditions. Hence, most of the peasants and the people of the lower strata renounced their professions and took refuge in monasteries to escape payment of onerous revenues.8

After giving an account of the misfortunes of the craftsmen and the peasants of Iran, the author of the book 'Iran-dar Zaman-i Sasaniyan' quotes this remark of one of the European historians named Amyan Marcilinos: "The craftsmen and the peasants were leading a very miserable and degraded life during the Sasanian period.

In the event of war they walked on foot and formed the rear of the army They were considered to be so mean and worthless, as if perpetual slavery had been pre-destined for them and they could get no wages or reward for the work done by them".9

In the Sasanian Empire only a minority which formed less than 1.5 per cent of the population was the owner of everything, whereas others, whose number exceeded 98 per cent, were just like slaves and had no rights of life.

Right of Obtaining Education was Reserved for the Upper

Classes

During the Sasanian period only the children of the rich people and the aristocrats were entitled to receive education and the masses and the middle class were deprived of the acquisition of knowledge and distinction.

This grave defect in the culture of ancient Iran is so patent that even the writers of epic poems (Khudainamah and Shahnamah) have mentioned it in expressive terms, although their real subject had been the narration of the achievements of the heroes.

Firdausi, the famous epic poet of Iran, has mentioned a story in Shahnamah which bears a clear testimony to this fact. This story belongs to the time of Anushirwan i.e. exactly to the period when the Sasanian empire was passing through its golden age. And this story shows that the majority of the people consisting of almost the entire masses had no right to become educated and even the lover of wisdom and justice, Anushirwan, was not prepared to grant the right of education to other classes of the public !

Firdausi says "A shoemaker turned up and offered to give a large amount of gold and silver to meet the expenses of the Iranian–Roman war. At that time Anushirwan was in great need of financial help, because about thrity thousand Iranian soldiers were faced with shortage of food and armour. There was a clamour amongst the soldiers who made their grievances known to the King himself.

Anushirwan was disturbed by this state of affairs and became alarmed about his own end. He immediately called his wise minister, Buzurg Mehr, to find out a remedy and ordered him to proceed to Mazandran at once to procure money to meet the expenses of war.

However, Buzurg Mehr said "The danger is imminent, hence something should be done immediately to remedy it". At that juncture Buzurg Mehr suggested a national loan. His suggestion was liked by Anushirwan who ordered that steps in this behalf might be taken without any delay. Buzurg Mehr sent officials to the nearest cities and towns and made the position known to the wealthy people of those places.

A shoemaker offered to provide the entire expenses of the war. The only recompense that he desired for this service was that his only son, who was very fond of education, might be permitted to obtain it. Buzurg Mehr considered his request to be quite insignificant as compared with the money offered by him. He hurried to the king and made the request of the shoemaker known to him.

Anushirwan got annoyed, rebuked his minister and said "What a strange request you are making! This is something inexpedient, for, when he gets out of the classification, the tradition of class system in the country will topple down and the harm caused by this will be much more than the gold and silver which he is prepared to give".

Firdausi explains Anushirwan's Machiavellian philosophy in the king's own words:

"When the son of a merchant becomes a secretary and also acquires skill, wisdom and intelligence.

Then, when our son ascends the throne he will need a secretary endowed with good luck.

If the son of one who deals in shoes acquires skill it will lend him eyes which can see clearly as well as ears.

In that event nothing will be left with a wise man of noble descent except regret and cold sighs".

Thus the money of the shoemaker was returned to him under the orders of the "Just Monarch". This made the helpless shoemaker very unhappy and, as is usual with the oppressed, he complained to Allah Almighty at night and made the "bell of Divine justice ring".

In the words of Firdausi "The messenger returned with the money and the shoemaker became very unhappy on account of that money.

He was very much grieved at the words of the king and when night came he rang the Divine bell".[10]

When speaking about the causes of the decline, unrest and disorder of the Sasanian period, the author of the book "Tarikh-i Ijtima'i Iran", who is himself one of the forerunners of the nationalists, draws a picture of the right of education being restricted to the higher circles in these words:

"During this period education and instruction in the usual branches of learning was the monopoly of the children of the aristocrats and the clergy, and almost all the other children of Iran were deprived of it".[11]

Indeed, this tradition of keeping the masses ignorant was so important in this eyes of the Sasanians that they did not wish to forsake it at any cost. Hence, the majority of the Iranians were deprived of the right of education as well as of other social rights, so that the opportune and improper desires of this pampered minority might be fulfilled.

Verdict of History on The Sasanian Kings

Most of the Sasanian monarchs adopted a harsh policy of government and desired to subjugate the people by force. They extracted very heavy and onerous taxes from the people. The people of Iran were therefore, usually dissatisfied, but for fear of their lives they could not utter any words of protest. So much so that even the learned and experienced persons were not accorded any recognition by the Sasanian court.

The Sasanian rulers were so despotic and self-willed that no one could express his own opinion in any matter.

Although history is always tampered with through the persons wielding authority, stories have been told about the injustice and cruelty of the tyrants.

Khusro Pervez was so hard-hearted that Tha'labi writes about him: "Khusro was told that a particular governor had been asked to come to the royal court but he had made excuses. The king immediately ordered: "If it is difficult for him to come before us with his entire body we shall be satisfied with only a portion of it so that matters may become easy for him. Tell the persons concerned to send only his head to my court".[12]

Unrest during The Sasanian Rule

While studying the last part of the Sasanian period the thing, which should not be lost sight of, is the maladministration of government, and the prevalence of arbitrariness, intrigue and chaos in the Sasanian regime.

The princes, the nobles and the army chiefs were at loggerheads with one another. One group elevated one prince and the other group removed him and selected another.

When the Muslims of Arabia decided to occupy Iran, the Sasanian royal family was very weak and was deeply involved in discord.

During four years ranging from the time of assassination of Khusro Parvez and ascension to the throne of Sheroya to the assumption of kingship by the last Sasanian monarch, Yazd Gard, numerous kings ruled Iran. Their number has been stated to be from six to fourteen.

Thus the government of Iran passed from one hand to the other about fourteen times during the span of four years. It can well be imagined what the condition of a country would be when coup d'etat is staged in it fourteen times during a period of four years and every time one person is assassinated and another is installed in his place.

Everyone who assumed reins of government did away with all other claimants to the throne and committed all sorts of atrocities to secure his own position. The father killed the son, the son killed the father and the brother extirpated his brothers.

Sheroya assassinated his father, Khusro Pervez,[13] to occupy the throne and also killed forty sons of Khusro Pervez (i.e. his own brothers).[14]

Shehr Baraz killed everyone about whom he was not certain whether or not he would be a danger for his throne.

Eventually all those who came to occupy the throne, whether they were men or women and whether old or young, killed their kith and kin (viz. the Sasanian princes) so that no pretender to the throne might

remain alive.

In short, chaos and anarchy had assumed such dimensions during the Sasanian period that children and women were elevated to the throne, then killed after a few weeks, and others installed in their place.

In this manner the Sasanian monarchy, notwithstanding its apparent pomp and grandeur, was speedily moving towards decadence, disintegration and destruction.

Disturbed Conditions of Sasanian Iran from Religious Viewpoint

The greatest reason for the chaotic conditions of Iran during the Sasanian period was differences and diversity of opinions in religious matters.

Ardshir Babkan, as the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, was himself the son of a Mubid (Zoroastrian priest) and had reached the throne with the assistance of the spiritual people of Zoroastrian faith, he employed all means to propagate the religion of his ancestors in Iran.

In the days of the Sasanians the official as well as the popular religion of the Iranian nation was Zoroastrianism and as the Sasanian Government had been established with the help of the priests, the Zoroastrian clergy received every support from the royal court.

Consequently the Zoroastrian clergy acquired great strength in Iran during the Sasanian period, so much so that they enjoyed the position of the most powerful class in the country.

The Sasanian rulers were always mere satellites of the priests and, if anyone of these rulers did not obey the spiritual people, he met with their serious opposition and consequent disgrace. Hence, the Sasanian Kings were more attentive to the clergy than to any other people and on account of the support which the priests received from the Sasanians, their number increased day after day.

The Sasanians utilised the spiritual people a good deal for the strengthening of their empire. They erected many fire-temples in every nook and cranny of the vast dominion of Iran, and in every temple they accommodated a large number of priests.

It is said that Khusro Pervez constructed a fire-temple and appointed twelve thousand priests in it to sing hymns and to offer prayers.[15]

Thus the Zoroastrian faith was the court religion. The priests tried their utmost to keep the deprived and afflicted masses quiet and to create an atmosphere in which the people should not feel their adversities.

The oppression by the priests and their unlimited powers were driving the people away from the Zoroastrian faith and the common man was desirous of finding for himself a religion other than that of the aristocracy.

The author of "Tarikh–i Ijtima'i Iran" writes: " ....forced by the pressure exerted by them (i.e. the priests) the Iranian people were making efforts to get rid of these hardships. For this very reason, as opposed to the official creed of 'Mazdesti Zartushti', which was the religion of the government and the court, and was called 'Behdin', two other schools of thought had also appeared amongst the Zoroastrians".16

Of course, it was due to the severity and harsh treatment of the nobility and the priests that in Sasanian Iran different religions were appearing, one after the other. Mazdak, and before him Mani,17 had tried to bring about a change in the spiritual and religious conditions of the land, but their efforts were not successful.

It was in about 497 A.D. that Mazdak came into prominence. He declared nullification of restricted ownership, abrogation of polygamy, and formation of harems to be the front piece of his reformatory programme. As soon as the deprived classes came to know about Mazdak's programme they flocked towards him and put a great revolution in motion under his leadership.

The sole purpose of all these risings and movements was that the people should achieve the legitimate rights granted to them by Allah Almighty. Eventually Mazdak had to encounter the hostility of the spiritual people and the opposition of the army, and this resulted in trouble and destruction for Iran.

The Zoroastrian faith had also completely lost its reality in the last days of the Sasanians. Fire had been accorded so much sanctity that it was considered unlawful to hammer iron which had assumed the nature of fire for its having remained in its vicinity and most of the principles and beliefs of Zoroaster were given the shape of superstitions and fables.

During this period the realities of this religion had given place to certain futile, prosaic and absurd rites. Their formalities were continuously enlarged upon by the priests to increase their own strength. Fables and silly superstitions had penetrated into this religion to such an extent that they made even the spiritual people uneasy. And there were persons amongst the priests also who had realised the hollowness of Zoroastrian rites and beliefs and were divesting themselves of their burden.

From the time of Anushirwan onwards, the path of reflection had been opened in Iran, and as a result of the penetration of Greek and Indian learning as well as the contact of Zoroastrian beliefs with those of Christianity and other religions, such reflection was gradually becoming more intense and was occasioning the awareness of the Iranian people. Hence, more than at any other time, they felt grieved on account of the superstitions and the vain and baseless propositions of the Zoroastrian faith.

At last the deterioration which had appeared in the Zoroastrian spiritual community and the superstitions and silly fables which had made inroads upon the Zoroastrian faith became the cause of diversity and dispersion in the beliefs and views of the Iranian nation. The appearance of these differences and the prevalence of various religions made the spirit of doubt and indecision run into the minds of the intellectuals and from them it gradually penetrated into others. Consequently the masses totally lost the absolute faith and the perfect belief which they possessed previously.

Thus chaos, irreligion and carelessness completely engulfed Iran. Barzuyah, the famous physician of the Sasanian period, has drawn a complete picture of the diversity of beliefs and disturbed conditions of Sasanian Iran in his introduction to 'Kalilah wa Damnah'.

Wars between Iran and Rome

Buzurg Mehr, who was an efficient and clever man, and enjoyed the foremost position in the organization of Anushirwan, saved Iran many times from grave dangers by dint of his prudent policy and experience. At times, however, crafty people and tale-bearers darkened his relations with Anushirwan and having instigated the King to take action against him got order of his arrest issued.

The same mischief-mongers poisoned Anushirwan's mind with regard to the Roman Emperor and instigated him to ignore the treaty of permanent peace and to attack the Romans in order to widen the frontiers of the country and weaken a dangerous rival. Eventually war started and in a comparatively short period the Iranian army conquered Syria, put Antakia to fire and ravaged Asia Minor.

After twenty years' warfare and bloodshed both the armies lost their strength and chances of success, and, after sustaining heavy losses, made peace treaties twice and agreed to maintain their respective former frontiers, subject to the condition that the Roman Government would require the Iranian Government, with the payment of twenty thousand dinars annually.

The extent to which such long wars, and those, too, fought in areas far away from the centre of a country, can do harm to the economy and industry of a nation can well be imagined. Keeping in view the resources of those times it was not possible to repair speedily the effects of such a long war.

This war and invasion provided the preliminaries for the sure fall of the Iranian Government. The wounds of this war had not yet been healed, when another seven years' war started. After ascending the throne, the Roman Emperor, Tibrius, with a view to take revenge, made severe attacks on Iran and threatened its very independence. The position of the two armies had not yet become decisive when Anushirwan breathed his last and his son Khusro Pervez ascended the throne.

In the year 614 A.D. he, too, relying on some excuses, attacked the Romans afresh and as a consequence of the very first onslaught conquered Syria, Palestine and Africa; plundered Jersusalem, set on fire their sacred places and destroyed various cities. After the blood of as many as ninety thousand Christians had been shed the war ended to the advantage of Iran.

At this juncture, when the civilized world of that day was burning in the fire of war and tyranny, the Prophet of Islam was entrusted the prophetic mission. It was 610 A.D. He conveyed the invigorating message of monotheism to the people and invited them to peace, sincerity, discipline and bliss.

Defeat of the God-worshipping Romans at the hands of fire-worshipping Iranians was taken to be a good omen by the polytheists of Mecca and they thought that they too would be in a position in the near

future to subdue the worshippers of God (the Muslims). However, the Muslims were very much concerned on hearing this news.

The Prophet of Islam awaited the Divine revelation and then this verse was revealed:

The Romans have been defeated in a neighbouring land. But in a few years they shall themselves gain victory. (Surah Rum, 30:1).

The prediction made by the Holy Qur'an proved to be true in the year 627 A.D., when Hercules attacked and occupied Naynava. The two rivals were breathing the last breaths of their lives and were planning reinforcements.

However, as Allah Almighty had willed it that these two lands should be illuminated with the worship of One Allah and the depressed spirits of the Iranians and the Romans should be rejuvenated with the invigorating zephyr of Islam, it was not long before Khusro Pervez was assassinated at the hands of his son Sheroya, and the son too passed away after eight months of the death of his father.

During this period Iran passed through such a chaos that after Sheroya there were nine rulers who ruled during four years (out of whom four were women) till, at last, the Muslim army put an end to this state of affairs. These conflicts, spreading over fifty years, were, of course, of great help for the advancement of the Muslim conquests.

1. Tarikh-i 'Ulum wa Adabiyat dar Iran, Dr Safa, pp. 3 - 4, Iran dar Zaman-i Sasaniyan, Christensen, page 267.
2. Payambar-i Rehnuma, vol. I, pp. 42 - 43
3. Payambar-i Rehnuma, vol. I, pp. 42 - 43
4. Payambar-i Rehnuma, page 43. "In the book 'Ganj-i Danish', Muhammad Taqi Khan Hakim, 'Mu'tamadus Sultan', has described the carpet 'Nigaristan' very minutely, while making research about the court of Khosroes".
5. Sanii Mulukul Arz wal Ambiya, page 420
6. Tarikh-i Tabari, as quoted by Christonson, page 327
7. Tarikh-i Ijtimai'i-i Iran, vol. II, pp. 24 - 26
8. Limadha Khasir al 'Alam bi inhitatil Muslimin, pp. 70 - 71
9. Iran fi 'ahdis Sasani'in, page 424
10. Firdausi has narrated this story in Shahnamah as an event of the reign of Anushirwan with reference to the war between Iran arid Rome (Shahnamah, vol. VI, pp. 257 - 260). Dr Sahib al-Zamani has analysed this story in a very fascinating manner in his book "Dibacha-i bar Rehbari" (pp. 258 - 262) See also, "Guzarish Nama-i Iran", Mehdi Quli Khan Hidayat (page 232).
11. Tarikh-i Ijtima'i-i Iran, vol. II, page 26
12. Iran dar Zaman-i Sasaniyan, page 318
13. Murujuz Zahab, vol. I, page 281
14. Tarikh-i Ijtima'i-i Iran, vol. II, pp. 15 - 19 by Sa'id Nafisi
15. Tarikh-i Tamaddun-i Sasani, vol. I, page 1
16. Tarikh-i Ijtima'i-i Iran, vol. II, page 20
17. Mani's religion was a combination of Zoroastrianism and Christianity. He had thus invented a new religion by the admixture of a local and a foreign faith.

1. Ibrahim, The Champion of Monotheism

The object of giving an account of the life of Prophet Ibrahim is to make known the ancestors of the Holy Prophet of Islam for he was a descendant of Ismail who was the son of Ibrahim. And as these two venerable persons as well as many other noble forefathers of the Holy Prophet have a great share in the history of Arabia and Islam, it is appropriate that a brief account of their lives may be given here, because the events of the history of Islam have, like the rings of a chain, a perfect relationship with the events simultaneous with the dawn of Islam as well as those which are somewhat remote from it.

For example, the protection and support accorded to the Holy Prophet by Abdul Muttalib, the favours bestowed upon him and the hardships suffered for his sake by Abu Talib, the greatness of the family of Hashim and the origin of the enmity of Bani Umayyah (with the family of Hashim) are considered to be very important events on which the history of Islam is based. It is for this reason that a chapter of the history of Islam is allocated to the discussion of these events.

We come across some very prominent and outstanding incidents in the life of Prophet Ibrahim. It is not possible to forget his struggles to uphold the standard of monotheism and to uproot the worship of idols and men. Similarly his significant and elegant debates with star-worshippers, which have been quoted by the Holy Qur'an with the object of education and guidance of the people, are the most sublime instruction in monotheism for the seekers of truth.

Why Worship of Creatures Came Into Existence?

The factors which occasioned worship of created things by man were no other than his ignorance coupled with the absolute commandment of nature (which, as a general rule, believes in a cause for every phenomenon). On the one hand man, being controlled by nature, was obliged to take refuge in some locality, to consider a subduing and powerful authority effective in creating this unique system and to imagine the beautiful paintings in the shape of different phenomena to be the work of a skilful painter.

On the other hand, however, as he wanted to traverse this path without the guidance of the Prophets, who are the Divine guides and have been appointed to ensure the completion of the spiritual journey of man, he took refuge in inanimate objects as well as in animals and men before he could reach his real object (i.e. the One Allah) and find His trace by observing the signs of creation and seek refuge in Him.

He therefore, imagined that these were the objects which he had been seeking. In view of this the scholars have acknowledged, after studying the Heavenly Books and the manner of the invitation extended to the people by the Prophets and their debates with them, that the object of the Prophets was not to make people believe in the existence of the Creator of the Universe.

In fact their basic role in the society was to free the people from the clutches of polytheism and idol-worship. In other words they had come to tell the people, "O people! Allah in whose existence all of us

believe is this and not that; He is One and not two. Don't give the creatures the place of Allah. Accept Allah as One. Don't accept any partner or peer for Him".

The sentence 'There is no god but Allah' bears a glowing testimony to what we have stated above. This was the starting point of the preaching of the Holy Prophet. The purport of this sentence is that there is no one fit to be worshipped except Allah and this necessitates that the existence of the Creator should evidently be an admitted fact, so that the people may be invited to accept His 'Unity'and 'Oneness'.

This sentence shows that in the eyes of the man of that time the first portion (i.e. the Universe has Allah) was not a matter of dispute. Besides this, the study of Qur'anic stories and the conversations of the Prophets with the people clarify this point further.1

Birthplace of Prophet Ibrahim

The Champion of 'Monotheism' was born in the environments which were permeated with the darkness of idol-worship and man-worship. Man expressed humility before the idols made with his own hands as well as before the stars. In these circumstances the thing which elevated the position of Ibrahim and crowned his efforts with success was his patience and fortitude.

The birth-place of the standard-bearer of monotheism was Babylon. The historians have considered it to be one of the seven wonders of the world and have recorded many narrations about the grandeur and magnificence of the civilisation of this territory. The famous Greek historian Herodote (484 - 425 B.C.) writes thus: "Babylon was constructed in the shape of a square. Each of its sides was 120 leagues long and its perimeter was 480 leagues".2

This statement, how much so ever exaggerated it may be, reveals an undeniable reality (when read along with other writings).

Of those attractive scenes and lofty palaces, however, nothing can be seen today except a mound of clay, between the Tigris and the Euphrates, which is covered by the silence of death. This silence is at times broken by the orientalists through the excavations which they carry out in order to gain information about the civilisation of the Babylonians.

Prophet Ibrahim, the architect of monotheism, was born during the reign of Namrud, son of Kan'an. Although Namrud was an idol-worshipper, he also claimed to be a deity and, taking advantage of the ignorance of the credulous masses, imposed his beliefs on them. It may appear somewhat strange that a person should be an idol-worshipper and should also claim to be a deity.

However, the Holy Qur'an provides us an example of this belief. When Musa son of Imran shook Firaun's authority with his forceful logic and gave the lie to him in a public gathering the supporters of Firaun said to him:

Will you allow Musa* and *his people to commit evil in the land and to forsake you and your gods? (Surah al--A'raf, 7 125).

It is well known that Firaun claimed to be a god and used to declare "I am your supreme lord". However, this verse shows that, notwithstanding his belief and claim, he was also an idol-worshipper.

The greatest defence which Namrud acquired was the procurement of the support of astrologers and fortune-tellers who were considered to be the sages of that age. It goes without saying that their humility before Namrud paved the way for the exploitation of the down-trodden and ignorant classes by him.

Moreover, some relatives of Ibrahim (for example Azar who made idols and was also conversant with astrology) were amongst the followers of Namrud. This in itself was a great obstacle for Ibrahim, for, besides having to struggle against the general beliefs, he had to face the opposition of his own Kith and Kin.

Namrud had plunged into the sea of superstitious beliefs. He had spread the carpet of feasting and drinking when the astrologers rang the first bell of danger and said "Your government will tumble down through a person who is the son of this soil". The latent fears of Namrud were awakened and he said. "Is he born yet, or not?" the astrologers replied that he was not yet born.

He then ordered the separation of women and men (during the night in which, according to the prediction and calculations of the astrologers, conception of his fell enemy was to take place). In spite of this, however, his executioners killed the male infants. The midwives were ordered to send reports about the particulars of new-born children to a special office.

The same night conception of Ibrahim took place. His mother became pregnant and, like the mother of Musa son of Imran, she kept the fact of her pregnancy secret till the very end. After delivery she resorted to a cave, situated near the town, in order to protect the life of her dear child. She left her son in a corner of the cave and visited it during day or night, as the circumstances would permit. With the passage of time Namrud acquired peace of mind as a result of this oppression, and believed that he had slaughtered the enemy of his throne and government.

Ibrahim spent thirteen years of his life in the cave which had a narrow passage and then his mother brought him out. When he appeared amongst the people the supporters of Namrud felt that he was a stranger. Thereupon his mother said, "This is my son. He was born before the prediction made by the astrologers".3

When Ibrahim came out of the cave he strengthened his innate belief in monotheism by observing the earth and the sky, the shining of the stars and the verdure of the trees. He witnessed a strange and astonishing society. He saw a group of persons who behaved in a very stupid manner vis-a-vis the shining of the stars. He also saw some people whose level of intelligence was even lower than other. They made idols with their own hands and then worshipped them. The worst of all these things was that

a man, taking undue advantage of the ignorance and foolishness of the people, claimed to be their god and declared himself to be the one who had given life to all the beings and foreordained all events.

Prophet Ibrahim was obliged to prepare himself to combat on these three different fronts. The Holy Qur'an has narrated the story of his campaigns in these three fronts.

Ibrahim's Campaign Against Idol Worship

The darkness of idol–worship had complerely permeated throughout Babylon, the bitth–place of Prophet Ibrahim. Numerous terrestrial and celestial gods had deprived different classes of the society of their reason and intellect. Some of these people considered the gods as possessing power themselves, whereas others treated them to be intermediaries for obtaining favours of the Almighty Allah.

Secret of Polytheism

The Arabs before the advent of Islam believed that every being and every phenomenon must have an independent cause and that the One Allah is not competent to create all of them. This was because of the fact that at that time science had not discovered the relationship which exists between different natural beings and phenomena and various events.

Consequently those people imagined all beings and various natural phenomena to be separate from and unconnected with one another. On this account they were obliged to assume an indepedent god for every phenomenon like rain and snow, earthquake and death, famine and dearth, peace and tranquillity, cruelty and blood shed etc. They had no idea of the fact that the entire Universe is a unity and all its parts are interconnected and everyone of them has a reciprocal effect on another.

The crude human intellect of those days had not yet realised the secret of worshipping the One Allah and was not aware that Allah who rules over the Universe is an Omnipotent and Omniscient Lord. He is the Creator who is free from every weakness and defect. His power, perfection, knowledge and wisdom are unlimited. He is above everything which may be assumed for Him.

There is no accomplishment which He does not possess. There is no possibility which He cannot create. He is the One Allah who is competent to create all beings and phenomena without the help of any person and without any supports. He can create other beings and phenomena in the same manner in which He has created the present ones. Hence, according to reason the existence of the mediation of an authority which may detract from the independence of the will of the peerless Allah is unacceptable.

The belief that the Universe has two creators, one of whom is the origin of good and light; and the other is the source of evil and darkness is also not acceptable. And the belief about there having been mediation by some persons like Maryam and 'Isa in the matter of the creation of the Universe, or the administration of the physical world having been entrusted to a human being is a manifestation of polytheism and exaggeration. A monotheist is one who, with due deference to the Prophets and the

saints, preserves the position of The Creator of the Universe and does not attribute the work of one to the other.

The method employed by the Prophets for the teaching and guidance of the people is that of logic and reason, because they are concerned with the minds of the people. They desire to set up a government which should be established on the basis of faith, knowledge and justice and such a government cannot be established by means of violence, warfare and bloodshed.

We should, therefore, differentiate between the goverments of the Prophets and the governments of Firouns and Narnruds. The object of the second group is security of their rule and government by all possible means, although their State may break down after their death.

On the other hand the divine people wish to set up a government which should have its way in private as well as in public and whether the ruler is strong or weak at any particular time or is alive or dead. Such an object cannot, of course, be achieved by use of force and pressure.

In the first instance Ibrahim campaigned against the faith of his kith and kin (viz. idol-worship), amongst whom Azar occupied the top-most position. He had not yet achieved complete success in this field when he had to fight at another sphere of operations. The level of thinking of this second group was somewhat higher and clearer than that of the first, for as opposed to the religion of the relatives of Ibrahim, these people had discarded the mean and worthless terrestrial beings and they worshipped the heavenly stars.

While campaigning against star-worship Ibrahim stated in simple words a number of philosophical and scientific truths which had not yet been conceived by the people of that age and even today his arguments command admiration of the scholars well-versed in the arts of logic and debate. Above all this, the Holy Qur'an has also quoted the arguments of Ibrahim and the author of the present book has the honour to reproduce them in these pages with brief explanations.

After coming out of the cave Ibrahim, in order to guide the people, fixed his eyes one night on the sky at the time of sunset and remained awake till sunset on the following day. During these twenty four hours he debated and conversed with three groups and disproved their beliefs with strong arguments.

The darkness of night approached and hid all signs of existence. The bright star 'Venus' appeared from a corner of the horizon. In order to win the hearts of the Venus-worshippers, Ibrahim concurred with them and affected to follow their line and said: "It is my nourisher" However, when the star set and disappeared in a corner, he said "I cannot accept a god which sets". With this cogent reasoning he rejected the belief of the Venus-worshippers and proved its falsity.

At the next stage his eyes fell on the luminous disc of the moon with its fascinating brilliance and beauty. With a view to win the hearts of the moon-worshippers he outwardly admitted its being the deity, but later tore this belief also to pieces with his forceful logic.

It so happened that the strong hand of Providence made the moon also sink below the horizon and its light and lustre disappeared from the face of the earth. Ibrahim, without injuring the sentiments of the moon-worshippers, said with truthful insight "If my real Lord does not guide me, I shall surely go astray, because this god sets like the stars and is in itself subject to a constant order and system shaped by someone else".

The darkness of the night came to an end and the sun appeared, tearing the bosom of the horizon, and began scattering its golden rays on the face of earth. The sun-worshippers turned their faces to their deity. In order to observe the rules of debate, Ibrahim also acknowledged its god-hood. However, the setting of the sun confirmed its being subservient to the general system of the Universe and Ibrahim explicitly repudiated its being fit for worship. (Vide Surah al-An'am, 6:75 – 79)

There is no doubt about the fact that, while staying in the cave, Ibrahim had, through an extraordinary divine favour, acquired from the fountain of the Invisible, that innate knowledge about monotheism, which is a speciality of the Prophets.

However, after perusal and study of these celestial bodies he gave that knowledge the shape of argument. Thus, besides showing the right path to the misguided people and providing them with a means of guidance, he has left behind a store of invaluable knowledge to be utilised by those who are in search of truth and reality.

Ibrahim's Logic Explained

Ibrahim was well aware that Allah rules over the Universe, but the question was whether that source of power consisted of these celestial bodies, or it was an Omnipotent Being, superior to them. After studying the conditions of these itinerant bodies he found that these bright and luminous beings are themselves subject to rising, setting, decline and disappearance in accordance with a particular system and they rotate on an unalterable path and this in itself proves that they are subservient to the will of someone else and a greater and stronger power controls them and makes them rotate in a specified orbit.

Let us clarify the point further: The Universe entirely consists of 'Possibilities' and 'Needs'. Various creatures and natural phenomena are never independent of the Almighty. They need an Omniscient Allah during every second of day and night – the Allah who should not, at any moment, be oblivious of their needs.

Now as regards the celestial bodies they are present and useful at one time and absent and useless at another. Such beings do not possess the necessary competence to be the gods of other beings and to meet their needs and requirements.

This theory may be propounded in the shape of various theoretical and philosophical statements. For example we may say 'These celestial bodies are in motion and move on their respective axes. In case

their movement is without any option and under compulsion there must he a stronger hand that controls them. And if their movement is in accordance with their own free will it will have to be seen as to what the object of this movement is.

If they are moving to achieve perfection and are like a seed which rises from the earth to grow into a tree and to bear fruit, this will necessarily mean that they need a kind, powerful, wise and independent being who should remove their short-comings and endow them with the quality of perfection.

But, if their movement and rotation tends towards weakness and deficiency and they are just like a person who is past his prime and has entered the wrong side of age, then their movement will be an inclination towards decline and destruction and will not at all accord with the position of the deity who should rule the world and all that it contains.

Method of Discussion and Debate Adopted by The Prophets

The history of the Prophets shows that they commenced their reformating programme by first inviting their relatives to the true path and later they extended the 'invitation' to others. This is just what the Prophet of Islam did immediately after his appointment to the prophetic mission. First of all he invited his own people to Islam and laid the foundation of his 'call' on their reformation, in compliance with the Divine commandment

Admonish your nearest kinsfolk (Surah al-Shu'ara, 26:214)

Ibrahim also adopted the same method and first undertook the reformation of his own kinsfold. Azar enjoyed a very high position amongst his relatives, because, besides being an educated man and an artist, he was an expert astrologer. In the court of Namrud his word was treated to be authoritative and his astrological conclusions were accepted by all the courtiers to be correct.

Ibrahim was aware that if he could win over Azar to his side he would have captured the strongest fortress of the idol-worshippers. He, therefore, advised him in the best possible manner not to worship inanimate things. For some reasons, however, Azar did not accept the message and advice of his nephew Ibrahim.

So far as we are concerned, however, the most important thing in this episode is the method of invitation and the manner of conversation of Ibrahim with Azar. Deep and careful study of the Qur'anic verses in which this conversation has been reproduced makes the method of argument and invitation adopted by the Prophets abundantly clear. Now let us see in which way Ibrahim invited Azar to the true path:

He said to his uncle: Father! how can you serve a worthless idol, a thing that can neither see nor hear?

Father, the truth has been revealed to me about many mysteries; therefore, follow me, that I may

guide you along an even path.

Father, do not worship Satan; for he has rebelled against the Lord of Mercy.

Father, I fear that Allah's scourge will fall upon you and you will become one of Satan's minions. (Surah Maryam, 19:44 – 47)

In reply to Ibrahim's invitation Azar said "Do you dare renounce my gods, Ibrahim? Desist from this folly or you shall be stoned to death. Begone from my house immediately"

Magnanimous Ibrahim bore this ill–speaking on the part of Azar with perfect calmness and replied "Peace be on you. I shall implore my Lord to forgive you".

Could there be a reply more appropriate and a conversation more mild and agreeable than these words of Ibrahim?

Was Azar The Father of Ibrahim?

The above quoted verses as well as 15th verse of Surah Tawbah and 14th verse of Surah al–Mumtahinah would give the impression that Azar was related to Ibrahim in the capacity of father and Ibrahim too, has addressed him as 'father'. However, the idol–worshipper Azar's being his father is not in harmony with the concensus of opinion of the Shi'ah scholars, who believe that the forefathers of the Holy Prophet of Islam as well as all other Prophets were pious people who believed in monotheism.

The distinguished Shi'ah scholar, Shaykh Mufid has, in his exquisite book,4 considered this proposition to be one on which all the Shi'ah scholars are unanimous and a large number of Sunni scholars have also concurred with them in holding this belief. The question, therefore, arises as to what is the real import of the apparent contents of the aforesaid verses and how this problem should be solved.

Many commentators of the Holy Qur'an assert that, although the word ***'Ab'*** *is* usually used in Arabic to mean 'father', this meaning is not exclusive and at times it has been used in the Arabic lexicon and in the Quranic terminology to mean 'uncle' as well. For example, in the following verse the word ***'Ab'*** stands for 'uncle'.

Were you present when death came to Ya'qub? He said to his children: 'What will you worship when I am gone' They replied: We will worship your Allah and the Allah of your forefathers (***Aba***) ***Ibrahim and Isma'il and Ishaq: He is the only Lord. To Him we have surrendered ourselves.*** (Surah Baqarah, 2: 132).

There is no doubt about the fact that Isma'il was the uncle of Ya'qub and not his father, because Ya'qub was the son of Ishaq who was the brother of Isma'il. However, inspite of this, the children of Ya'qub have mentioned him as father of Ya'qub i.e. they have called him ***'Ab'*** vis–a–vis Ya'qub.

As this word carries two meanings it is possible that in the verses related to Azar having been invited to the right path by Ibrahim it may mean 'uncle', and especially so in view of the consensus of opinion mentioned by Shaykh Mufid. And possibly Ibrahim called him 'father', because he had acted as his guardian for quite a long time and he (Ibrahim) looked upon him as if he were his father.

Azar in The Holy Qur'an

With a view to find out the verdict of the Qurtan about the relationship between Ibrahim and Azar we should like to invite the attention of the reader to the explanation of two verses:

1. As a consequence of the strenuous efforts made by the Holy Prophet, Arabia was illuminated with the light of Islam. Most of the people embraced this religion whole-heartedly and realized that polytheism and idol-worship would end in Hell and torture. Although they were happy to have come within the fold of the true faith, they felt grieved to recollect that their fathers and mothers were idol-worshippers.

Hearing of the verses which depict the plight of the polytheists on the Day of Judgment weighed heavily on them. To get rid of this mental torture they requested the Holy Prophet to pray to Allah for the forgiveness of their forefathers who had died as infidels, in the same manner in which Ibrahim had prayed for Azar.

The following verses were, however, revealed in reply to their request

It is not for the Prophet or the believers to beg forgiveness for idolaters, even though they be related to them, after it has become manifest that they have earned the punishment of Hell. Ibrahim prayed for his father only to fulfill a promise he had made him. But, when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him. Yet Ibrahim was a compassionate and tender-hearted man. (Surah Tawbah, 9:113 – 114)

It would appear more probable that the conversation of Ibrahim with Azar and his promising the latter to pray for his forgiveness, which ended in the severance of their mutual connections, and renouncement of each other took place, when Ibrahim was young i.e. at a time when he was still residing in Babylon and had not yet intended to go to Palestine, Egypt and the Hijaz. After studying this verse it may be concluded that, when Azar persisted in his infidelity and idol-worship, Ibrahim, while still young, severed his connections with him and never thought of him thereafter.

2. During the last part of his life i.e. when he grew old, Ibrahim, after discharging a great responsibility (i.e. construction of the Ka'bah) and bringing his wife and child to the dry desert of Mecca, prayed, from the core of his heart, for a number of persons, including his parents, and sought acceptance of his supplication from Allah. At that time he prayed thus

'Forgive me, Lord, and forgive my parents and all the faithful (believers) on the Day of Reckoning. (Surah Ibrahim, 14 41)

These verses clearly show that the ceremony of supplication took place after the completion of the construction of the Ka'bah when Ibrahim was passing through his old age. If the father for whom he has shown love and devotion in this verse and he prayed for him is the same Azar it would mean that Ibrahim did not remain dissociated from him throughout his life and at times also prayed for him, whereas the verse which was revealed in reply to the request of the descendants of the polytheists makes it clear that after some time, when he was still young, Ibrahim broke off all connections with Azar and kept aloof from him – and aloofness and renouncement means ceasing to be on speaking terms, lack of attention and abandoning supplications for each other's salvation.

When these two verses are read together, it becomes clear that the person whom Ibrahim came to hate in his young age and with whom he broke off all ties of interest and love was a person other than that whom he remembered till his old age and prayed for his forgiveness and salvation.5

Ibrahim The Idol-Breaker

The time of the festival approached and the neglectful people of Babylon left for the jungle to get rid of their fatigue and to reinforce their faculties and perform the ceremonies of the festival. Thus the city became empty of them. The antecedents of Ibrahim and his reproaches and criticisms had made them anxious.

They, therefore, insisted that Ibrahim should also go with them and partake in the ceremonies of the festival. However, their proposal, rather insistence, coincided with Ibrahim's illness. In reply to their suggestion, therefore, he said that he was ill and would not participate in the ceremonies of the festival.

Indeed, that was a day of joy for the one who was a monotheist, as well as for the polytheists. For the polytheists it meant the celebration of a very old festival and they had gone to the foot of the mountain and in green fields to carry out the ceremonies of the festival and to revive the custom of their forefathers.

And for the champion of the monotheism also it was the august day of the first unprecedented festival for which he had longed for quite some time, so that the city should be cleared of the opponents and he should break up the manifestations of infidelity and polytheism.

The last group of the people left the city, Ibrahim considered this time to be very opportune and, with a heart imbued with confidence and faith in Allah, he entered the idol temple. He saw from a distance the sculptured pieces of wood and the lifeless idols. He thought of the enormous food which the idol-worshippers used to bring to their temples as offerings to seek blessing, and went in search of it. He took a morsel of bread in his hand and pointing it to the idols said jeeringly, "Why don't you eat these all kinds of foodstuff?"

Evidently the artificial gods of the polytheists did not posses power to make the slightest movement, not to talk of their being able to eat anything. A deathlike silence prevailed over the spacious hall of the idol-

temple, which was broken only by the heavy blows which Ibrahim was giving on the hands, feet and bodies of the idols. He broke all the idols, till a big mound of broken and shattered pieces of wood and metal was formed in the middle of the temple. However, he spared the biggest idol and placed the axe on its shoulder. This he did purposely.

He knew that on return from the jungle the polytheists would understand the actual position and would regard the apparent situation as artificial and unreal, because they would never believe that these blows had been given to the other idols by the big idol, which possessed no power at all to move or do anything, and in that event he (Ibrahim) would utilise the situation for his 'call' and say that when, according to their own admission, that idol did not possess the least power, how could it be possible that it should be the lord of the world?

The sun moved to the horizon and ceased to throw light on the world. At that time the people began returning to the city in groups. Time for performing the ceremonies of idol-worship arrived and a group of the idolaters entered the temple. The unexpected scene, which clearly showed the disgrace and humility of their gods, attracted the attention of all of them. There was deathlike silence in the atmosphere of the temple and everyone was impatient.

One of them, however, broke the silence and said ' Who has committed this mischief?" Condemnation of the idols by Ibrahim in the past and his open criticism of idol-worship convinced them that it was only he who had done all this. A tribunal was, therefore, set up under the supervision of Namrud and young Ibrahim and his mother were brought up for trial.

The mother was charged with the offence of concealing the birth of her child and not reporting it to the special office of government, so that he could eventually be executed. She gave this reply to the charge "I found that as a result of the final decision of the government of the time (i.e. killing the children) the human race in this country was being exterminated.

I did not inform the government office about my son, because I wanted to see how he progressed in the future. In the event of his proving to be the same person about whom the foretellers (priests) had predicted, there would have been a reason for me to inform the police so that they might desist from shedding the blood of other children. And if he does not happen to be that person, then I have saved a young man of this country from death". The mother's argument fully satisfied the judges.

Now Ibrahim was cross-examined. He said "The state of affairs would show that the big idol has struck all these blows and if the idols possess power of speech you had better ask him". This vague reply, tainted with ridicule and contempt, was meant to serve another purpose; and that purpose was that Ibrahim was sure that those people would say in reply, "Ibrahim! You are well aware that these idols do not possess power of speech. They do not also have any will or intellect".

In that event Ibrahim could invite the attention of the tribunal to one basic point. By chance, the same thing happened which Ibrahim had anticipated. He spoke thus with reference to the statement of those

people which testified the weakness, humility and helplessness of the idols "If they are in fact like that as you describe them, then why do you worship them and why do you pray to them to grant your requests?"

Ignorance, obstinacy and blind imitation ruled the hearts and intellects of the judges, and in the face of irrefutable reply of Ibrahim, they found no alternative but to give a judgement which conformed with the wishes of the government of the time.

They, therefore, decided that Ibrahim should be burnt alive. A large stack was set on fire and the champion of Divine monotheism was thrown into the blazing.flames. However, Almighty Allah extended His hand of Kindness and blessing towards Ibrahim and kept him immune from harm. He (Allah) converted the artificial hell made by man into a green and pleasant garden.6 (Vide Surah al-Anbiya, 21:51 – 70).

Instructive Points of This Narrative

Although the Jews claim to be the forerunners of the Caravan of those who believe in monotheism, this story was not well-known amongst them and it does not find place in their present Torah. Amongst the Heavenly Books it is only the Holy Qur 'an which has undertaken to narrate it. We, therefore, mention below some instructive points of this story which are in fact the very points which the Holy Qurtan wishes to bring home to the people by narrating the stories of various Prophets.

1. This story is a clear proof of the extraordinary valour and bravery of the friend of Allah (Ibrahim). His determination about breaking the idols and destroying the manifestations and means of polytheism was not a thing which could remain hidden from the people of Namrud because, by his reproaches and criticism, he had already made his extreme aversion and hatred for idol-worship quite manifest and he used to say openly and clearly:

"If you do not desist from your shameful practice I will take a decision about them". And on the day people went to the jungle he openly said: By the Lord' I will overthrow your idols as soon as you have turned your backs. (Surah Anbiya, 21:57)

Allamah Majlisi quotes thus from Imam Sadiq: 'The movement and campaign of one person against the rows of the infidels, whose number exceeded a few thousands, is a living proof of the valour and perseverance of Ibrahim, who did not harbour any fear in his mind in the path of the exaltation of Allah's name and strengthening the base of the worship of One Allah ".7

2. While the smashing blows by Ibrahim were apparently an armed and hostile revolt, but, as is evident from his talk with the judges, this movement had actually a propagandistic aspect, because he considered the last means of awakening the wisdom and conscience of those people to be that he should break all the idols except the big one and place the axe on its shoulder so that they might make further investigations into the causes of this incident.

And as eventually they would consider the scene to be a mere mockery and would not at all believe that the blows had been struck by the big idol, he could utilise this thing for propagating his views and say: "According to your own admission this big idol does not possess the least power, so why do you worship it?"

This shows that from the very beginning the Prophets have used only logic and argument as their sharp weapons, which have always borne results. Or else what was the value of breaking a few idols as compared with the danger to life with which Ibrahim was confronted? It was necessary that this act should have carried a great service for his mission in its lap, so that it should have been admirable for him, from the point of view of reason, to sacrifice his life for it.

3. Ibrahim was aware that, as a consequence of this act, his life would be finished. As a rule, therefore, he should have become agitated or should have hidden himself somewhere or at least refrained from witticism and humour.

Nevertheless, however, he had complete control over his spirits and nerves. For example, when he entered the idol–temple he approached every idol and asked it mockingly to eat food. After becoming desperate he reduced the idol–temple to a heap or broken wood and treated all this as something quite ordinary, as if it were not to be followed by his own death or execution.

When he appeared before the tribunal he replied to their questioning, "Surely (some doer) has done it, the chief of them is this, therefore ask them, it they can speak.". Such witticism before the court could be expected only from a person who was prepared for all eventualities and did not feel any fear or awe in his heart.

Even more wonderful is the study of the attitude of mind of Ibrahim at the time when he was stationed on the catapult and knew it for certain that he would soon find himself amidst the flames of fire – the fire, for which fire–wood had been collected by the people of Babylon to perform a sacred religious rite, and whose flames were rising with such intensity that even a falcon dared not fly around or above it.

Just at that time the celestial angel (Archangel Jibreel) descended from the heavens, expressed his readiness to render him (Ibrahim) every assistance and said: "Tell me about your heart's desire". Ibrahim replied to him: "I do have a desire. However, it cannot be made known to you but to my Lord only".8

This reply clearly manifests the nobility and spiritual greatness of Ibrahim.

In a big palace, situated a few miles away from the scene of the fire, Namrud waited anxiously and impatiently for venegeance being wreaked upon Ibrahim and wished to see how the flames of fire devoured him. The catapult was put into operation. With one jerk the body of the champion of Divine monotheism fell into the fire.

However, the penetrating will of the Lord of Ibrahim converted that artificial hell into a garden in a

manner which surprised them all, so much so that Namrud turned involuntarily to Azar and said "Ibrahim's Lord holds him dear"9

In spite of all these incidents Ibrahim could not preach his faith with complete freedom. Eventually the government of the time decided, after holding consultations, to send him in exile. This opened a new chapter in his life and became the beginning of his journeys to Syria, Palestine, Egypt and the Hijaz.

A New Chapter in The Life of Ibrahim

The court of justice in Babylon banished Ibrahim from the country and he was forced to quit his birth place and to proceed to Egypt and Palestine. 'Amaliqa' who ruled those territories accorded him a warm reception and gave him many presents, one of them being a slave-girl named Hajar.

Ibrahim's wife Sarah had not borne any child till that time and the above-mentioned developments stimulated her sentiments for her honourable husband. She, therefore, suggested to Ibrahim to marry Hajar so that possibly she might be blessed with a son who should become a source of their joy and happiness. The marriage took place and after some time Hajar gave birth to a son who was named Isma'il. It was not long before Sarah too become pregnant; and bore a son who was given the name of Ishaq.10

After some time Ibrahim, as commanded by Allah, took Isma'il and his mother Hajar towards south (Makkah) and stationed them in an unknown valley. This valley was uninhabitated and only the caravans which travelled from Syria to Yemen and vice versa pitched their tents there. For the remaining days of the year this place remained absolutely isolated and was only a burning desert like other parts of Arabia.

Residence at such a dreadful place was very trying for a woman who had spent her days in the the territories of Amaliqa.

The scorching heat of the desert and its extremely hot winds presented the scene of death before her eyes. Ibrahim himself was also much conerned about these developments. While he was holding the bridle of his riding animal with the intention of saying good bye to his wife and child a flood of tears began to flow from his eyes and he said to Hajar: "O Hajar! All this has been done according to the command of the Almighty and His command cannot be defied. Rely on Allah's blessings and rest assured that He will not humiliate us". Then he prayed to Allah in these words with perfect concentration:

Lord! Make this a land of peace and bestow plenty upon its people, those of them that believe In Allab and the Last Day. (Surah Baqarah, 2:126)

When he was descending the hill, he looked back and prayed to Allah to shower His blessings on them.

Although apparently this journey was very difficlit and vexatious, but later it became evident that it carried momentous happenings in its lap, amongst them being the construction of the Ka'bah which

provided a great base for the monotheists, flying the flag of the worship of One Allah in Arabia and laying the foundation of a great religious movement, which was to take shape in future, viz. the great movement which came into operation in this land through the last of the Prophets.

How The Fountain of Zamzam Came Into Existence

Ibrahim took the bridle of his riding animal and, with tears in his eyes, bade farewell to the land of Makkah as well as Hajar and his son. After a short time however, food and water available with the child and his mother was exhausted and the breast of Hajar also became dry. The condition of her son too began to deteriorate. A flood of tears flowed from the eyes of the banished mother and moistened her lap.

In utter confusion she got up on her feet and reached the Safa mountain. From there she saw the spectacle of a mirage near Marwa mountain and ran towards it. However, the bitterness of the deceptive landscape disappointed her very much. The lamentations and uneasiness of her dear child made her run more fanatically in all directions Thus, she ran seven times between the mountains of Safa and Marwa to locate water, but eventually lost all hopes and returned to her son.

The child must have reached his last breath by that time and must have lost the capacity of weeping or crying any more. However, at that very moment the prayer of Ibrahim was granted. The tired and weary mother saw that limpid water had begun gushing out from beneath the feet of Isma'il. The mother who was looking towards the last breaths of her son and believed that he would pass away after a few moments felt extremely happy on seeing this water. Both the mother and the son drank their fill and the clouds of despair and hopelessness which had cast their shadow on their lives were driven away by the zephyr of Divine blessings.11

The appearance of this fountain, which is called "Zam Zam" since that day, made the birds of air fly over it and spread their broad wings like a cover on the heads of the afflicted mother and son. People of a tribe named "Jarham" who lived at a distance from this valley saw the birds going to and tro and came to the conclusion that water had become available in the vicinity. They sent two of their men to verify the position.

After a good deal of wandering those persons reached the centre of Divine blessing. When they drew near they saw a woman and a child sitting by the side of a pool of water. Thev returned immediately and reported the matter to the chiefs of their tribe. The members of that tribe soon pitched their tents around this blessed fountain and Hajar was thus relieved of the hardship and bitterness of loneliness which she had been suffering.

The growth and perfect sociability of Isma'il became the cause of his making a matrimonial alliance with the Jarham tribe and thus benefit from their support and society. Isma'il soon married a girl of that tribe. From their mother's side, therefore, his descendants are related to that tribe.

They Meet Again

After leaving his dear son and wife in the land of Makkah, under the command of Allah Almighty, Ibrahim thought at times of going there to see his son. During one of his journeys, which was perhaps his first journey, he reached Makkah and found that his son was not present in his house. By that time Isma'il had grown up to manhood and had married a girl of the Jarham tribe. Ibrahim asked Isma'il's wife, "Where is your husband?" She replied, "He is gone out for hunting". Then he asked her whether she had anything to eat. To this she replied in the negative.

Ibrahim was very much grieved to observe the rudeness and unkindness of his son's wife and said to her, "When Isma'il returns home convey my greetings to him and tell him to change the threshold of his house" He then returned to his destination.

When Isma'il returned he smelt the odour of his father and realised from his wife's account that the man who had visited his house was Ibrahim himself. He also understood from the message left by his father that he had desired him to divorce his present wife and choose another, because he did not consider his present wife to be a suitable partner of his life.12

It may perhaps be asked as to why, after having performed so long a journey, Ibrahim should not have waited till the return of his son from hunting and why he went back without seeing him. The historians explain that he returned hastilv because he had made a promise to Sarah that he would not stay there longer and his early return was with a view to keep the promise.

After this journey he was also ordered by Allah Almighty to perform another journey to Makkah, to construct the Ka'bah there and to attract to that point the hearts of those who believe in monotheism.

The Holy Qur'an testified that in the last days of the life of Ibrahim, Makkah had grown into a city, because, having performed his task, he had prayed to Allah in the following words:

Lord! Make this (***Makkah***) ***a land of safety. Preserve me and my descendants from worshipping idols.*** (Surah Abraham, 14:35)

And at the time of his arrival in the desert of Makkah he bad prayed: Lord! make this a land of peace (Surah Baqarah, *2:* 126).

In order to complete the discussion, it would have been appropriate to narrate the circumstances in which the Ka'bah was constructed and also to give a brief history of it. However, lest we should minimise our real object, we give below the particulars of some of the reverenced forefathers of the Holy Prophet who are well–known in history.

2. Qusayy Son Of Kilab

The following are the names of the father and forefathers of the Holy Prophet in upward order:

Abdullah, Abdul Muttalib, Hashim, Abd-i Manaf, Qusayy, Kilab, Marra, Ka'b, Loo, Ghalib, Fahr, Malik, Nazar, Kananah, Khuzamah, Mudrakah, Ilyas, Mazar, Nazar, Ma'd and Adnan.[13]

The genealogy of the Holy Prophet up to Ma'd son of Adnan is as reproduced above. However, there is a difference of opinion with regard to the number and names of intermediate persons from Adnan upwards upto Isma'il, and, according to the report quoted by Ibn Abbas from the Holy Prophet, when the genealogy of the Holy Prophet reaches Adnan one should not proceed beyond it, because whenever, the Holy Prophet himself mentioned the names of his forefathers he did not proceed beyond Adnan, and ordered that other too, should not narrate the names of his other forefathers upto Isma'il.

He also said that what was commonly known amongst the Arabs regarding that portion of the pedigree was not correct. Hence we have also quoted that portion of his genealogy which is admittedly correct and now proceed to give detailed particulars of some of the persons concerned.

The above-mentioned persons are well-known in the history of Arabia and the history of Islam, too, has relationship with some of them. Hence, we give below an account of the lives of those from Qusayy upto the reverenced father of the Holy Prophet (Abdullah) and refrain from narrating the events of the lives of others who have no concern with the matter under discussion.[14]

Qusayy was the fourth ancestor of the Prophet of Islam. His mother, Fatima, married Kilab and gave birth to two children named 'Zohrah' and 'Qusayy.' The second of them was still an infant when Fatima's husband died. She then married another man named Rabi'a and accompanied him to Syria. Qusayy received fatherly support from Rabi'a till differences arose between him and Rabi'a's tribe, as a result of which they drove him away beyond the frontiers of their home-land.

His mother was touched by the treatment meted out to him and decided to send him back to Makkah. The hand of destiny pulled him to Makkah. His hidden qualities enabled him to establish his superiority over the Makkans and especially the tribe of Quraysh. Within a short time he acquired the high governmental offices in Makkah and also became the custodian of the keys of the Ka'bah and the undisputed ruler of that city.

Many remarkable events are associated with his name. One of these was that he encouraged the people to construct a house with the name of 'Darun Nadwah' adjacent to the Ka'bah and thus founded a Council Hall for the Arabs so that their dignitaries and chiefs might sit together in this public centre and solve their problems. He died in the 5th A.D. and left behind two sons named Abdud Dar and Abd Manaf.

3 . Abd Manaf

He was the third ancestor of the Holy Prophet. His name was Mughirah and he enjoyed the title of 'Qamar al-Bat'ha' (the moon of Bat'ha). He was younger than his brother Abdud Dar, but enjoyed great respect amongst the people. He was very pious. He invited people to virtue, behaved well with them and maintained very good relations with his kinsfolk.

Although he enjoyed a very honourable position in the society he never became a rival of his brother, Abdud Dar in the matter of acquisition of high offices connected with the Ka'bah. According to the will of Qusayy the rulership rested with Abdud Dar, but when the two brothers died their sons began quarrelling for various offices. After a good deal of contention and conflict they eventually got reconciled and divided the positions amongst themselves.

It was decided that the custodianship of the Ka'bah and the chairmanship of 'Darun Nadwah' would remain with the children of Abdud Dar and the functions of providing drinking water to the pilgrims and their entertainment would be performed by the sons of Abd Manaf. This division of offices was still intact at the time of the advent of Islam.15

4. Hashim

He was the second forefather of the Holy Prophet. His real name was 'Amr and he enjoyed the title of 'Ala. He and Abd Shams were twins and their two other brothers were Muttalib and Nawfal. It is narrated by the historians that at the time of the birth of Hashim and Abd Shams a finger of the former was stuck on the forehead of the latter. Blood flowed profusely when they were separated from each other and the people took this occurrence to be a bad omen.16

Halabi writes in his 'Seerah' that this bad omen later manifested its effect, because, after the advent of Islam, fierce battles were fought between Bani Abbas who were the decendants of Hashim and Bani Umayyah, who claimed their descent from Abd Shams.17

This shows that the writer of 'Seerah' has completely ignored the tragic events connected with the descendants of Ali, although the bloody drama which Bani Umayyah staged by shedding the pure blood of the progeny of the Holy Prophet is a glaring evidence of the existence of enmity between the two families. It is not, however, known as to why the said writer has failed to mention these events.

One of the particular points about the descendants of Abd Manaf, which are reflected in the battle-cries and literature of Arabia, is that they died at different places viz. Hashim died in Ghaza, Abd Shams in Makkah, Nawfal in Iraq and Muttalib in Yemen.

To quote an example of the magnanimity of Hashim it may be stated that whenever Zil-Hajj moon was sighted he came to the Holy Ka'bah, leaned on its wall and delivered a speech on the following lines:

'O people ot the tribe of Quraysh, you are the wisest and noblest amongst the Arabs. Your race is the best amongst all races. Almighty Allah has provided you accommodation by the side of His own House and has granted you superiority, in this regard over all other descendants of Isma'il.

O my kinsmen, beware! Pilgrims of the House of Allah are coming to you this month with extraordinary favour They are Allah's guests and it is your duty to receive them. There are many indigent persons amongst them, who will be coming from far off places. I swear by the Lord of this House that if I had been wealthy enough to entertain all the guests of Allah, I would not have insisted upon you to provide assistance.

At present, however, I am going to spend all that I can afford, and which I have earned bv lawful means. I administer an oath to you in the name of the honour of this House that you will not spend, for this purpose, anything which you have usurped, or give or spend anything hypocritically or under compulsion. If anyone is not inclined to assist, he is at liberty not to spend anything.18

For all intents and purposes the leadership of Hashim was for the welfare of the Makkans and had a great effect on the betterment of the conditions of their lives. Whenever a famine occured, his magnanimity did not permit that people should experience any hardship on this account. One of the outstanding steps, which he took for the advancement of the commerce of the Makkans, was the conclusion of an agreement with the ruler of Ghassan.

It was in the wake of this agreement that similar agreements were concluded by his brother Abd Shams with the King of Ethiopia and by his two other brothers Muttalib and Nawfal with the Ruler of Yemen and the Emperor of Iran respectively. Merchandise could be exchanged freely with various countries.

This agreement solved many difficulties and brought into existence a number of shopping centres in Makkah which also existed at the time of the advent of Islam. Besides this, one of the beneficial activities of Hashim was the establishment of journeying by the Quraysh to Syria in summer and to Yemen in winter. This practice continued for quite some time even after the birth of Islam.

Umayyah Son of Abd Shams Feels Jealous

Umayyah, son of Abd Shams, was jealous of the greatness and dignity of his uncle, Hashim, and endeavoured to attract the people to himself by bestowing gifts on them. However, inspite of his best efforts and obstructionist activities he could not divest Hashim of his position. On the contrary his vilification and slandering of Hashim increased honour and respect for the latter all the more in the hearts of the repeople.

The fire of jealousy continued to burn in the heart of Umayyah. At last he insisted upon his uncle that both of them should approach one of the sages (fortune-tellers) of Arabia and only he whom that sage confirmed to be fit for rulership should take the reins of administration in his hands.

Hashim's magnanimity did not permit him to enter into a dispute with his nephew. However, as Umavvah was very much insistent, he (Hashim) agreed to the proposal on two conditions. Firstly that whoever lost the case should sacrifice one hundred black-eyed camels during Haj season and secondly that he should remain out of Makkah for ten years.

Now it so happened that, as soon as the Arab sage (the fortune-teller of Asfan) saw Hashim, he began praising him and decided the case in his favour. Umayyah was, therefore, obliged to leave Makkah and spend ten years in Syria.19

The effects of this hereditary enmity continued to exist for 130 years after the advent of Islam and occasioned crimes which are unprecedented in the history of mankind. The above-mentioned story, besides bringing to light the fact as to how the enmity between the two families originated, also explains the reasons for the influence which Bani Umayyah enjoyed in Syria, and it becomes known that their old relations with the Syrians prepared ground for their rule in that area.

Hashim Marries

Salma, daughter of 'Amr Khazraji, was a virtuous woman, who had obtained divorce from her husband and was not prepared to remarry. While returning from Syria, during one of his journeys, Hashim stayed at Yathrib (Madina) for a few days and proposed to Salma. Salma was impressed by the nobility, affluence and character of Hashim and by the influence which he wielded amongst the Quraysh.

She agreed to marry him on two conditions, one of which was that at the time of giving birth to a child she should be amongst her own people. According to this agreement she spent some time in Makkah with Hashim and when the time of her child-birth approached she returned to Yathrib. There she gave birth to a son who was named Shibah and later came to be known as Abdul Muttalib. The historians have mentioned the following reasons for the assumption of this title by Shibah:

When Hashim felt that his death was approaching, he said to his brother Muttalib "Brother! Find out your slave Shibah". And as Hashim (father of Shibah) had called his son, "the slave of Muttalib", he later came to be known as Abdul Muttalib (i.e. slave of Muttalib).

Another version is this: "One day, while a Makkan was passing through the streets of Yathrib, he saw many children practising archery. When one of the children won the match he said immediately "I am the son of the chief of Bat'ha (Makkah)". The man from Makkah came forward and asked the boy, 'who are you?". The reply was, "I am Shibah son of Hashim son of Abd Manaf".

On his return to Makkah that man informed Muttalib, the brother of Hashim and chief of Makkah, about this incident. The uncle was reminded of his nephew and, therefore, went to Yathrib. The bearing of the nephew personified before Muttalib the very personality of his brother and tears trickled down his cheeks. Both of them exchanged kisses of love and emotion. The mother was not willing to part with her son and objected to his being carried away to Makkah, but her objections and protests made the

determination of Muttalib all the more stronger. Eventually Muttalib succeeded in achieving his purpose and, after having obtained the permission of the mother, made Shibah mount along with himself and proceeded to Makkah.

During the course of the journey the scorching heat of the sun blackened the silvery face of the nephew and his dress was also worn and torn. For this reason, therefore, when the two arrived at Makkah, people thought that the young man was a slave of Muttalib.

They whispered to one another "This young man (Shibah) is Muttalib's slave". And, although Muttalib announced time and again that the lad was his nephew, the wrong impression which had taken root in the minds of the people continued to persist. The result was that the nephew of Muttalib came to be known as Abdul Muttalib (the slave of Muttalib).20

Still another version is this Abdul Muttalib was called so, because he had been brought up by his uncle and it was usual amongst the Arabs that whenever a person was brought up by another man he was called the slave of his benefactor.

5. Abdul Muttalib

Abdul Muttalib son of Hashim, the first ancestor of the Holy Prophet, was the chief of Quraysh and a renowned person. His entire social life was replete with brilliant attributes. As the events of his chiefship are also related to the history of Islam we narrate hereunder some of them.

There is no doubt about the fact that however resolute and strong a man may be, he is eventually influenced, to some extent, by his environment, and the habits and customs of the society affect his way of thinking. At times, however, some persons have an innate tendency to resist the factors governing their environments with great daring and courage, and keep themselves and their surroundings immune from all sorts of contamination.

The hero of our discourse was a perfect specimen of those people in whose lives we observe many brilliant points. If a person who, inspite of spending more than eighty years of his life amongst people who are habituated to idol-worship, drinking wine, usury and homicide, does not, throughout his life, let wine stain his lips and restrains people from committing murders drinking wine and doing wicked deeds, and prevents them from marrying the persons with whom marriage is prohibited, and from going round the Ka'bah unadorned, and remains firm in the matter of vows and promises till the last breath of his life, he is certainly one of those ideal men who are born rarely in human society.

Of course, it was necessary that the person in whose body the light of the Holy Prophet (the greatest guide of humanity) had been deposited should be pure and free from every pollution.

From the brief anecdotes and instructive sayings ascribed to Abdul Muttalib it is learnt that everin those dark environments he was counted amongst those who believed in monotheism and in the Day of

Judgement and used to say "An unjust person is punished in this very world. However, if, by chance, he dies before being duly punished, he will meet retribution for his actions on the Day of Judgement".21

Harb son of Umayyah was a near relative of Abdul Muttalib. He was also considered to be one of the distinguished persons amongst the Quraysh. A Jew was the neighbour of Har'b. One day the Jew displayed harshness towards Har'b in one of the bazaars of Tahamah and hot words were exchanged between them.

This incident culminated in the Jew being murdered at the instigation of Har'b. Abdul Muttalib came to know about the matter and severed his relations with Har'b. He also made efforts to realise blood–money from him and to pass it on to the survivors of the few. This brief anecdote is a specimen of the enthusiasm of this magnanimous person for helping the weak people and for dispensation of justice.

Re–Excavation Of The Well Of Zamzam

From the day the well of Zamzam came into existence the people of the tribe of Jarham had settled round it and benefited from its water during the long years when they ruled over Makkah. However, as a result of the advancement of Makkans in business, their affluence, negligence on their part and lack of any restraint on the use of the water, the well gradually dried up.22

Another version is this: When the people of Jarham tribe were threatened by Khaza'ah tribe and were obliged to abandon their homes, their chief and distinguished man, Mazaz son of 'Amr, realised that he would soon cease to be at the helm of affairs and the enemy would attack and destroy his territory and government.

He, therefore, ordered that two deer made of gold and a few precious swords, which had been brought as a present for the Ka'bah, should be thrown into the well, which should then be filled up completely so that the enemy might not lay his hands on these things, and later, when they (Jarham tribe) recovered their territory and throne, they themselves should utilise this treasure. After some time the tribe of Khaza'ah commenced their attacks and the tribe of Jarham as well as a large number of the descendants of Isma'il were compelled to leave Makkah and proceed to Yemen, and none of them returned to Makkah thereafter.

From that time onwards the tribe of Khaza'ah ruled over Makkah till Quraysh gained ascendancy by the coming into power of Qusayy son of Kilab, the fourth ancestor of the Holy Prophet. After some time Abdul Muttalib came at the helm of affairs. He decided to dig the Zamzam well once again, but unfortunately the location of the original well was not known for certain. After excavating a good deal he was able to locate the real spot and resolved to take preliminary steps to dig the well with the assistance of his son Harith.

In every society there is usually a group of negativists who try to find one excuse or the other to prevent the performance of every positive act. Hence, the rivals of Abdul Muttalib, fearing that this honour might

fall to his share, began criticising him and addressed him thus "O elder of Quraysh As this well is a memorial of our ancestor Isma'il, and all of us are reckoned to be his descendants, it is only appropriate that you may let all of us partake in this task".

For certain reasons Abdul Muttalib did not accept their suggestion, because his intention was to dig the well alone and let all of them use its water free of cost. He also wished to assume himself the responsibility of supplying water to the pilgrims on specific occasions so that this function could be performed in good order under his personal supervision. This could however, be ensured only when he had this job in his own hands, being independent of others.

This resulted in a good deal of bickering and it was at last decided that they should approach an Arab sage (fortune-teller) and his decision should be binding on all. Thus Abdul Muttalib and his rivals started their journey. They passed through many barren tracts of land. On their way, they were faced with extreme thirst, and became almost certain that they would perish.

They, therefore, became anxious about their death and subsequent burial. Abdul Muttalib suggested that every person should dig a grave for himself and, as and when anyone of them died, others should bury him. And, if they continued to be deprived of water and all of them died, they would all be buried and be saved from being devoured by beasts and birds, except the person who would be the last one to pass away.

Abdul Muttalib's suggestion met approval and everyone of them dug a grave for himself. Now they awaited death with dejected and pale faces. Suddenly Abdul Muttalib cried out "Men! This will be a very ignominious and disgraceful death. It will be better if all of us move about in the desert in search of water. It is possible that Almighty Allah may have mercy on us.[23]

All of them mounted and began moving about. They were not very hopeful of finding water and looked at one another with dismay. By chance, however, they soon came across wholesome water and were thus saved from certain death. From that very place they returned to Makkah and, gladly agreeing with Abdul Muttalib's view with regard to the digging of the well, gave him full authority to carry out his project.[24]

Abdul Muttalib began digging the well with his only son Harith and a mound of dust appeared around the spot. Suddenly they touched upon two deer made of gold and a few swords. Now Quraysh kicked up another row and claimed a share in this find. Eventually it was decided to settle the dispute by drawing lots. By chance, the two golden deer fell to the share of the Ka'bah and the swords to that of Abdul Muttalib, whereas Quraysh received nothing. Noble-minded Abdul Muttalib utilised the swords for constructing a gate for the Ka'bah and installed the deer upon it.

Steadfastness In Keeping Promise

Some of the qualities of the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance merit praise. For example, they considered breaking of promise to be the most loathsome act. At times they concluded very onerous and

burdensome treaties with the Arab tribes and respected them to the last. And on some occasions they took extremely tiresome and intolerable vows but made an all-out effort to fulfil them.

While digging Zamzam Abdul Muttalib felt that owing to his not having many sons his position was rather weak amongst Quraysh. He, therefore, resolved and took a vow that when the number of his sons would become ten he would sacrifice one of them in front of the Ka'bah. He did not, however, make a mention to anyone about his having taken this vow.

With the passage of time the number of his sons rose to ten and the time therefore, arrived for him to fulfil his vow. The very thought of the proposition was very trying for him. He was, however, afraid of lagging behind in the performance of this task and thus becoming one of those who failed to keep their promises. He, therefore, decided to mention the matter to his sons and, after obtaining their agreement, to select one of them for the purpose, by drawing lots.25

The ceremony of drawing the lots was performed and the lot fell upon Abdullah (father of the Holy Prophet). Abdul Muttalib immediately caught the hand of Abdullah and led him to the sacrificial altar. Qurayshite men and women came to know about the vow and the drawing of lots and became very much grieved. A flood of tears was flowing down the cheeks of men. One of them was heard saying: "O that they should have killed me instead of this young men!"

The chiefs of Quraysh were saying "If his life can be redeemed by property we are prepared to place all our wealth at his disposal". Abdul Muttalib was wondering what to do in the face of the roaring sentiments of the people. He was reflecting within himself lest he should be guilty of disobeying the Almighty and breaking his vow.

Notwithstanding all this he was also thinking of finding a solution of the problem. One of those present said: "Take this problem before one of the Arab sages. It is possible that he may suggest a solution". Abdul Muttalib and the chiefs of the tribe endorsed the suggestion and proceeded to Yathrib, where the particular sage resided. The sage asked for a day's respite to give a reply. On the following day all went to him. He asked `'What is the blood-money fixed by you for one human being?" They told him that it was ten camels.

Thereupon the man said: "You should draw lots between ten camels and the person whom you have selected for being sacrificed. If the lot falls on that person then raise the number of camels to twice as many (i.e. twenty). And if the lot falls on that person again then raise the number of camels to thrice as many (i.e thirty) and draw the lots again and continue doing so till the lot falls on the camels.

The suggestion made by the sage cooled down the emotions of the people, because it was easier for them to sacrifice hundreds of camels as compared with seeing a young man like Abdullah rolling in blood. One morning, after their return to Makka, the ceremony of drawing lots was performed for the tenth time, when the number of the camels had risen to one hundred, the lot fell on them. The deliverance and safety of Abdullah gave birth to very strange emotions.

However, Abdul Muttalib said "It is only appropriate that I should draw the lots anew so that I may know for certain that the Almighty is pleased with my action. He then drew the lots thrice and every time the lot fell on one hundred camels. He was thus convinced of Divine pleasure and directed that one hundred camels, out of those belonging to him, should be slaughtered that very day in front of the Ka'bah and no human being or animal should be restrained from eating their meat.26

Tumult Of The Year of The Elephant

When a great event takes place in a nation, its root-cause is at times religious and occasionally national and political. It is usually admired by the masses and is for this reason treated to be the starting point of their history for past and future events. For example, the movement of Prophet Musa, the birth of Prophet 'Isa and the migration of the Prophet of Islam are the starting points of history for the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims respectively and the followers of these religions reckon the events of their lives with reference to these happenings.

At times, some nations, in spite of possessing a basic history, also treat some particular events to be the starting points of their history. As we find the great French Revolution and the October 1917 Communist Revolution in the Soviet Union are the starting points of history for many events in the Western countries. Uncivilized nations, which are deprived of such political and religious movements, naturally consider unusual events to be the bases of their history.

For this reason, the Arabs of the age of ignorance, on account of their not possessing a proper civilisation, considered unpleasant occurrences like wars, earthquakes, famines and other unusual phenomena as the measure and origin of their history. In this way we observe, in the pages of history, a number of starting points for the history of the Arabs, the last of which was the disturbance of the Year of the Elephant viz. the attack by Abraha to destroy the Ka'bah, which became the starting point of history for other events. We give below a detailed account and analysis of this great event, which occurred in 570 A.D., to be the year of the birth of the Prophet of Islam.

The Origin Of This Event

The event of the 'People of the Elephant' has been mentioned briefly in the Holy Qur'an and we shall, after narrating the story, mention the verses which have been revealed about it. The historians have stated the origin of the event to be as follows:

After strengthening the capital of his government, Zu Nuwas, the King of Yemen, passed, during one of his journeys, through the city of Yathrib (Madina). At that time Yathrib enjoyed a high religious position. A group of the Jews had concentrated at that place and had built a number of synagogues at different points in the city.

The opportunist Jews accorded a warm welcome to the king and invited him to their own faith so that, under the protection of his government, they might remain safe from attacks by the Roman Christians

and the Arab idolaters Their efforts in this regard were fruitful. Zu Nuwas embraced the Jewish religion and made maximum efforts for its advancement. Many persons became inclined to him on account of fear. Some were awarded severe punishments on account of differences.

However, the people of Najran, who were converted to Christianity some time earlier, were not prepared at any cost to forsake their religion and follow the teachings of the religion of the Jews. The King of Yemen was very much annoyed on account of their disobedience and defiance and came up with a large army to suppress the rebels.

The commander of the army encamped by the side of the city of Najran, dug a ditch there, lit up a huge fire in it and threatened his opponents with burning. The brave people of Najran, who had firm faith in Christianity were not, however, dismayed. They welcomed death and burning with open arms and their bodies were devoured by the flames of fire.27

The great Muslim historian Ibn Athir Jazari writes thus:

In the meantime one of the residents of Najran named Daws went post-haste to Caesar, the Roman Emperor, who was a great supporter of Christianity in those days, and informed him about the happening. He also requested the Emperor to punish the blood-thirsty man who had extinguished the lamp of guidance in Najran and to establish firmly the tottering pillars of Christianity in that area.

The Roman ruler expressed his grief and sympathy and said: "As the principal seat of my government is far away from your country I am writing to the Negus, the King of Ethiopia, to take revenge on that cruel person for killing the people of Najran. The Najrani took Caesar's letter and proceeded to Ethiopia as quickly as possible.

On reaching there he related the complete story to the Negus. The sense of honour of the king of Ethiopia was roused. He despatched an army exceeding seventy thousand men to Yemen under the command of an African named Abraha Ashram. The organized and well-equipped Ethiopian army crossed the sea and pitched its tents on the coast of Yemen. Zu Nuwas was taken unawares. All his activities proved to be of no avail and no reply was received by him to the letters which he had written to the tribal chiefs requesting them to take part in the battle.

One brief attack was sufficient to pull down the foundation of his government and the populous country of Yemen came in the possession of the Government of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian king appointed the commander of the army, Abraha, as viceroy of that area.

Abraha was very happy for having taken revenge and achieved victory and began leading a free life. In order to win the favour of the King of Ethiopia he constructed a splendid Church at San'a which had no parallel at that time for its grandeur.

Then he wrote a letter to the Negus on these lines: "In compliance with the wishes of your Majesty the

construction of the Church has been completed. I hope that it will be possible for me to make the people of Yemen abandon the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah, whose place will now be taken by this Church".

When the contents of the letter became known, there was a very unfavourable reaction amongst the Arab tribes. So much so that one night a woman of the tribe of Bani Afqam polluted the precincts of the Church. This act, which showed grave disrepect, contempt and enmity on the part of Arabs for Abraha's Church, made the government of the time very much excited. Besides this, the more Abraha endeavoured to increase the apparent adornment and decoration of the Church the more the people were attached to the Ka'bah.

These developments made Abraha swear that he would destroy the Ka'bah. He organized an army for this purpose, put fighter elephants in the fore–front, and decided to pull down the House, the foundation of which had been laid by the champion of Divine monotheism Prophet Ibrahim.

The chiefs of Arabia realized that the situation was delicate and dangerous and took it for certain that the independence and individuality of the Arab nation was bound to collapse. The past victories of Abraha also kept them from taking any useful decision. Nevertheless, some zealous chiefs of the tribes who were facing Abraha fought with great bravery.

For example, Zu Nafar, who was one of the nobles of Yemen, exhorted his people, with fiery speeches, to defend the Sanctuary (the Ka'bah). However, the immense army of Abraha soon cut down their organized ranks.

Thereafter Nafil son of Habib put up a fierce fight, but his people also met with defeat. He himself was captured and requested Abraha for forgiveness. Abraha agreed to grant his request on the condition that he should guide his forces to Makkah. Thus Nafil became his attendant and led him upto Ta'if. There he entrusted the job to one of his friends named Ayurghal. The new guide led them upto Mughmas – a place near Makkah – and there Abraha's army encamped.

According to an old custom Abraha ordered one of his officers to plunder the camels and other domestic animals of Tahamah. Out of the camels so plundered 200 of them belonged to Abdul Muttalib. Later Abraha ordered another officer named Hanatah to carry his message to the chief of the Quraysh.

He addressed Hanatah with these words: "I can visualize the actual scene of the destruction of the Ka'bah. It is also certain that in the first instance Quraysh will resist. However, to ensure that their blood is not shed you should proceed to Makkah immediately. There you should contact the chief of Quraysh and tell him that my object is to destroy the Ka'bah and if Quraysh do not resist they will remain safe from molestation"

The messenger sent by Abraha arrived in Makkah and saw various groups of Quraysh discussing the matter at different places. On his enquiring about the Chief of Quraysh he was led to the house of Abdul Muttalib. After hearing Abraha's message Abdul Muttalib spoke thus: "We are not at all inclined to fight.

The Ka'bah is the House of Allah. It is the House which was founded by Prophet Ibrahim. Allah will do whatever He deems fit".

Abraha's officer also expressed pleasure on hearing the soft and conciliatory words of the Chief of Quraysh which were indicative of his spiritual faith. He, therefore, requested Abdul Muttalib to agree to accompany him to the camp of Abraha.

Abdul Muttalib Goes To The Camp of Abraha

Abdul Muttalib proceeded to the camp of Abraha accompanied by a few of his sons. The sobriety, grace, and dignity of the leader of Quraysh made Abraha admire and respect him. So much so that he descended from his throne, took the hand of Abdul Muttalib in his own hand and made him sit by his side. Then he very respectfully enquired from Abdul Muttalib, through an interpreter, as to why he had some there and what he wished.

He said in reply: "The camels of Tahamah, which also include two hundred camels belonging to me, have been seized by your soldiers. I would ask you to give orders that those camels should be returned to their owners".

Abraha replied "Your luminous bearing possessing a holy aspect made me consider you to be a very great man. However, the request made by you for insignificant things has diminished your worth in my eyes. Keeping in view the fact that I have come to demolish and destroy the sanctuary of your ancestors, I was expecting that you would talk about the Ka'bah and request me to desist from accomplishing my object which will deal a deadly blow to your independence and political and religious life. I did not hope that you would talk about a few insignificant and worthless camels and intercede in that behalf".

In reply to Abraha's remarks Abdul Muttalib spoke a sentence, whose value and worth is still preserved. He said: "I am the owner of the camels. The House too has a Master who forestalls every intrusion upon it". On hearing this Abraha shook his head and said proudly "There is none so powerful as to keep me from achieving my object". Then he ordered that the plundered property should be returned to the owners.

Quraysh Await Abdul Muttalib's Return

Quraysh were anxiously awaiting Abdul Muttlib's return to. learn about the result of his talk with Abraha. So, when he met the Qurayshite chiefs, he said to then "Take refuge immediately in the valleys and on the hills along with your animals so that you may be safe from every harm". Soon thereafter the people abandoned their homes and found shelter in the hills. At night all the hills and valleys were resounding with the cries of children, the lamentations of women and the noise made by the animals.

In the very middle of that night Abdul Muttalib and some other Qurayshites descended the summit of a

hill and reached the gate of the Ka'bah. He (Abdul Mutallib), with flowing tears and burning heart, held the chain of the gate of the Ka'bah in his hand and recited a few verses addressing the Almighty. He spoke thus:

"O Allah! We do not pin our faith on anyone except You, for remaining immune from their mischief and harm.

O Lord! Hold them back from your Sanctuary. The enemy of the Ka'bah is he who is inimical to you.

O Nourisher! Cut off their hands so that they may not pollute Your House.

I have right over my own property, so I am endeavouring for its safety.

However, safety of Your House is Your responsibility.

Don't let that day come when the Cross becomes victorious over it, and the inhabitants of their lands encroach upon Your land and conquer it".

Then he released the chain of the gate of the Ka'bah and took shelter on the summit of a hill to watch the developments.

Early in the morning Abraha and his forces got ready to march towards Makkah. All of a sudden, however, a flock of birds appeared from the side of the sea, holding tiny stones in their beaks and claws. The shadow of the black birds made the sky above the encampment dark and their small and apparently insignificant weapons produced a very strange effect. The birds, armed with small stones, showered those stones under the command of the Almighty on the army of Abraha in such a manner that their heads were broken and their flesh was severed from their bodies.

One of the stones hit Abraha on his head, whereupon fear overpowered him and he began to tremble. He became sure that the wrath of the Almighty had descended on him. Then he cast an eye on his soldiers and observed that their bodies had fallen on earth like the leaves of the trees. He, therefore, immediately ordered those who had remained safe to return to Yemen and to proceed to San'a through the way they had come.

The remaining army moved towards San'a but, while on their way, most of the soldiers perished on account of wounds and fear. And even Abraha reached San'a in such a condition that the flesh of his body was turn off and he died a very queer death.

This deadful and strange event became known throughout the world. The Holy Qur'an narrates the story of the "People of the Elephant" in these words:

Have you not considered how Allah dealt with the Army of the Elephant? Did He not foil their evil plots by sending against them flocks of swallows which pelted them with claystones, so that they

became like left-over grass grazed by cattle. **(Surah al-Fil, 105: 2 – 5).**

What has been narrated In these pages is a gist of Islamic history on the subject28 and that which has been stated specifically in the Holy Qur'an. Now we shall study the comments made by the great Egyptian exegete Muhammad Abdoh and the famous scholar, Dr Haikal, former Education Minister of Egypt.

A theoretical discussion about miracles

Recent surprising advancement of man in various branches of physical sciences and coming to an end of the life of many scientific hypotheses, created a strange tumult in the western countries. Although the explanation for these changes lay in scientific transition and revolved on the pivot of physical sciences alone (for example, Ptolemy's theorem was falsified) and did not have the least connection with religious beliefs, they created a strange pessimism amongst different classes about the theories and beliefs which had still survived.

The secret of this pessimism lay in the fact that when the scholars saw that the old theories which had ruled human thought and centres of learning for centuries stood falsified now, with the strong hand of knowledge and the might of experimentation, and, moreover, no information was available about different heavenly spheres and minute movements and centrality of earth, and also about scores of other theories; they thought to themselves that no one knows the remaining religious and scientific theories might also be like the other ones?

This way of thinking gradually sowed the seeds of doubt in the minds of most of the scholars of physical sciences and within a short time this doubt grew and spread to all the European scientific circles of that day like a contagious disease.

Furthermore 'Inquisition' (Department for the investigation of beliefs) and the severity of the Church authorities had full share in the germination, rather the growth of this pessimism, because the schoalrs of that time who succeeded in discovering some scientific theory were being annihilated by the Church with torments and torture.

And it goes without saying that such pressure and persecution must have had a bad reaction and it was predicted from that very day that if at any time these scholars gained power and made sufficient progress in the physical field they would say good bye to religion and piety on account of the wrong policy of the Popes.

By chance matters did come to such a pass. As knowledge with regard to various matters increased and the scholars penetrated more and more into the inter-relationship of physical beings, disclosed the secrets which had remained hidden from man for ages, and gained knowledge about the causes of many natural phenomena like earthquakes and rain as well as causes of various diseases, they devoted comparatively lesser attention to metaphysical matters. (Origin, Resurrection, miracles and unusual

performances by the Prophets etc.) and the number of sceptics and deniers increased day after day.

The self-conceit and pride with regard to their learning, which some scholars harboured in their minds, and the pressure exerted by the Popes and the priests, became the cause for some scientists looking upon all religious matters with contempt and disregard. They were no longer agreeable that the names of Torah or Evangel should be mentioned.

According to them the event of Prophet Musa's rod and his luminous hand should be treated as a mere story and the breath of Prophet 'Isa which brought to life many dead persons with the permission of Allah was also, mere fiction.

It so happened because pride on account of advancement of scientific knowledge and the memories of the pressures to which they were subjected in the past made them think within themselves 'How can it be possible that in the absence of a natural cause a piece of wood should assume the shape of a dragon or dead persons may come to life by means of a prayer?'

The scholars who were intoxicated with their successes in the field of science thought that they had acquired the key for all branches of knowledge and had understood the relations between all beings and occurrences. It was for this reason that they could not find the least connection between a piece of dry wood and a boa or between the prayer and attention of a person on the one hand and coming to life of dead persons on the other. Hence they either viewed these matters with doubt and hesitation or denied them totally.

Way of Thinking of Some Scholars

Nowadays this way of thinking, with slight modifications, has been adopted by some Egyptian scholars. These scholars, who are in fact a link between the centres of learning of the East and the West and have for years been transferring, earlier than anybody else, the knowledge and the ways of thinking of the West to the East and are truly considered to be a bridge of learning and educational relationship between these two blocs, have been influence more than anyone else by this way of thinking (of course with particular modifications) and follow this method in the matter of explanation and analysis of historical and scientific problems.

Some of them have chosen a method by which they wish to keep satisfied the Muslims who believe in the obvious meanings of the Holy Qur'an and of the decisive Ahadith (reports) and also to adopt the view-point of scientists, or, at least, not to express an opinion which cannot be explained in the light of the laws of physical sciences.

On the one hand they see that the Holy Qurtan comprises a chain of undeniable miracles and this Heavenly Book is the final authority for the Muslims, and whatever it says is correct and in conformity with facts. On the other hand they find that the physical sciences and the supporters of material learning do not recognize these phenomena which, according to their own thinking (which insists on a natural

cause for every natural event), are at variance with scientific laws.

As a consequence of these two factors, none of which, according to their belief, is flexible, they have adopted a course by means of which they wish to keep both the groups satisfied ... viz. they safeguard the apparent meanings of the Holy Qur 'an and the decisive reports and also do not say anything against the scientific laws.

Accordingly, they endeavour to explain away the miracles and unusual performances of the Prophets according to modern scientific standards and account for the miracles in such a way that they appear to be natural occurrences. In this way they have safeguarded the respect due to the Holy Qur'an and the decisive reports, and have also freed themselves from every kind of pessimism and protest. We narrate below, as a specimen, the explanation offered by Muhammad Abdoh, the famous, Egyptian scholar, about the event of the 'People of the Elephant', which has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

"It was the disease of smallpox and typhoid fever, caused by petrified dust, which spread in Abraha's army through insects like mosquitoes and flies. And by 'clay-stones' is meant petrified infected clay which the wind scatters everywhere and thus contaminates the feet of those insects. As a consequence of the contact of those insects with the human bodies the germs are transferred to the pores of human skin and make painful and dirty wounds appear on it. And these germs are the strong divine soldiers which are called 'microbes' in scientific terminology".

A modern writer says in support of the view expressed by the afore-said scholar that the word 'Tayr' used in the Holy Qur'an means anything which flies and includes mosquitoes and flies.

Before we take into consideration the remarks of the afore-said writers we consider it necessary to reproduce once again the verses revealed in connection with the 'People of the Elephant'. Almighty Allah says thus in Surah al-Fil:

Have you not considered how Allah dealt with the Army of the Elephant? Did He not foil their evil plots by sending against them flocks of swallows which pelted them with claystones, so that they became like left-over grass grazed by cattle. **(105: 1- 5)**

On the face of it, these verses show that the people of Abraha were subjected to Divine wrath and the only cause of their death was these clay-stones which the birds were carrying and which were pelted on their heads, faces and bodies.

A deep and minute study of these verses leads us to believe that the death of those people took place on account of these very unnatural weapons (apparently worthless and insignificant claystones but in fact very powerful and destructive things). As such these Divine verses cannot be interpreted to carry any meanings given to them by means of an explanation which is at variance with their apparent text, unless a positive proof about the correctness of such an explanation is advanced.

Notable Points With Regard to The Above Mentioned Explanation

1. The above-mentioned explanation, too, cannot manifest the entire event to be natural and some points still remain in the story which can be explained by advancing unnatural reasons. Thus even if we suppose that the death and annihilation of those people took place on account of microbes of smallpox and typhoid fever, the question remains as to how and by what means and as a result of whose guidance and training did these birds come to know that microbes of smallpox and typhoid fever had settled themselves in these clay-stones at that particular time, and instead of going in search of their sustenance, they flocked together towards the clay-stones and holding them in their beaks pelted them at Abraha's people like an army attacking its enemy? In the circumstances can we treat the entire event as usual and natural?

If we are prepared to admit that all these things happened in accordance with Allah's command and that a supernatural power was at work in this event where does the necessity lie that we should consider only a part of that event as natural and run after explaining away its causes.

2. The minute animals called 'microbes" which are enemies of entire mankind did not then have any relationship with anyone. As such how can this thing be explained that they attacked only Abraha's army and ignored the Makkans? The history books which we possess at present are unanimous that all losses were sustained by Abraha's soldiers and the Quraysh and the Arabs did not experience even the slightest harm, although smallpox and typhoid fever are contagious diseases and various natural factors transfer them from place to place and at times it so happens that they ruin the entire country. In the circumstances can the event in question be treated as something usual?

3. Diversity of opinions of those, who have furnished this explanation, about the genus of the microbes, itself weakens their proposition. At times they say that they were the germs of cholera and occasionally they assert that they were those of smallpox and typhoid fever, whereas we have not yet found any authentic and reliable document concerning this dispute.

Amongst the exegetes only Akramah, who himself is an object of dispute amongst the scholars, has considered this probable and, amongst the historians, Ibn Athir, while quoting this probability as a weak statement, has straightaway proceeded to refute it.29

Most strange is the explanation given by the author of 'Hayat-i Muhammad' (Dr Haikal, former Egyptian Education Minister), while narrating the story of the 'People of the Elephant'. Notwithstanding the fact that the object before his eyes is the verse 'We sent against them flocks of birds', he, after quoting Surah al-Fil, says thus about the death of the army of Abraha: "Perhaps cholera germs came with the wind and from sea-side".

Now if wind had brought the cholera germs why were the birds flying on their heads? Moreover, the birds were pelting clay-stones at them; – now what part did those clay-stones play in their death?

Hence, we should not follow this way of thinking and unnecessarily explain the great miracles of the Prophets and great spiritual people in this manner.

In principle, the attitude of religion in these matters, towards the physical sciences, whose sphere is limited to the usual relations of natural phenomena, is two fold. We should not, therefore, abandon our established religious principles to please a few people whose religious knowledge is insignificant and who do not possess information about matters of this type, especially when we are under no obligation to do so.

Two Important Points

We would like to mention the two important points here.

1. There should be no misunderstanding about the fact that by the above remarks we do not want to correct and explain the things which people attribute to the Prophets and religious leaders by way of hearsay – things which are not supported by any authentic evidence and have usually a superstitious aspect. What we mean to say is that according to the authentic evidence, which we have in hand, the Prophets of Allah performed some unusual acts to prove their relationship with the supernatural world. Our aim is to defend these kinds of miracles.

2. We do not at all say that a miracle is an exception to the law of cause and effect. We fully respect this law and believe that all events of this world have causes and no phenomenon makes its appearance without a cause.

However, what we say is that it is not necessary that the causes of the miracles should belong to the category of usual and material causes. thence, the miracles and unusual acts of the Prophets have causes which do not conform with the usual natural causes and everyone is not familiar with these mysteries.

After The Defeat of Abraha

The tumult of the 'Year of the Elephant', Abraha's death and the destruction of the enemies of the Ka'bah and Quraysh, made the Makkans and the Ka'bah very honourable in the eyes of the Arab world. Now no one could dare think of attacking Quraysh or doing them any harm or destroying the House of Allah.

The common thinking was to this effect, that: "Allah has, for the sake of the honour of His House and for the honour and greatness of Quraysh, made their sworn enemy roll in dust and blood. In view of this Divine decree Quraysh and the Ka'bah have become respectable in the eyes of the People". They seldom reflected that this development had taken place simply for the sake of the protection of the Ka'bah and the greatness or smallness of Quraysh had nothing to do with it.

This is proved by the fact that the enemy chiefs of that area had attacked Quraysh several times but had

never been faced with such a situation.

This victory and success, which was secured without any toil and without even a drop of the blood of Quraysh being shed, created new thoughts in their minds and their conceit, pride and heedlessness increased. They now began to believe in the limitations of others, because they considered themselves to be the distinguished group among the Arabs and thought that they alone were the object of attention of three hundred and sixty idols and enjoyed their support.

From the day they became unrestrained their revelry and voluptuousness knew no bounds. They quaffed cup after cup of palm-date wine and occasionally indulged in wine-drinking in the precincts of the Ka'bah, and according to their idiom, 'spent the best days of their lives' in the neighbourhood of idols made of stone and wood which pertained to the Arab tribes.

In these assemblies everyone who had heard any story about the Manzariyans of Hirah and the Ghassaniyans of Syria and the Yemenite tribes, narrated it to others and they believed that they owed their own happy lives to the attention of idols which had humiliated ordinary Arabs as compared with them and had granted them (i.e. Quraysh) superiority over all others.

Imaginary Frontiers of Quraysh

God forbid that this two-footed being (man) should one day find the horizon of life clear and may assume himself to be of an imaginary privileged class. It is on that day that he appropriates existence and life to himself and does not believe that his fellow-beings are at all entitled in the least to any life and worth.

In order to prove their greatness and superiority over others Quraysh decided on that day that they would not extend the least respect to the people of "Hil" (the area extending upto four leagues from the Ka'bah in all the four sides is called "Haram" and the area beyond that limit is called "Hil"), because, according to them, others were dependent on their Sanctuary and had seen with their own eyes that they (Quraysh) were the object of the favours of the gods of the Ka'bah.

From that time onwards Quraysh began meting our harsh treatment to others. Exercising perfect dictatorship they decided that whenever the people of "Hil" came to perform pilgrimage they should not utilize the edibles brought by them but should obtain food from the people of the "Haram". They also decided that at the time of going round the Ka'bah only the local dress of the Makkans, which had a national aspect, should be worn. If a person could not afford to wear that dress it was necessary for him to perform the pilgrimage without wearing any clothes.

As regards some Arabs of high rank who did not agree to this arrangement it was decided that after going round the Ka'bah they should take off their clothes and throw them away and nobody was permitted to touch those clothes. As regards women, however, they were obliged, in all circumstances, to go round the Ka'bah unclad. They could cover only the sides of their heads with a piece of cloth and

were required to hum some particular verses.

After the event relating to Abraha, who was himself a Christian, no Jew or Christian was permitted to enter Makkah, except as a hired worker of Makkan. In that case also it was obligatory upon him not to utter even a word about his faith and religion.

Things had come to such a pass that they had abandoned some of the ceremonies of Haj, which were to be performed outside the sanctuary. For example, they were not prepared to perform the ceremony of staying at 'Arafah (it is a place beyond the "Haram" where the Hajis are required to stay till sun–set on the 9th of the month of Zil Hijjah.30

And this was in spite of the fact that their ancestors (the descendants of Isma'il) considered stay at 'Arafah to be a part of the ceremonies of Haj and for their entire apparent superiority Quraysh were indebted to the Ka'bah and to these very Haj ceremonies, because it was on this account that the people were obliged to come to this barren place every year. But for the sanctuary no one would have been inclined to visit this place even once throughout one's life.

From the point of view of social accountability such corruption and discrimination is unavoidable. It was therefore necessary that the environment of Makkah should have been submerged in corruption and pollution so that the world should have become ready for a basic revolution and a penetrating movement.

All these privations, feasting and drinking and lack of restraint were making the environment more and more ready for the appearance of a great reformer of the world and it was not without reason that when Waraqah bin Nawfal, the sage of Arabia, who had embraced Christianity during the last days of his life and had acquired knowledge of the contents of the Evangel, spoke about Allah and the Prophets, he had to face the wrath of the Firaun of Makkah in the person of Abu Sufyan who used to say "We Makkans don't stand in need of Allah or the Prophets, as we enjoy the mercy and favours of our idols"

Abdullah – Father Of The Holy Prophet

At the time when Abdul Muttalib purchased the life of his son by sacrificing one hundred camels in the name of Allah, Abdullah was not more than twenty four years old. This event, besides becoming the cause of his (Abdullah's) renown amongst the Quraysh, ensured for him a great position and honour in his own family, especially in the eyes of Abdul Muttalib. The reason for this was that a person loves specially that thing, which proves expensive for him, and for which he takes excessive pains. As such Abdullah enjoyed extraordinary respect amongst his friends and kinsfolk.

It goes without saying that when Abdullah was going with his father to the sacrificial altar he was faced with violent antithetical sentiments. The sentiment of respect for his father and appreciation of the great hardships which he had suffered for his sake controlled his entire self and for this reason he had no alternative but to submit to him. On the other hand, however, as the hand of destiny wished that the

spring flowers of his life should wither like autumn leaves, a tide of disturbance and agitation rose in his mind.

Abdul Muttalib also found himself, struggling betwixt two dominant forces of 'faith' and 'attachment' and this situation had definitely created a chain of acute worries in the minds of both of them. However, when the problem was solved in the manner narrated above, he thought of making amends for the bitter emotions by immediately marrying Abdullah with Aminah and thus unite his life, which had reached the stage of exhaustion with the most basic relationship of one's existence.

Hence, while returning from the sacrificial altar, Abdul Muttalib, who was still holding his son's hand in his own, went straight to the house of Wahab son of Abd Manaf son of Zohrah and concluded Abdullah's marriage with Wahab's daughter Aminah, who was well–knowri for her purity and modesty. In the same assembly he (Abdul Muttalib) himself married Dalalah, a cousin of Aminah, who gave birth to Hamzah, the uncle and coeval of the Holy Prophet.31

The contemporary historian Abdul Wahhab (Professor of History in the University of Egypt, who has written very useful notes on the history of Ibn Athir) has treated the above–mentioned development as something unusual and writes thus: "Going of Abdul Muttalib to the house of Wahab on that very day (when the sentiments of the people were at a high pitch and tears of delight were flowing down their cheeks) and that also with the object of asking for the hands of two girls – one for himself and the other for his son Abdullah – does not conform with the usual standards. The only thing suitable and becoming for them was to take rest, so that both ot them could get rid of their mental fatigue, and then attend to some other business."32

However, we believe that if the said historian had studied the matter in the manner in which we have viewed it, it would have been much easier for him to confirm their action. Abdul Muttalib had appointed a time for the consummation of the marriage and, according to the custom of Quraysh, when that time approached the wedding ceremonies took place at the house of Aminah.

Abdullah and Aminah remained together for some time and then Abdullah left for Syria for purposes of trade. During his return journey, however, he breathed his last, as mentioned below in detail.

Death Of Abdullah In Yathrib

By contracting marriage Abdullah opened a new chapter in his life and his apartment was lighted up by his having had a spouse in the person of Aminah. After some time he left for Syria for trade along with a caravan which was proceeding there from Makkah. The bell for departure was rung and the caravan proceeded on its way, carrying hundreds of hearts along with itself. At that time Aminah was pregnant.

After a few months the van of the caravan appeared. A number of people went out of the city to receive their kinsfolk. Abdullah's old father was awaiting him and the curious eyes of his wife were also searching for him amidst the caravan, but unfortunately he was not visible anywhere. Alter making

inquiries they learned that, while returning from Syria, Abdullah had been taken ill at Yathrib and had, therefore, stayed there with his relatives to take rest. On hearing this Aminah became very sad and tears trickled from her eyes.

Abdul Muttalib asked his eldest son Harith to go to Yathrib and to bring Abdullah along with him. On reaching there he learned that one month after the departure of the caravan Abdullah had died owing to the same ailment.

On his return Harith informed Abdul Muttalib as well as Abdullah's widow of what had happened. The property left behind by Abdullah consisted of five camels, a herd of sheep arid one female slave named Umme Ayman who later nursed the Prophet.

1. But what was their conception about the idols? Did they consider them fit for worship and to be only intermediaries or they thought that they too possessed power like Allah? This point is beyond our discussion for the present, although the first view is firm and proved.
2. Qamus–i Kitab–i Muqaddas, root 'Babal'.
3. Tafsir–i Burhan, vol. 1, page 535
4. Awa'il al–Maqalat, page 12
5. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. III, page 319 and al–Mizan, vol. VII, page 170
6. As regards the particulars of this chapter and matters relating to the birth of Prophet Ibrahim and his breaking the idols, refer to Tarikh–i Kamil, pp. 53 – 62 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XII, pp. 41 – 55. For the sake of brevity we have refrained from mentioning the source of all its contents.
7. Biharul Anwar, vol. V, page 130, Company Print.
8. al–'Uyun, page 136; Amali Saduq, page 274 and Bihirul Anwar, page 35.
9. Tafsir–i Burhan, vol. III, page 64
10. Sa'dus Su'ud, pp. 41 – 42 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XII, page 118
11. Tafsir–i Qummi, page 52 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XII, page 100
12. Biharul Anwar, vol. II, page 112 as quoted from Qassas–i Anbiya.
13. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, pp. 1 and 21
14. Their lives have been discussed by Ibn Athir in Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, pp. 15 – 21.
15. It is an admitted fact that the offices related to the Ka'bah did not exist when the sanctuary was constructed, and they came into existence gradually, according to the exigencies of time. Till the advent of Islam these offices were divided into four parts: (1) Custodianship of the Ka'bah and holding charge of its keys (2) Providing water to the pilgrims during Haj season (3) Providing food to the pilgrims. (4) Chiefship of the people of Makkah, standard bearership and command of the army.
16. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, page 13
17. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. I, page 5
18. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. I, page 6 – 7
19. Tarikh–i Kamil, by Ibn Athir vol. II, page 10
20. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 6; Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, pp. 8 – 9 and Seerah–i Halabi, vol. I, page 8
21. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. 5, page 4
22. One of the causes for a society being subjected to adversity is the prevalence of sin and debauchery amongst its people and it is not improbable that shameful deeds should bring famines and other calamities in their wake. This proposition, besides being in conformity with philosophical principles, has also been mentioned expressly in the Holy Qur'an and in the Islamic traditions.
23. The question arises as to why others did not come up with this suggestion? Possibly they had lost all hope of finding water.

24. Tarikh-i Yaqubi, vol. I, page 206 and Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 45.
25. The above-mentioned incident has been narrated by many historians and writers of Seerah. This story is worthy of appreciation for this reason only that it manifests the nobility of character and steadfastness of Abdul Muttalib and clearly indicates how ardent he was in the matter of his faith and in keeping his promises.
26. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 153 and Bihar, vol. XVI, pp. 74 - 79.
27. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. I, page 253 onwards.
28. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 43 - 62; Faza-il Shazan, pp. 52 - 64, Biharul Anwar, vol. XV, pp. 146 - 155, and Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. I, pp. 260 - 263.
29. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. I, page 263.
30. Tarikh-i Kimil by Ibn Athir, vol. I, page 266.
31. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 4 and Seerah-i Halabi, vol. I, page 54.
32. Tarikh-i Ibn Athir, vol. II, page 4 - a part of the footnote.

The dark clouds of ignorance had completely enveloped the Arabian Peninsula. Abominable and unlawful deeds, bloody campaigns, wide-spread plundering, and infanticide had obliterated all moral virtues, and placed the Arab society in a strange dclivity. The distance between their life and death had become very short.

Just at this time the morning star of prosperity made its appearance and that dark atmosphere was illuminated with the auspicious birth of the Holy Prophet. Thus the preliminary step towards the foundation of the civilization and the advancement and prosperity of a backward nation was taken. Soon the beams of this light lit up the entire world and the foundation of learning, wisdom and civilization was laid.

Every chapter of the lives of great men is worthy of study and scrutiny. At times the personality of an individual becomes so great and grand that all phases of his life, even his infancy and childhood, are mysterious. The lives of the geniuses, leaders of the society, and the forerunners of the caravan of civilization, are usually attractive and contain sensitive and wonderful phases. From the cradle to the grave their lives are replete with mysteries.

We read about the great men that the periods of their childhood and youth are admirable and miraculous. And if we accept this proposition about the great men of the world, the acceptance of something similar to that about the Prophets and saints becomes quite easy.

The Taurat and the Qur'an depict the childhood of Prophet Musa as very mysterious and say "Hundreds of innocent children were beheaded with the object, so that Musa should not be born. However, as Allah had willed that he should make his appearance in the world, it so happened that not only could his enemies not harm him, but Firaun, his greatest enemy, himself became his guardian and supporter". The Holy Qur'an says:

We revealed Our Will to Musa's mother, saying: Put your chld in the box arid let him be carried away by the river. The river will cast him on the bank safely, and he will be taken up by an enemy

of his and Mine. I lavished my love on you, so that you might be reared under My watchful eye.

The sister of Musa went to the palace of Fir'aun and said, "Shall I bring you one who will nurse him?" Then the mother of Musa was hired to nurse the child and her son was thus restored to her. (**Surah Taha, 20: 41 – 43**).

The period of pregnancy, birth and nurture of Prophet 'Isa was even en more wonderful than that of Prophet Musa. The Holy Qur'an narrates the period of growth of 'Isa in this manner:

We sent to her (***i.e. Maryam***) ***Our spirit*** (***i.e. Archangel Jibril***) ***in the semblance of a full-grown man. And when she saw him she said "May the Merciful defend me from you! If you fear the Lord, leave me and go your way". "I am the messenger of your Lord", he replied and have come to give you a holy son". "How shall I bear a child," she answered, "when I am a virgin, untouched by man"? "Such is the Will of your Lord", he replied, "that is no difficult thing for Him. He shall be a sign to mankind", says the Lord, "and a blessing from Ourself. This is Our decree".***

Thereupon she conceived him, and retired to a far-off place. And when she felt the throes of childbirth, she lay down by the trunk of a palm-tree crying "Oh, would that I had died and passed into oblivion!" But a voice from below cried out to her "Do not despair. Your Lord has provided a brook that runs at your feet, and if you shake the trunk of this palm-tree it will drop fresh ripe dates in your lap. Therefore rejoice. Eat and drink, and should you meet any mortal say to him: "I have cooled a test to the Merciful and will not speak with any man today" .

Then she took the child to her people, who said to her, "This is indeed a strange thing! Sister of Harun, your father was never a whore-monger, nor was your mother a harlot".

She made a sign to them, pointing to the child, but they replied "How can we speak with a babe in the cradle?"

Whereupon he spoke and said,

"I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Gospel and ordained me a Prophet …… (***Surah Maryam. 19:18 – 32***)

When believers in the Qur'an and the Taurat and the followers of Prophet 'Isa confirm the above-mentioned facts connected with the birth of the two great Prophets they should not wonder at the extraordinary events which followed in the wake of the auspicious birth of the Prophet of Islam and should not treat them to be superficial.

We learn from the books on history and ahadith (reports) that at the time of the birth of the Holy Prophet the walls of the palace of Khosroes split and some of its turrets collapsed. The fire of the fire-temple of Persia extinguished. The lake of Sawah became dry. The idols in the temple of Makkah were turned upside down.

A light ascended from the Holy Prophet's body towards heaven and illuminated a distance of many leagues along its path. Anushirwan and the Zoroastrian priests dreamt very horrible dreams. When the Holy Prophet was born he was already circumcised and his navel too had been cut. On coming into the world he said "Allah is Great and all praise is due to Him and He is to be praised day and night"

All these details are given in authentic historical documents and in the collections of ahadith1 and keeping in view the facts regarding Prophet Musa and Prophet 'Isa, which have been mentioned above, there is no justification for hesitation in the acceptance of these events.

Year, Month and Date of Birth of The Prophet of Islam

The writers of "Seerah" (biographies of the Prophet) generally agree that the Prophet of Islam was born in the "Year of the Elephant" in 570 A.D. As it is definite that he breathed his last in 632 A.D. when he was 62–63 years old, the year of his birth must have been 570 A.D.

Almost all the traditionalists and historians are unanimous that the Prophet was born in the month of Rabi'ul Awwal, but they differ about the date of his birth. It is well–known among the Sh'iah traditionalists that he was born after sunrise on Friday, the 17th of Rabi'ul Awwal, whereas it is believed by the Sunni scholars that his birth took place on the 12th of that month on Monday.2

Which of The Two Versions is Correct?

It is a matter of great regret that authentic information about the dates of birth and death of the Prophet of Islam and, in fact, about most of the religious leaders is not available with the Muslims and on account of this ambiguity most of the celebrations of their birthdays, and death anniversaries, do not take place on days which should be definite from historical viewpoint.

Aithough the Muslins scholars have recorded various events of Islamic history in a very systematic manner it is not known as to why the dates of birth and death of most of the religious leaders have not been recorded after due scrutiny.

However, this problem is solvable to some extent. In this connection let us take an example. If you wish to write the biography of a scholar belonging to a particular city and supposing that this scholar has left a number of children and other relatives behind him, would you like to enquire about the details of his life from strangers or from his friends and acquaintances in spite ot there being present his children and other members of his family, who naturally possess detailed and exact knowledge about the particulars of his life? It is definite that your conscience will not permit you to do so.

The Holy Prophet departed from amongst the people and left behind himself his family and children. These relatives of the Holy Prophet say, "If the Messenger of Allah is our revered father and we have been brought up in his house and under his patronage, we say that the head of our family came into this

world on such and such date and departed from it on such and such date. In the circumstances is it permissible for us to ignore the statement of his children and rely on the version of other people?

Ceremony of Giving A Name To The Prophet of Islam

The seventh day approached. A sheep was slaughtered by Abdul Muttalib as an expression of gratitude to Allah and a number of persons were invited to the feast. In that magnificent celebration, which was attended by most of the Quraysh, he gave his grandchild the name "Muhammad".

When it was enquired from him as to why he had named his child "Muhammad", while this name was very rare amongst the Arabs, he replied "I wished that he should be praised in the heavens as well us on earth". Hassan bin Thabit, says thus in this regard:

"The Creator derived the name of His Prophet from His own name. As such, whereas Allah is "Mahmud" (laudable), his Prophet is 'Muhammad' (praiseworthy). Both the words have been derived from the same root and carry the same meaning".3

It is certain that occult inspiration had a part to play in the selection of this name, because, although the name 'Muhammad' was well-known amongst the Arabs, very few persons had till then been given this name. According to the exact statistics, which some of the historians have collected, only sixteen persons had been given this name before the Holy Prophet.4

It goes without saying that the lesser a word is used the lesser is the chance of any misunderstanding about it. As the Heavenly Books had predicted the advent of Islam and the name, the particulars, the spiritual and corporeal signs of the Prophet, it was necessary that his signs should have been so evident that the question of any mistake should not have arisen.

One of those signs was the name of the Holy Prophet and it was essential that it should be borne by so few persons that no doubt should be left about his identification, especially when his qualities and signs were appended to it. In this way the person whose appearance had been predicted by the Taurat and the Injeel could be easily identified.

The Holy Qur'an mentions two names of the Prophet.73

In the 138th, 2nd, 29th and 40th verses respectively of the Surah Ale Imran, Muhammad, al-Fath and al-Ahzab he has been called 'Muhammad' and in Surah al-Saff he has been called 'Ahmad'. The reason for this difference is that, as mentioned in history, the Holy Prophet's mother had named him 'Ahmad' before his grandfather gave him the name 'Muhammad'.5

The Infancy Of The Prophet

The Prophet was suckled by his mother for three days only. Thereafter two other women had the honour of being his foster-mothers.

1. **Suwaybah:** She was a female slave of Abu Lahab. She nursed the Prophet for four months and remained the object of appreciation by the Prophet himself, as well as of his virtuous wife (Khadijah), throughout her life. Earlier she had also nursed Hamzah, uncle of the Prophet. After his appointment to the prophetic mission the Prophet intended to purchase her and sent someone to Abu Lahab to arrange the transaction, but he refused to sell her.

However, she received assistance from the Prophet throughout her life. When the Prophet returned from the battle of Khaybar he came to know about her death and signs of grief appeared in his face. He made enquires about her son, so that he might do some good to him, but was informed that he had died earlier than his mother.

2. **Halimah:** She was the daughter of Abi Zuwayb and belonged to the tribe of Said bin Bakr bin Hawazan. She had three children named Abdullah, Anisah and Shima'. The last of them also attended upon the Prophet. It was customary with the noble families amongst the Arabs that they entrusted their children to wet nurses. The nurses usually lived at places beyond the city so that the children could be brought up in fresh desert air and might grow up strong and healthy.

Incidentally, while staying in the desert, the children remained immune from the contagious diseases of the city of Makkah which were more dangerous for the new-born babies and they also learnt the Arabic language in an untempered region. The nurses who belonged to the tribe of Bani Sa'd were famous in this area. They visited Makkah at a particular time of the year and every one of them took a new-born baby along with her.

When four months had passed since the birth of the Prophet the nurses of the Bani Sa'd tribe visited Makkah. That year they were in the grip of a severe famine and, were therefore, in great need of help from the noble families.

The new-born baby of Quraysh did not suck the breast of any wet-nurse. Eventually Halimah came and the child sucked her breast. At this moment the family of Abdul Muttalib became very jubilant.6

Abdul Muttalib turned to Halimah and said "To which tribe do you belong?" She replied that she belonged to the tribe of Bani Said Then he enquired about her name and she told him that it was Halimah. Abdul Muttalib was very much pleased to learn her own name and that of her tribe and said "Very good! Very good! Two good habits and two decent qualities. One of them is happiness and prosperity and the other is meekness and forbearance".7

1. Tarikh-i Ya'qubi, vol. II page 5; Biharul Anwar, vol. XV, chapter 3, pp. 231 – 248 and Seerah-i Halabi, vol. I, page 64.

2. Miqrizi has collected all the statements with regard to the day, month and year of the birth of the Prophet in al-Amta' (page 3).
3. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. I, page 93.
4. Mudrak Pesh, vol. I, page 97.
5. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. I, page 93.
6. Biharul Anwar, vol. XV, page 442.
7. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. I, page 106.

History tells us that the life of the Prophet, the noble guide of the Muslims, was replete with a chain of wonderful events from his very childhood upto the time when he was entrusted with the prophetic mission and all these events had an aspect of greatness. On the whole these events testify that the life of the Prophet was not a usual one.

As regards the explanation of these events the writers are divided into two groups, the materialists and a number of orientalists.

1. The materialist scholars who look at the world from the material point of view and consider the organisation of existence as confined within the four walls of matter and believe that.all the phenomena are material and dependent upon physical causes do not attach any importance to these events and even though they may be supported by a very strong authority, they do not pay any heed to them.

The reason for such an attitude on their part is that according to the principles of materialism the occurrence of such events is impossible. As and when, therefore, they observe such happenings recorded in history they adjudge them to be the offspring of the imagination, love and devotion of the followers of the particular religion.

2. There is also a group of the orientalists, who apparently present themselves to be theists and godly persons and express belief in the supernatural, but, on account of weakness of their faith, their pride about their knowledge and predominance of materialism over their thoughts, while analysing events, follow the principles of materialism.

We frequently come across this sentence in their discourses "Prophethood is the state of being a human genius. A Prophet is a social genius who illuminates the path of life of human beings with his brilliant ideas etc.... "

Discourses of this type originate from a sense of materialistic thinking which considers all religions to be the outcome of human reflection, although the doctrinal scholars have proved, while discussing 'general prophethood', that prophethood is a divine gift which is the source of spiritual inspirations and connections, and, unless there is a diffusion from the side of the Almighty, not the slightest benefit can be derived by this side (i.e. by the Prophets).

However, as the Christian orientalist looks at these matters from the materialistic point of view and

wishes to measure all events in accordance with the scientific principles, which have been discovered through tests and expert meets, he subjects to criticism all those events which have a supernatural aspect and denies their genuineness.

Worshippers of Allah

These are the people who believe that the properties and structure of the material world are under the management of another world and another power (the world of solitude and metaphysics) is responsible for the order of the physical world.

In other words the material world is not free and independent and all its fixed rules and natural and scientific laws are inspired by another world viz. the Will of the Creator which surrounds all things that exist. It is He who has created matter and enforced sound laws amongst its ingredients and erected it on the basis of a chain of natural and scientific principles.

Along with believing in the scientific laws and whole heartedly accepting the statements of scholars about the connections of physical beings upto the extent to which they have been substantiated by science, the people belonging to this group also believe that these scientific rules and principles and the wonderful system of the material world are connected with another organization, all parts of which revolve according to the Will of that High Being.

Furthermore, they do not consider these scientific laws to be permanent and unalterable and believe that watchful Power can change them at any time it likes, in order to achieve some special object. It is competent to do so and (not only competent but) has actually done this many times for such aims and objects as it has had in view.

They say that supernatural and surprising acts of the Prophets which do not accord with the natural laws have been performed through this channel. These people do not permit themselves unduly to reject or doubt what they come across in the Holy Qur'an and in the Hadith as well as in authentic and reliable history hooks merely on the ground that it does not conform With the standards of nature and scientific laws.

Now we mention two events from the mysterious and wonderful life history of the Holy Prophet relating to his childhood and when this narrative is kept in view no room is left for any improbability or doubt about them.

1. The historians have quoted Halimah as saying: "When I assumed responsibility for bringing up the new-born child of Aminah I decided to feed the infant with my milk in the same assembly and in the presence of his mother. So I put into his mouth my left breast which contained milk, but the child was more inclined to my right breast.

However, I did not have anv milk in my right breast since I had given birth to my first-born. The

insistence of the child made me put my milkless right breast in his mouth, and, as soon as he began sucking it, its dry mammary glands were filled with milk and this incident made all those present wonder.1

2. She also says "From the day I took Muhammad to my house I became all the more prosperous and my wealth and herd increased".2

Undoubtedly in these matters the judgement of materialists and their followers differs from that of the persons who worship Allah, although none of them has observed these events and the only evidence for them is the statement of the nurse of the Holy Prophet. As those who follow materialistic principles cannot explain such incidents through natural sciences, they immediately say that these events are the creation of imagination.

If they are very much respectful they say that the Prophet of Islam did not stand in need of such miracles. There is no doubt about the fact that the Prophet did not stand in need of these miracles, but not standing in need of something is a matter totally different from a judgement on its being true or false.

However, a godly person, who considers the organism of nature to be conquered and subdued by the Will of the Creator of the world and believes that the entire Universe including the smallest being (viz. atom) and the biggest phenomenon (viz. the Milky Way) rotates according to His plan and control. After studying these events and their supporting evidence, he looks at all these events with due respect and, even if he is not satisfied, he does not reject them outright.

We come across a similiar event in the Holy Qur'an regarding Maryam (mother of Prophet 'Isa) about whom it has been said:

When the time for Maryam, being delivered of the child, drew near she lay down by the trunk of a palm-tree and (***on account of throes of childbirth, loneliness and fear of accusations***) ***she wished to Allah that she might die. At this moment she heard a voice saying, "Do not despair. Your Lord has provided a brook that runs at your feet and if you shake the trunk of this*** (***withered up***) ***palm tree, it will drop fresh ripe dates in your lap.*** (**Surah Maryam, 19:24 – 25**).

Although there is a great difference between Maryam and Halimah from the point of view of their respective positions and virtues, but a similar difference also exists between the two new-born babes. And if the personal merit and excellence of Maryam made her an object of Divine blessings it is also possible that the position and rank which this infant (i.e. Muhammad) was to acquire later might have made his nurse worthy of Allah's bounties.

We also learn something more about Maryam from the Holy Qur'an

Her chastity and piety had elevated her so much that whenever Zakariyah visited her place of worship, he found heavenly food there, and when he asked her from where that food had come,

she used to say that it had come from Allah. **(Surah Ale Imran, 3: 32)**

On this basis we should not doubt the correctness of such miracles or consider them to be impossible.

Five Years In The Desert

The Holy Prophet spent five years amongst Bani Sa'd tribe and was sufficiently grown up. During this period Halimah took him to his mother twice or thrice and eventually made him over to her.

The first time that Halimah took him to his mother was when his suckling period was over. She, however, insisted on her giving him back to her. The reason for her insistence was that this child had become a source of bounties and blessings for her, and the reason why his mother acceded to her request was that cholera had broken out in Makkah at that time.

The second time that she took him to Makkah was when a group of Ethiopian clergymen came to the Hijaz and saw Muhammad amidst the tribe of Bani Sa'd. They observed that all the signs of the Prophet who was to come after Prophet 'Isa, as given in the Heavenly Books, were found in this child.

They, therefore, decided to take hold of him, in whatever manner it might be possible, and to take him to Ethiopia, so that the honour of having the Prophet might fall to the share of that country.3

This is not at all unlikely, because, as clearly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, the signs of the Prophet of Islam had been narrated in the Injeel. It was, therefore, perfectly in order that the sages of that time should have identified the person in whom those signs were present. The Holy Qur'an says in this regard:

**And of 'Isa, who said to the Israelites: "I *have been sent to you by Allah to confirm the Taurat already revealed and to give news of an apostle who will come after me. His name is Ahmad". Yet when he* (*the Prophet about whom 'Isa had foretold*)*, came to them with all the signs and proofs to support his truthfulness*)*, they said: "This is plain magic ".* (Surah al-Saff, 61 6).

There are other verses also which show that the signs of the Prophet of Islam were clearly described in the Heavenly Books and the earlier peoples were aware of them.4

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. XV, page 345 quoted from Fazatil-i Waqidi.
2. Manaqib-i Ibn Shehr Ashob, vol. I, page 24.
3. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 167.
4. Vide Surah al-A'raf, 7:157.

The Almighty has destined every human being for some particular job. If one has been created to acquire knowledge and wisdom, another has been endowed with capability for discovery and invention and a third one for labour and effort. If some are suited to play a role in government and politics, others

have been entrusted the task of teaching and training their fellow–men and so on.

The compassionate leaders, who are interested in the prevalence of good order and comfort in their environments, and desire the advancement of the individuals as well as the society, test the taste and talent of a person before entrusting him a job, and give him only that work which accords with his aptitude and capacity.

In case this is not done the society is exposed to two disadvantages. Firstly the man concerned does not do what he can and secondly whatever he does proves to be futile. It is said "In every head there is an aptitude. Lucky is he who recognizes his aptitude".

A teacher was advising an indolent student. He was telling him about the evils of sluggishness and the fate of those who do not learn, but spend their lives in idle pursuits. Suddenly he saw that the student, while hearing his words, was also drawing a picture on the ground with a piece of coal. He at once realized that the boy had not been created to study and the hand of nature had meant him to be a painter.

He, therefore, summoned his parents and said to them: "Although your child is careless and dull in studies, he has a good taste for painting. It will, therefore, be better if you arrange for his instruction in painting". The parents of the boy accepted the advice of the teacher. He soon began to learn that art and eventually became a great painter of his time.

The early period of the life of the children provides the best opportunity to their parents and guardians to test their inclinations and aptitudes and to gain knowledge about their talents from their acts, manners, ideas and conceptions. This is so, because the thoughts, actions and sweet and gentle words of a child are a mirror of his future and, if proper guidance suited to his faculties is provided, the best possible benefit can be derived from his aptitude.

The study of the ways and manner; of the Holy Prophet, right from his childhood till the commencement of his prophetic mission, draws in our eyes the picture of the background of his life and his sublime thoughts, and the scrutiny of the history of his childhood tells us about his brilliant future.

Rather, his brief biography upto the day he was appointed to the prophetic mission, when he declared himself to be the guide of the society, informs us about his future, and makes clear the purpose for which he had been created, and also tells us whether or not his claim to prophethood and leadership accorded with the events of his life.

It tells us whether or not his forty years' life and his behaviour, character, speech and the conduct of his long association with the people support his prophethood. Keeping this in view, therefore, we place before the readers a part of the early life of the Holy Prophet.

The kind foster–mother of Muhammad looked after him for five years and did her best to nurse and

cherish him. During this period the Holy Prophet learnt eloquent Arabic language and prided himself upon it afterwards. Later Halimah brought him to Makkah and he spent some time under the loving care of his mother and the guardianship of his magnanimous grandfather. This child was the only souvenir left by Abdullah to his bereaved family.1

Journey To Yathrib

From the day the newly-wedded daughter-in-law of Abdul Muttalib (viz. Aminah) had lost her young and dignified husband she had been waiting for an opportunity to go to Yathrib and to see with her own eyes his last resting-place and in the meanwhile also to see her relatives in that city.

Eventually she decided that the proper time for her journey had arrived and her dear child had sufficiently grown up to accompany her. They made preparations for the journey and left for Yathrib along with Umme Aiman.

They stayed there for one month. For the young child of Quraysh this journey was very severe and caused him spiritual pain, because he saw for the first time the house in which his father had breathed his last as well as the place where he was lying buried and naturally, till that time, his mother had already told him many things about his father.

The pangs of grief were still fresh in his soul when another tragedy took place and gave him a new current of sorrow and sadness, because, while on his way back to Makka, he lost his mother also at a place called Abwa'.2

This unfortunate happening made Muhammad all the more dear in the eyes of the members of his family, and the only rose, which had survived this rose-garden, became all the more the object of affection and love of Abdul Muttalib. He loved him more than his own sons and gave him preference over everyone else.

A carpet used to be spread for the ruler of Quraysh (Abdul Muttalib) by the side of the Ka'bah. The chiefs of Quraysh as well as his own sons used to sit in a circle around the carpet. However, as and when his eyes fell on the souvenir of Abdullah he ordered that way might be made for him so that he might accommodate him on the carpet.3

The Holy Qur'an mentions the Holy Prophet's period of orphanhood in Surah al-Zuha and says: ***Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter?*** **(Surah al-Zuha, 93 6)**

The philosophy underlying the orphanhood of the newborn child of Quraysh is not very clear to us. We know only this much that the roaring torrent of accidents indicate a good purpose. In view of this we can guess that Allah willed that before the leader of mankind assumed the reins of affairs and commenced his leadership, he should taste the weal and woe, and experience the ups and downs of life so that he should develop a great forbearing and courageous spirit and with those sufferings should prepare

himself to encounter in his later life a chain of hardships and deprivations as well as homelessness.

Allah had willed it that he should not be educated by any person and should not be under obligation to submit to anyone. From the very early days of his life he should be free and independent and procure the means of his advancement and elevation like a self-made man so that the people may realise that the inspiration in his case is not a human inspiration and his parents have had no part to play in moulding his character, way of thinking and bright future and his greatness and excellence have emanated from the fountain of revelation.

Death of Abdul Muttalib

Heart-rending wordly accidents make appearance during the course of human life, one after the other, like huge waves of the sea and hurt the human soul.

The waves of grief still reigned over the heart of the Prophet of Allah when he had to encounter another great mishap. He was not yet more than eight years of age when he lost his grandfather. The death of Abdul Muttalib had so deep an impression on him that he kept weeping upto the very edge of his grave and never forgot him.

Guardianship by Abu Talib

We shall speak about the personality and greatness of Abu Talib in a specific chapter and shall prove his Islam and faith in the Holy Prophet with authentic evidence. However, for the present, it is only appropriate that we should narrate the events related to the guardianship of the Holy Prophet by Abu Talib.

There were a number of reasons which made it appropriate that Abu Talib should undertake the responsibility and the honour of looking after the Holy Prophet. He and Abdullah, father of Muhammad, were born of the same mother4 and he was also well-known for his generosity and goodness.

For this reason Abdul Muttalib selected him for the guardianship of his worthy grandson. The services rendered by him in this capacity are recorded in history in golden words and shall be narrated later.

When the Holy Prophet was fifteen years old, he took part in a battle along with his uncle. As this battle was fought in the months during which fighting is prohibited it is called the Battle of Fujjar. Detailed accounts of Fujjar Battles are given in history books.

A Journey to Syria

It was customary for the Quraysh who were engaged in trade to visit Syria once every year. Abu Talib had determined to participate in the annual journey of Quraysh. As regards his nephew, whom he did

not usually leave alone even for a while, he had decided to leave him behind in Makkah and to appoint some persons to look after him.

However, when the caravan was about to move, tears trickled down the eyes of Muhammad and he extremely felt the separation from his guardian. The sad face of Muhammad aroused the sentiments of Abu Talib to such an extent that he felt compelled to bear the hardship involved and to take Muhammad along with himself.

This journey, undertaken by Muhammad at the age of twelve years, is considered to be one of the most pleasant journeys performed by him, because during this journey he passed through Madyan the Qura valley and the country of Samud and witnessed the beautiful natural sceneries of Syria.

The caravan had not yet reached Syria when an incident occurred enroute at a place called Busra which upset the programme of Abu Talib's journey to some extent. The details of this incident are as follows:

For very many years a monk named 'Bahira' had been engaged in worship in his particular monastery situated at Busra. He possessed very deep knowledge of the Christian faith and was held in much respect by the Christians of that area. At times the trade caravans broke their journey at that place and the members of the caravans visited him to seek blessings.

Fortunately Bahira happened to meet the trade caravan of Quraysh. His eyes fell on the nephew of Abu Talib who attracted his attention. His mysterious and deep look indicated the secret which was hidden in his heart. He stared on for a few moments and then suddenly broke the silence and asked "To whom is this boy related from amongst you?" Some of those present looked towards his uncle. Abu Talib said, "He is my nephew".

Then Bahira said, "This boy has a brilliant future. He is the same promised Prophet whose universal prophethood, conquests and rule have been foretold in the Heavenly Books and the signs which I have read in the Books apply to him. He is the same Prophet, about whose name and about the name of whose father and regarding whose family, I have read in the religious books, and I know from where he is to rise and in what manner his religion will spread in the world. However, you must keep him hidden from the eyes of the Jews, for, if they learn about him, they will kill him".5

Most of the historians say that the nephew of Abu Talib did not proceed beyond that place (Busra). However, it is not clear whether Muhammad's uncle sent him back to Makkah along with someone else (and this appears to be quite improbable after Abu Talib having heard from the monk that he should not separate his nephew from himself) or himself returned to Makkah along with him and discontinued his further journey. And sometimes it is said that he took Muhammad to Syria along with him, exercising much care about him.

Falsehood of The Orientalists

In the chapters of this book we shall point out the mistakes and occasionally the lies and unjust calumnies of the orientalists so that the basis of their information may become known and it may also become clear to what an extent they try intentionally to confuse the minds of the credulous people.

The Prophet's meeting with the monk is quite a simple matter. However, now many centuries have passed since this incident occurred, the orientalists have made it a pretext and insist to prove that Prophet Muhammad learnt from Bahira during this journey his own sublime teachings which he introduced twenty eight years later and which enlivened anew, like the elixir of life, the dead body of the human society of that age.

They say: "On account of the greatness of spirit, purity of mind, retentive faculty and profoundness of thought, which nature had endowed upon Muhammad in abundance, he learnt from that very monk the stories of the Prophets and of the perished communities like Ad and Samud and also acquired most of his vital teachings from him during the same meeting".

It goes without saying that the above view is nothing more than mere fantasy and does not at all conform with the events of the life of the Prophet. It is also not supported but stands rejected by the scientific and normal standards. Here are some proofs of what we have said:

1. The historians are unanimous that Muhammad was illiterate and had not learnt reading and writing. Moreover, at the time of this journeys his age did not exceed twelve years. Now is it possible to believe that a boy, who was not more than twelve years old, should learn the realities of the Taurat and the Injeel and later, at the age of forty years, give them the shape of revelation and introduce a new religion? Such an eventuality is beyond usual standards and keeping in view the extent of human capability it may be said that it is not possible intellectually.

2. The period of this journey was too short to enable Multammad to acquire even a smattering of the Taurat and the Injeel, because it was a trade journey and did not last for more than four months including the period of stay. The reason for this is that Quraysh journeyed twice in a year – to Yemen during winter and to Syria during summer – and in view of this it cannot be imagined that the period of the journey in question exceeded four months.

And it is not possible even for the greatest sage of the world to master these two voluminous Books in such a short period, not to speak of an illiterate boy, especially when he was not with the monk for full four months and this meeting had materialised at a halting place during the journey and did not last for more than a few hours.

3. History provides testimony to the fact that Abu Talib wanted to take his nephew to Syria and Busra was not their real destination. Moreover Busra was a place which lay on the route and at times the

caravans stopped there to take rest. In that event how can it be possible that the Holy Prophet should stay on there and busy himself in the study of the Taurat and the Injeel.

It matters little if we say that Abu Talib took him to Syria along with himself or that he returned from there (Busra) to Makkah or sent his nephew back to Makkah alongwith someone – in any of these cases the destination of the caravan and also of Abu Talib was not Busra, so that the caravan might have become busy in commerce and the Holy prophet might have simultaneously engaged himself in receiving instruction.

4. If the nephew of Abu Talib had received instruction from the monk the matter would certainly have gained publicity among the Quraysh and all would have spoken about it on their return. Moreover, even the Holy Prophet himself would not have been able to claim before his people that he was illiterate and had not pursued any studies, whereas we find that the Holy Prophet commenced his prophetic mission with this very assertion, but none said to him "O Muhammad! you did receive instruction from the monk at Busra when you were twelve years of age and learned these glowing truths from him!"

As is well known, the idolaters of Makkah accused the Holy Prophet in different ways and studied the Holy Qur'an very minutely to find a pretext for their accusation. So much so that when they saw at one time that the Holy Prophet associated, on certain occasions with a Christian slave in Marwah they seized he opportunity and said that Muhammad learnt what he said from the Christian slave. The Holy Qur 'an mentions this accusation of theirs in these words.

We know that they say: 'A mortal taught him'. But the man to whom they allude (***the Christian slave***) ***speaks a foreign language, while this is eloquent Arabic speech.*** (**Surah al-Nahl, 16:103**)

However, as regards this accusation (i.e. the Prophet received instruction from Bahira) it has neither been objected to by the Holy Qur'an nor did the quarrelsome and objectors Quraysh make it a pretext. And this thing is in itself a clear proof of the fact that this accusation is the outcome of the brains of modern orientalists.

5. The stories of Prophets. which have been narrated in detail in the Holy Qur'an, are totally at variance with those narrated in the Taurat and the Injeel and the matters ascribed to the Prophets have been narrated in these two Books in such an indecent and repulsive manner that they do not accord at all with rational standards. A comparison of these two Books with the Holy Qur'an shows that the contents of the Holy Qur'an have not been taken from them. And if it is supposed that Muhammad obtained information about the history of the nations from the two Testaments it should have been necessary that his narrative should also have been mixed with extravagant talks and myths.

6. If the monk stationed on the route to Syria possessed so extensive theoretical and religious knowledge that he could provide it to a Prophet like Muhammad why did he not acquire any fame himself? And why did he not give instruction to anyone other than Muhammad, when he was always visited by the people at large?

A Glance at The Existing Taurat

This Heavenly Book! It is extremely incoherent in the matter of narratives about the Prophets. We mention briefly here some instances in this regard so that it may become clear that, if the Holy Prophet had obtained the glowing realities of the Holy Qur'an from the monk, there was no reason why even the smallest repulsive remark should not have appeared in what he said. For example:

1 . The Taurat says in the book of Genesis, (chapter 32, verses 28 – 30) 'One night God wrestled with Jacob till dawn'.

2. God lied to Adam by telling him that if he ate the fruit of the particular tree he would die, whereas the fact was that if he ate the fruit of that tree he would have become aware of good and bad like God. And when he did eat it he acquired that knowledge.6

3. The Taurat narrates in this manner the descent of two angels to meet Ibrahim: God descended along with two angels to know whether the information which he was receiving about the people was correct or false. For this reason He appeared before Ibrahim, who said "Let me bring water so that you may wash your feet". thereafter God and the two angels who had become tired took rest and ate food. (***Vide Genesis. chapter 18, verses 1– 9***)

Dear reader! Please also go through the stories narrated in the Holy Qur'an and then decide whether it is possible to say ' The Holy Qur'an which has narrated everything in so sublime a manner has borrowed the narratives relating to the Prophets from this very TI aural?" And if it has borrowed the–m from the Taurat why is not even an iota ot this extravagant talk reflected in them?

A Glance at The Injeel

We mention three instances of "glowing realities" of the Injeel to show whether or not this very Injeel is the source of the Qur'an of the Muslims:

Prophet 'Isa Shows a Miracle

'Isa went to a marriage party along with his mother and his disciples. It so happened that the wine got finished. He miraculously converted seven jars full of water into wine. (St. John, chapter 2, verses 1 – 11).

Prophet 'Isa took a cup (of wine) and handed it over to them and said "Drink, for it is my blood". (St. Matthew, chapter 26. verse 27)

However, dear readers, you will find the logic of the Holy Qur'an about drinking of wine which is absolutely opposed to the above view. It says:

Believers! Wine and games of chance, idols and divining arrows, are abominations devised by Satan. Avoid them, so that you may prosper **(Surah al-Mai'da, 5:9)**

In these circumstances, is it possible that Muhammad should have collected material for the Holy Qur'an from the monk at Busra?

The present Injeel introduces 'Isa as a vicious person who was very unkind to his mother (vide St. Matthew, chapter 12, St. Mark, chapter 13, St. Luke, chapter 8). whereas the Holy Qur'an depicts him to be quite the reverse of it:

He has exhorted me to honour my mother and purged me of vanity and wickedness.
(Surah Maryam 19:32)

Unprejudiced persons, while comparing the stories and commands of the Qur'an with the Bible can understand that the latter cannot serve as the source of the Qur'an.

1. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 167.
2. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. I, page 125.
3. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 168.
4. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, page 179.
5. Tabari, vol. I, pp. 33 – 34; Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 180 – 183.
6. Taurat has narrated in detail the story of Adam and Eve in the book on Genesis, chapters 2 and 3.

Leaders of society should be forbearing and patient, strong and powerful, brave and valiant, fearless and bold, and should possess a great soul.

How can it be possible for persons who are timid and chicken-hearted, weak and cowardly, feeble-minded and lazy to lead the society through intricate paths? How can they take a stand before the enemies and protect their entity and personality from the attacks of the people at large?

The greatness and magnificence of the soul of a leader and his corporeal and spiritual power and ability have wonderful impact on his followers. When Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, selected one of his sincere companions for the Governorship of Egypt he wrote a letter to the afflicted people of Egypt who had been greatly put out on account of the tyranny of the government which was then in position in that land. In that letter he praised his governor-designate for his bravery and spiritual purity. We reproduce here an extract from that letter wherein the real attributes of a ruler have been narrated

"..... I have sent to you a servant of Allah, who does not go to sleep in dreadful days and does not show cowardice while facing the enemy during an emergency. For the wicked he is more harsh than the burning fire. He is Malik bin Harith from the clan of Mazhaj. Listen to his words and enforce his orders, because he is one of the swords of Allah which does not become blunt and whose stroke does not remain ineffective'.1

Spiritual Power of The Holy Prophet

During his boyhood as well as manhood the signs of strength, bravery, firmness and forcefulness were patent in the forehead of the darling of Quraysh. When he was fifteen years of age he took part in a battle which has fought by Quraysh against the tribe of Hawazan and which is called the Fujjar Battle. In the battle-front his duty was to ward off the arrows aimed at his uncles. In his Seerah-i Ibn Hisham[2] quotes this sentence from the Prophet: "I warded off the arrows from my uncles".

Participation in this battle and that too at such a young age tells us about the unparalleled valour of the Holy Prophet and we understand as to why Imam Ali, the most valiant of the valiant, the Commander of the Faithful says "Whenever matters became difficult for us (the Muslim Soldiers) on the battle front we took refuge with the Prophet of Allah and none of us was nearer to the enemy than the Prophet himself.[3]

We shall mention the principles of Islamic military training in the chapter relating to the battles of the Muslims with the polytheists, and shall study the manner of their fighting, which always took shape according to the directions of the Holy Prophet. And this in itself is one of the fascinating discussions of the history of Islam.

The Fujjar (Unjust) Battles

Detailed account of such matters is beyond the scope of our book. However, we give below in brief the causes and the events of these battles, in one of which the Holy Prophet also participated, so that the esteemed readers may not remain totally uninformed about them.

The Arabs of the Age of Ignorance spent the whole year in fighting and plundering. However, the continuance of this state of affairs deranged their lives. For this reason they did not fight during four months in a year (viz. Rajab, Zi Qa'd, Zil Haj and Muharram) so that their might open their trade markets during these four months and engage themselves in work and earning of livelihood.[4]

In view of this resolution the bazaars of 'Ukaz, Mujannah and Zil Majaz witnessed wonderful gatherings during these four months and friends as well as foes engaged themselves, side by side with one another, in buying and selling as well as in selfglorification. The great singers of Arabia sang their compositions in these assemblies. The well-known orators delivered speeches. The Jews, the Christians and the idolaters presented their religious beliefs before the Arab world without any fear of harm from their opponents.

During the course of Arabian history, however, this covenant was broken four times, when some Arab tribes engaged in war-fare with one another. And as these battles were fought in the months in which fighting is prohibited they are called Fujjar Battles. Now we give below a very brief account of these battles

The First Fujjar: The two warring parties were the tribes ot 'Kananah' and 'Hawazan' and the cause of the battle has been mentioned to be this: A person named Badr bin Ma'shar selected a place for himself in the bazaar of 'Ukaz and read out self-glorifying verses every day before the people.

One day he stood up, with sword in hand, and said 'O people' I am the most honourable person and if anyone repudiates this claim of mine he shall be put to sword'. In the meantime a man rose up, struck a sword on Badr's foot and severed it. For this reason the two parties grappled with each other but stopped fighting before anyone was killed.

The Second Fujjar: The reason for this battle was that a beautiful woman of the tribe of Bani 'Amir attracted the eyes of a young man who requested her to show him her face. The woman declined to do so. The lustful young man sat behind her and sewed together her long laps with thorns so that when she got up her face became visible. At that moment both of them called their tribes. The two tribes stopped fighting only after some persons had been killed.

The Third Fujjar: A man belonging to the tribe of Kananah was indebted to another who belonged to the tribe of Bani Amir. The debtor was dilly-dallying. The two persons began to quarrel on this account. A bloody fight was doing to start between the two tribes, but, before the situation worsened, the matter was settled peacefully.

The Fourth Fujjar: It is the very battle in which the Prophet participated personally. There is a difference of opinion about his age at that time. Some say that he was fourteen or fifteen years of age whereas others have written that he was then twenty years old. However, as this war continued for four years, it is possible that all these versions mall be correct.5

The root cause of this dispute has been stated to be this. No'man bin Manzar used to arrange a caravan every year and sent merchandise to 'Ukaz, so that, hides, ropes and brocade might be bartered from there. A man named 'Urwatur Rijal, who belonged to the tribe of Hawazan, took responsibility to safeguard and protect the caravan.

However, Baraz bin Qays, a member of Kananah tribe, became very sentimental about a man of Hawazan tribe having surpassed him. He went to No'man bin Manzar and complained about the arrangement but met with no success. He became annoyed and jealous and was constantly waiting for an opportunity to deal with 'Urwarur Rijal on the way.

Eventually he killed him in the territory of Bani Marrah and thus besmeared his hands with the blood of a member of Hawazan tribe. In those days the tribes of Quraysh and Kananah were allies and this development rook place when the Arabs were busy in trade in the market-place of 'Ukaz. A man informed Quraysh about what had come to pass.

Hence, the tribes of Quraysh and Kananah collected their belongings and hurried towards the Haram (a distance of four leagues around Makkah is called the Haram and fighting in this area was unlawful

amongst the Arabs) before Hawazan tribe should become aware of the happening. However, members of Hawazan tribe pursued them and, before they could reach within the limits of the Haram, fighting commenced between the two parties.

At last they had to stop fighting on account of night fall. Quraysh and Kananah tribes availed of this opportunity to escape to the Haram in darkness and thus became safe from the enemy's attack. After that day Quraysh and their allies came out of Haram sometime or the other and fought with the enemies. On some days the Prophet also participated in the battles along with his uncles, as mentioned above. This state of affairs continued for four years. At last the war came to an end by paying of the bloodmoney to Hawazan tribe, who had lost more lives as compared with Quraysh.6

Hilful Fuzul (The Covenant of The Youths)

In the past an agreement called the 'Fuzul Covenant' existed amongst the Jarhamis and it was meant for safeguarding the rights of the oppressed. The parties to this agreement, according to the renowned historian Imaduddin Ibn Kathir, were Fazal bin Fazalah, Fazal bin Harith and Fazal bin Wida'ah.7

As the mutual agreement, which a number of Quraysh had made later, was identical with Hilful Fuzul, from the point of view of its object (viz. protection of the rights of the oppressed), it was also given the name of 'Fuzul covenant'.

The Prophet Participates in The Agreement

Twenty years before the commencement of the prophetic mission of the Prophet a man arrived in Makkah in the month of Zi Qa'dah along with some goods. These goods were purchased by 'As bin Wa'il, but he failed to pay the price settled between them. That man saw Quraysh sitting near the Ka'bah. He began to complain loudly and also recited some verses which roused the sentiments of men possessing a sense of honour.

Zubayr bin Abdul Muttalib stood up and some others also joined him. They held a meeting in the house of Abdullah bin Jad'an and made a covenant and vowed that they would observe unity, and, as far as possible in the prevailing circumstances, would make the oppressor surrender the rights of the oppressed to them. When the ceremonies of the agreement were over they got up and went to 'As bin Wa'il. They took back from him the goods which he had purchased but had not paid its price and returned the same to the owner.

The Prophet participated in this agreement which ensured the welfare of the oppressed. He has himself spoken about the greatness of this agreement and two of his remarks in this behalf are reproduced below:

"In the house of Abdullah bin Jad'an I became a witness to such an agreement. If even now (i.e. after the commencement of the prophetic mission) I am invited to a similar agreement I shall accept it (viz. I am

still faithful to the covenant made by me)"

Ibn Hisham quotes that the Prophet used to speak thus about the said agreement. ``I am not prepared to break my covenant, even though I am offered the most precious gift".

The 'Fuzul agreement' was so firm and established that even the later generations considered themselves bound to abide by it. An instance of it is the event which took place during the Governorship of Walid bin 'Utbah bin Abu Sufyan, the nephew of Mu'awiyah, who had been appointed by him as Governor of Madina.

The Chief of the Martyrs, Husayn bin Ali, who never submitted to tyranny throughout his life, developed some differences regarding financial matters with the said Governor of Madina, who always depended on local and central (Syrian) power and used to overcharge.

To destroy the very foundation of injustice and to make others acquainted with their right to get justice administered, Husayn turned to the Governor of Madina and said: "By Allah, whenever you overcharge me I shall put my hand to the sword and shall stand in the Prophet's Masjid and shall invite the people to the agreement which was concluded by their ancestors. From amongst those present Abdullah bin Zubayr got up and repeated the same sentence and incidentally added: "We shall all rise and obtain his right or be killed in this path".

The call of Husayn bin Ali gradually reached the ears of noble-minded persons like Masur bin Mukhramah and Abdur Rahman bin Uthman and all hurried to the sacred door of the Imam saying "Here we are!" The result was that the governor, fearing a revolt, refrained from overcharging.8

1. Nahjul Balaghah, vol. III, page 92.
2. Volume I, page 186. He interprets it in the same manner as explained by us.
3. Nahjul Balaghah, vol. III, page 314.
4. It may be gathered front verse 36 of Surah al-Tawbah that prohibition of war-fare during these four months had a religious origin and the Arabs did not repudiate this prohibition.
5. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. I, 358 - 359 and Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 184.
6. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 134 - 187.
7. Al-Bidayah wal Nihiyah, vol. II, page 292.
8. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. I, pp. 155 - 157.

The Divine guides are charged with a very important and great responsibility. It is a responsibility linked with embarrassment and deprivation, torture and calamities, murder and death; etc. in short with all sorts of hardships and sufferings. And the greater and more sublime their target is, the severer and the graver are the hardships attached to it.

On this account fortitude and forbearance, i.e. patience in the face of all calumnies, accusations, injuries and persecutions, is a pre-condition for the success of Divine leaders, because forbearance and

patience are a real condition at all stages of a campaign for the attainment of their object.

In the history and the narratives relating to the Prophets we come across matters which it is very hard and difficult for us (ordinary human beings) to imagine. We read about Noah that he preached for 950 years and as a result of his campaign and prolonged efforts only eighty one persons expressed their belief in him. In other words in every twelve years he succeeded in bringing only one person to the right path.

The quality of forbearance and patience develops in man only gradually. It is necessary that he should face unpleasant events so that his soul should become fully acquainted with hardships and sufferings.

Before attaining the position of prophethood the Prophets used to spend a part of their lives as shepherds so that they might spend some time in the jungles in bringing up flocks and herds, and thus become patient and forbearing for the education of human beings and might take it easy to bear all hardships and sufferings.

This is so, because when a man is able to bear hardships with reference to an animal which. from the point of view of intellect and wisdom, holds no comparison with human beings, he inevitably accepts responsibility for the guidance of the misguided people, who are essentially prepared to have faith in Allah.

What has been said above is based upon the contents of a tradition wherein it has been said. "Allah has not sent any Prophet who has not been made to tend the flocks as a shepherd so that he may learn how to guide the people.1

The Holy Prophet also spent a part of his life in this manner and most of the writers of 'Seerah' have quoted this sentence from him "All the Prophets have been shepherds for some time before attaining to the position of prophethood". The people asked the Prophet "Have you too been a shepherd?" He replied "Yes. For some time I grazed the sheep of the people of Makkah in Qarareet area".

No doubt it was necessary for the person, who must fight with Abu Jahls and Abu Lahabs, and one who wanted to mould, out of degraded persons, whose common sense and intelligence was at such a level that they bowed before every stone and stick, a set of those, who should not submit to the will of anyone except the Will of Allah, that he should have rehearsed the lesson of forbearance and patience, in different ways, for quite some time.

We think that there was another reason also for the Holy Prophet choosing the pastoral occupation. It was that the sight of unreasonable ways of life of the powerful ones amongst the Quraysh and demonstration of viciousness by them weighed heavily on the mind of this brave and free man; who possessed a great sense of moral dignity.

Besides this, failure of the Makkan society to worship the Almighty and their going round the inanimate

idols was something very unpleasant for an intelligent person. For these reasons the Holy Prophet dissociated himself from that society and spent a part of his life in the jungles and on the slope of the mountains which were naturally located at a distance from that polluted society, so that, for some time at least, he might be relieved of the mental torture caused by the pitiable conditions prevailing in that age.

By observing the beautiful sky and the positions and shape of stars and by reflecting on the plants of the jungle an enlightened person becomes acquainted with hundreds of signs of Divine order and strengthens his natural belief in monotheism with cogent scientific proofs.

The great Prophets, notwithstanding the fact that from the very time of their coming into existence their hearts were illuminated with the glowing torch of monotheism did not consider themselves independent of the need of studying the created beings and the Universe and through this very method they attained to the highest degrees of conviction and faith.

Abu Talib's Proposal

The stringent financial conditions of his nephew prompted Abu Talib, who was himself one of the chiefs of Makkah and noblemen of Quraysh and was famous for his generosity, bravery and magnanimous disposition to arrange for a vocation for him.

He therefore, said to his nephew: "Khadijah, daughter of Khuwaylad is one of the wealthy persons among Quraysh and her trade activities extend to Egypt and Ethiopia. She is on the look out for an honest man who should assume responsibility for her trade, participate on her behalf in the trade caravan of Quraysh and take her merchandise to Syria for sale. O Muhammad! What a good thing it would be if you introduce yourself to her".2

The magnanimity and spiritual excellence of the Prophet did not permit him that he should go to Khadijah direct, without any acquaintance, and in the absence of any request from her, and make such a proposal.

He, therefore, replied to his uncle: "It is possible that Khadijah may herself send someone to me'. He said so, because he knew that he was well-known amongst the people as an 'honest' person. And the same thing did happen. When Khadijah came to know about their conversation she at once sent someone to the Prophet saying: "The thing which has inspired my regard for you is your truthfulness, honesty and good morals. I am prepared to give you double of what I give to others and shall also send along with you two slaves, who will obey you in all circumstances".3

The Prophet related this thing to his uncle and the latter said "This offer is a source of your livelihood which Almighty Allah has bestowed upon you"

The caravan of Quraysh, which included the merchandise of Khadijah, got ready to move. Khadijah placed an easy-paced camel, a quantity of costly goods and two slaves at the disposal of her agent and

ordered the slaves to be very respectful to him at all stages, never to object to what he did, and to obey him in all circumstances.

Eventually the caravan reached its destination and all its members made profit. However, the profit made by the Prophet was comparatively more than that made by others and he also purchased certain things for being sold in the market-place of Tahamah.

After making a successful trip to Syria the caravan of Quraysh returned to Makkah. During this journey the Prophet once again passed through the land of Ad and Samud. The silence of death which prevailed over the environments of that unruly nation invited his attention more and more to the other worlds.

Moreover, the memories of the previous journey were also revived. He recollected the days when he had traversed those very deserts along with his uncle. The caravan of Quraysh drew near Makkah. Addressing the Prophet the slave named Maysarah said, "It will be better if you enter Makkah before us and inform Khadijah about the affairs of trade and the extraordinary profit which we have made this year'.

The Prophet entered Makkah at a time when Khadijah was sitting in her upper chamber. She ran down to receive him and took him into the chamber. The Prophet narrated, in a sweet manner, the matters relating to the merchandise. In the meantime Maysarah also arrived.4

The slave of Khadijah (Maysarah) narrated to her exactly all that he had seen during the journey and all of which testified to the greatness and spirituality of Muhammad, 'the honest one'. He told her inter alia that during the journey 'the honest one' differed with a merchant about some matter.

That man told him that he would accept his word if he swore by 'Lat' and 'Uzza' but the honest one said to him in reply. "I consider Lat and Uzza, whom you worship, to be the meanest and most despicable things on the face of the earth".5

Maysara also added that in Busra 'the honest one' sat under a tree to take rest. In the meantime, a monk, who was sitting in his monastery, chanced to see him. He came and enquired about his name and then said "This man who is sitting under the shade of the tree is the very Prophet about whom I have read many good tidings in the Taurat and the Injeel".6

Khadijah – The First Lady Of Islam

Till that time the financial and economic conditions of the Prophet had not improved and he still needed financial help from his uncle, Abu Talib. His business matters were apparently not so firm as yet that he should choose a wife and set up a family.

His last journey to Syria, and that, too, in the capacity of the agent and representative of a wealthy and well-known lady of Quraysh (Khadijah) stabilised his financial and economic condition to some extent.

His courage and skill attracted the admiration of Khadijah and she expressed her willingness to pay him, as a prize, something over and above the settled amount. However, the Prophet accepted only that remuneration which had been agreed upon originally. He then proceeded to the house of Abu Talib and handed over to him all that he had earned, so as to ensure some relief for his uncle.

Abu Taiib had been waiting impatiently for his nephew who was the souvenir of his father (Abdul Muttalib) and his brother Abdullah. Tears trickled down his eyes as soon as he saw him. He was, nevertheless, very much pleased to learn about his business activities arid the profit that he had made, and expressed his willingness to place two horses and two camels at his disposal so that he could continue his business. As regards the money which he had earned during the said journey and had handed over to his uncle, he (Abu Talib) decided to utilize it for choosing a wife for his nephew.

In these conditions the Holy Prophet decided to choose a spouse for himself. The question, however, is as to how the lot fell upon Khadijah who had previously rejected the proposals of the most wealthy and influential men of Quraysh, like Uqbah bin Abi Mu'it, Abu Jahl and Abu Sufyan.

What were the causes which brought together these two persons who were absolutely different from each other from the point of view of their respective lives, and which created such cordial relations, love and spiritual cohesion between them that Khadijah put her entire wealth at the disposal of Muhammad, and spent her wealth, which she gained from her business which extended upto Egypt and Ethiopia in the path of monotheism and for the exaltation of truth? And how was it that the house which was full of chairs studded with ivory and pearls and decorated with Indian silks and Iranian brocade curtains eventually became an asylum for the Muslims?

The causes of these events should be ascertained from the life history of Khadijah. However, the thing which is indisputable is that services, indulgence and self-sacrifice of this kind cannot certainly become permanent unless they have a firm, pure and spiritual origin.

Pages of history testify that this marriage was the outcome of the faith of Khadijah in the piety, chastity, virtue and honesty of the Holy Prophet, the dear one of Quraysh, and the life history of Khadijah and narrations about her attainments make this fact abundantly clear.

As she was a chaste and virtuous woman she wished to marry a pious and virtuous husband, and it was for this reason that the Holy Prophet said about her "Khadijah is one of the honourable ladies of Paradise". And the first woman who expressed faith in Muhammad was Khadijah. Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, while describing, in one of his sermons, the pitiful condition of Islam in the early days of the prophetic mission of the Holy Prophet says "There was then no Muslim family except the family consisting of Muhammad, and his wife Khadijah. and I was its third member".

Ibne Athir says that a merchant named Afif came in Masjidul Harem and was very much surprised to observe the gathering there, and worship by a group consisting of three persons. He saw that the Holy Prophet was offering prayers along with Khadijah and Ali. On his return from the Masjid he met Abbas,

the uncle of the Prophet. He told him what he had seen and inquired about the factual position. Abbas said to him, "The leader amongst those three persons is claimant of Prophethood and the woman is his wife Khadijah and the third person is my nephew Ali". Then he added, "I am not aware of any person on the face of the earth who should be a follower of this religion except these three".

It is beyond the scope of this book to explain and quote the narratives which have come down about the excellence of Khadijah. It would, therefore, be better that we should explain the causes which occasioned this historical event (i.e. marriage of Muhammad and Khadija).

The Patent and Latent Causes of The Marriage

Materialists, who study everything from the materialistic point of view, imagine that as Khadijah was rich and a trades-woman, she was very much in need of an honest person in connection with her commercial affairs and she, therefore, married Muhammad; and as Muhammad was also aware of her respectable position he consented to her request, although there was disparity in their ages.

However, history tells us that Khadijah was prompted to marry Muhammad the 'honest man' of Quraysh owing to a series of spiritual causes, and this union had no material aspect. Evidence in support of our claim is as follows:

1. When Khadijah enquired from Maysarah about the incidents related to the journey of the Prophet he narrated to her the miracles which he had seen from him and also what he had heard from the monk of Syria. Khadijah felt excessive emotion within herself, which had its origin in her interest in the spirituality of Muhammad and she said to Maysarah involuntarily "Maysarah! That will do. You have doubled my interest in Muhammad. I hereby set you and your wife free and also place at your disposal two hundred dirhams. two horses and a costly dress ".

Thereafter she narrated what she had heard from Maysarah to Waraqah bin Nawfal, who was a sage of Arabia, and he said: "One who possesses these attributes is the Arabian Prophet".7

2. One day Khadijah was seated in her house while her bonds-women and slaves encircled her. One of the Jewish scholars was also present. By chance the Prophet passed that way and the Jewish scholar saw him. He at once requested Khadijah to insist upon Muhammad that he should postpone his task and join that party for a few moments. The Prophet accepted the request of the Jewish sage, which was based on observation of the signs of prophethood in his person.

Khadijah then turned to the Jewish sage and said "When his uncles will become aware of your investigation and inquisitiveness they will display an adverse reaction, because they are afraid of the Jews about their nephew". The Jewish sage then replied: "How can it be possible that anyone should harm Muhammad, when the hand of destiny has reared him up for the last prophethood and for the guidance of the people?" Khadijah said: "On what authority do you say that he will come to hold this

position?"

He replied: "I have read the signs of the last Prophet in the Taurat. His signs include three things that is his parents will die, his grandfather and uncle will support him, and he will choose for his spouse a woman, who will be the lady of Quraysh". Then he pointed to Khadijah and said: "Blessed is she who has the honour of being his life-mate".8

3. Waraqah, uncle of Khadijah, was one of the sages of Arabia. He had thorough knowledge of the Bible and used to say time and again: "A man will be raised by Allah from amongst Quraysh for the guidance of the people and he shall marry one of the richest ladies of Quraysh". And as Khadijah was the richest woman of Quraysh he occasionally said to her: "A day will come when you will marry the noblest man on earth!"

4. One night Khadijah dreamt that the sun revolved above Makkah and then descended slowly and landed in her house. She related her dream to Waraqah bin Nawfal and he interpreted it thus: "You will marry a great man and he will become renowned throughout the world".

These are the incidents which have been quoted by some historians and by late Allamah Majlisi9 and have also been recorded in many history books. When all of them are taken into account they make crystal clear the reasons for the inclination of Khadijah towards the Prophet. This inclination was mostly due to her belief in the spirituality of the Prophet and the fact that the 'honest one' was more suitable for her business than others had no bearing on the consummation of this union.

Circumstances of Khadijah's Suit

This much is admitted that the proposal originated from the side of Khadijah herself; so much so that Ibn Hisham quotes10 that Khadijah expressed her inclination personally and said: "Cousin! On account of the relationship which exists between us and the greatness and respect which you enjoy amongst your people and the honesty, good manners and truthfulness which you evidently possess, I am earnestly inclined to marry you". The 'honest man' of Quraysh replied "I must inform my uncles about this and this task should be accomplished with their approval".

Most of the historians believe that Nafisah, daughter of 'Alyah conveyed the proposal of Khadijah to the Prophet in the following manner:

She said, "O Muhammad! Why don't you illuminate the night-chamber of your life with the light of a spouse? Will you respond favourably if I invite you to beauty, wealth, gentleness and respect?" The Prophet said "What do you mean?" She then mentioned Khadijah.

The Prophet said, "Is Khadijah prepared for this, when there is a world of difference between the conditions of my life and of hers?" Nafisah said, "I hold authority on her behalf and shall make her agree. You should fix a date for the purpose so that her agent ('Amr bin Asad) may sit along with you and your

kinsfolk and the ceremonies of marriage and rejoicing may be accomplished.11

The Holy Prophet talked about the matter with his honourable uncle (Abu Talib). A grand party consisting of distinguished persons amongst Quraysh was organized. In the first instance Abu Talib delivered a sermon, commencing it with praise for Allah. As regards his nephew, he introduced him thus "My nephew Muhammad bin Abdullah is superior to any man of the tribe of Quraysh with whom he may be compared. Although he lacks every sort of wealth, yet wealth is a passing shadow, and origin and lineage is something permanent.12

As Abu .Talib had made in his sermon a mention of Quraysh and the family of Hashim, Waraqah, uncle of Khadijah said in reply "None amongst Quraysh denies your excellence. We earnestly wish to hold the string of your nobility. The marriage ceremony was then performed and the dowry was fixed at four hundred dinars. Some say that the dowry was twenty camels.

Age of Khadijah: It is usually said that at the time of marriage with the Prophet, Khadijah was forty years old and was born fifteen years before the 'Year of the Elephant'. However, some writers have mentioned that her age at the time of marriage was lesser than this. Previously she had married twice. The names of her husbands were 'Ais bin Abid and Abu Halah and both of them had died.

1. Safinatul Bihar, root word nabi.
2. Biharul Anwar, vol. XVI, page 22
3. Seerah Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 24
4. al-Khara'ij, page 186 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XVI, page 4.
5. Tabaqat-i Kubra, page 140
6. Biharul Anwar, vol. XV, page 18.
7. Seerah-i ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 26.
8. Biharul Anwar, vol. XVI, page 19.
9. Biharul Anwar, vol. VI, page 124.
10. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 204.
11. It is well-known that Khuwaylid, the father of Khadijah was killed in a Fujjar Battle and for this reason her uncle authorized marriage on her behalf. Thus the view, recorded by some historians that in the first instance Khuwaylid was not agreeable, but later he agreed, owing to the severe inclination of Khadijah, is baseless.
12. Manaqib, vol. I, page 30 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XV, page 6.

The most sensitive period of the life of a person begins when he (or she) comes of age. It is so because at this time the sexual instincts attain perfection, the sensual self inspires passions in one's head every moment, the storm of lust darkens the atmosphere of human intellect, the foundation of the rule of material instincts becomes more firm and as a result of all this the lamp of wisdom becomes dim. During day and night and time and again a grand palace of desires assumes a concrete form before the eyes of the grown up person.

In case, at such time, someone also possesses wealth, life for him becomes something very dangerous.

When animal instincts and good health and material opportunities and enormous wealth of a man are united the result is that they make the program of his life full of lustful activities and he is saturated with concupiscible desires without any care for future.

This period is called the frontier of prosperity and adversity, and one rarely succeeds in determining the other route for oneself and in selecting, with the hope of acquiring good habits and pure mentality, a path which may keep one safe from all dangers.

In such circumstances it is a very difficult task to take care of oneself and in case the person concerned has not been brought up and educated properly in family environments one should only wait for the collapse of the structure of life.

Manhood of The Holy Prophet

There is no doubt about the fact that the Prophet was brave, strong and healthy, because he had been brought up in taintless environments, and all members of the family in which he was born possessed elements of heroism and bravery. The huge wealth of Khadijah was also at his disposal and all means of comfortable life were available to him.

However, it should be seen as to how he utilized these material resources. Did he choose a life of pleasure and did he resort to the satisfaction of his passions like other young men? Or that notwithstanding all these means and resources, he selected another program which fully revealed the background of his sensitive life?

History bears testimony to the fact that he led his life like wise and experienced men. He always avoided profligacy and recklessness and signs of prudence and reflection were ever apparent in his countenance. To remain away from the corruption of the society he spent a good deal of his time in caves situated at the feet of the mountains and studied the signs of Divine power and reflected upon the creation of the Universe.

Sentiments of His Manhood

An incident which took place in the bazaar of Makkah wounded the human sentiments of the Prophet. He saw a person gambling. Unfortunately the man lost his camel as well as his residential house in the game. And not only this but he also staked and lost ten years of his life. The Prophet was so much moved by this incident that he did not stay in Makkah that day.

He, therefore, went away to the nearby hills and returned home after a part of the night had passed. He was moved to observe such sad spectacles and reflected on and wondered at the lack of wisdom and intelligence of those misguided people.

Before Khadijah married the Prophet Muhammad, her house was the center of the hopes of the needy

people. And even after her marriage with the Prophet she did not allow even the slightest change to take place in the condition of her house or in the munificence and generosity of her spouse.

During the periods of famine and drought the Prophet's foster-mother Halimah came at times to see her son. The Prophet then used to spread his cloak under her feet, recollected her kind sentiments and the simple life which he had spent with her and listened to what she said. At the time of her departure he helped her with as much as he could afford.1

His Children from Khadijah

Birth of a child further cements the bond of matrimony and makes life bright and brilliant. The Prophet's wife bore him six children. Two of them were sons – the elder one being Qasim and the younger one Abdullah. They are also called Tayyib and Tahir. She also gave birth to four daughters.

Ibne Hisham writes: 'Their eldest daughter was Ruqayyah and the other three were Zaynab, Umme Kulsum and Fatimah'. The male children died before Muhammad was appointed to the prophetic mission, but the daughters continued to live.'2

Self-control of the Holy Prophet in the face of calamitous happenings was proverbial. However at the time of the death of his children the sentiments of his heart sometimes appeared from his eyes in the shape of tears which trickled down to his cheeks and this matter became more evident at the time of the death or Ibrahim, whose mother was Mariyah.

At that time, while his heart was grief-stricken, the Prophet was busy praising Allah with his tongue. So much so that an Arab, owing to his ignorance and lack of knowledge about the fundamentals of Islam, objected to the weeping of the Prophet. The Prophet, however, said: "Weeping of this kind is a blessing". 3

Unfounded Guess

Dr Haikal writes: "There is no denying the fact that at the time of the death of each of her children Khadijah approached the idols and asked as to why the gods were not pleased to bless her". 4

The above statement is not supported even by the most insignificant historical evidence and is nothing more than a mere guess. Its purpose is to give the impression that as, during her time, all were idolaters, Khadijah too was, certainly, like them.

However, Shi'ah belief is opposed to this statement and naturally the factual position, too, should be as believed by Shi'ah. The reason for this is that the Prophet undoubtedly hated idol-worship from his very youth and the position became quite clear during his journey to Syria. For, when he developed some differences with a merchant with regard to accounts and the opposite part swore by Lat and 'Uzza the Prophet said, "These are the very things which are most despicable in my eyes!"

In the circumstances how can it be said that a woman like Khadijah, whose regard and love for her husband was unquestionable, should run to the idols (who were the most despicable things in the eyes of her husband) at the time of the death of her children.

Moreover, the cause of her inclination towards Muhammad and of her entering into matrimonial alliance with him was that she admired his habits and spirituality, as she had heard that he was the last of the Prophets. In these conditions how can it be possible that she should go and complain to the idols in the matter?

We have already narrated for the readers some of her conversations with Waraqah bin Nawfal (the Arab fortune-teller) as well as with other scholarly persons of that time.

Adopted Son of The Prophet of Islam

The Prophet of Islam called Zayd bin Harith as his son by the side of the Black Stone. Zayd was the person whom the Arab bandits had captured from the frontiers of Syria and had sold him in the market-place of Makkah to Hakim, a relative of Khadijah. It is not, however, clear as to how it so happened that later he was purchased by Khadijah.

The author of 'Hayat-i Muhammad' says "The Prophet had felt the death of his sons very much and, in order to console himself, had asked Khadijah to purchase Zayd. Later the Prophet freed him and adopted him as his own son".

Majority of the writers, however, say that at the time of Khadijah's marriage with the Prophet, Hakim bin Hizam presented him (Zayd) to his aunt (Khadijah). As he (Zayd) was a virtuous and intelligent young man in all respects the Prophet developed a liking for him and Khadijah too made a gift of him to the Prophet.

At last, however, Zayd's father located his whereabouts after continuous inquiries. At that time the Prophet permitted Zayd to go away with his father. However, in view of the love and kindness of the Prophet for him, Zayd preferred to stay on with him. It was on this account that the Prophet freed him, adopted him as his son; and married him to Zaynab, daughter of Jahash. 5

Beginning of Differences Among The Idolaters

With the appointment of the Prophet to the prophetic mission deep differences appeared among the Quraysh, though the foundation of these differences had been laid a long time ago and, even before the appointment of the Prophet to prophethood, a number of wise men had expressed their dislike and aversion for the religion of the Arabs. There was always a talk in every nook and cranny about the expected Arabian Prophet, who was to revive the practice of worship of One Allah.

The Jews used to say: "As the foundation of our religion as well as that of the Arabian Prophet is the

same, we shall follow him and, with the help of his strength, shall break the idols and destroy the edifice of idol-worship.

Ibne Hisham says in his Seerah6 "The Jews used to threaten the idolatrous Arabs saying that the time of the appearance of the Arabian Prophet was approaching fast and he would destroy the edifice of idol-worship.

These words presented before the eyes of the Arabs the scene of the overthrow of the era of idol-worship. So much so that, on account of the previous preachings of the Jews, some tribes responded to the call of the Holy Prophet and embraced Islam. However, for reasons, which will be explained later, the Jews continued to persist in their infidelity. The following verse of the Holy Qur'an points to the same position:

Now that a book (***the Qur'an confirming their own Taurat***) ***has come to them from Allah, they deny it, although they know it to be the truth and have long prayed for help against the disbelievers*** (***through the new religion and the new Book***)***. May Allah's curse be upon the infidels!"*** (**Surah al-Baqarah, verse 89**)*.*

The Foundations of Idol-Worship Shake

At the time of the celebration of one of the festivals of Quraysh there occurred a strange incident, which in the eyes of the deep-sighted people, tolled the bell of danger of overthrow of the rule of idol-worshippers.

Once, when the idolaters had gathered round an idol and were rubbing their foreheads on earth before it, four of their distinguished persons, who were famous for their learning and wisdom, disapproved of their action and held discussions on the subject in a secluded place. One of the points discussed by them was that their nation had deviated from the path of Ibrahim; and the stones, round which the people were going, could neither hear, nor see nor do any good or evil. 7

These four persons consisted of
(1) Waraqah bin Nawfal, who, after deep study, came within the circle of the Christians and gained extensive knowledge of the Bible,
(2) Abdullah bin Johash, who became a Muslim after the advent of Islam and migrated to Ethiopia along with other Muslims,
(3) Uthman bin Huwayris, who went to the Roman court and embraced Christianity, and
(4) Zayd bin 'Amr bin Nafil, who, after extensive study, chose the religion of Ibrahim for himself.

Another Weakness of Quraysh

The Holy Prophet was not yet more than thirty five years of age when he had to witness a grave dispute

among the Quraysh, which was solved with his capable hand. The following incident shows the extent to which he was respected and admitted to be honest and truthful by Quraysh:

A terrible flood flowed down from the high mountains towards the House of Allah, and consequent upon it none of the houses of Makkah, not even the Holy Ka'bah remained safe from the damage caused by it. Many cracks appeared in the walls of the Ka'bah. Quraysh decided to reconstruct the Ka'bah, but were afraid of demolishing it.

Walid bin Mughayrah was the first person who took a pick in his hand and pulled down two pillars of the sanctuary. He was then feeling very much frightened and nervous. The people of Makkah were awaiting something to befall, but when they saw that Walid had not been subjected to the wrath of the idols they became confident that his actions had the approval of the idols.

As a result of this all of them joined in demolishing the building. By chance on that very day, a boat which was coming from Egypt and belonged to a Roman merchant capsized near Makkah (Jeddah) following a violent storm. Quraysh came to know about this incident. They therefore, sent some persons to Jeddah to purchase the planks of the boat for the construction of the Ka'bah. As regards masonry work they entrusted the same to a Copt mason, who resided in Makkah.

The walls of the Ka'bah became as high as the stature of a man. And now arrived the time for the installation of the Black Stone at its appropriate place. At this stage differences arose among the chiefs of the tribes and the tribes of Bani Abduddar and Bani Adi concluded an agreement that they would not allow anyone else to enjoy this honour. In order to strengthen the agreement they filled a container with blood and put their hands into it.

Owing to this development the construction work remained suspended for five days. The matters had reached a very critical stage. Different groups of Quraysh had gathered in the Masjidul Haram and a bloody encounter seemed imminent. At last, however, a respectable old gentleman from amongst Quraysh named Abu Umayyah bin Mughayrah Makhzumi made the chiefs of Quraysh assemble and said to them "Accept as arbitrator the person who first enters through the Gate of Safa (according to some history books Babus Salam)". All agreed to this.

Suddenly the Holy Prophet entered the Masjid from that gate. All said in unison; "It is Muhammad, the honest one. We agree to his acting as the arbitrator!" In order to settle the dispute the Holy Prophet asked them to bring a piece of cloth.

He placed the Black Stone on the cloth with his own hands then suggested that every one of the four chiefs of Makkah should hold one corner of the cloth. When the Black Stone was brought near the pillar the Holy Prophet placed it at its proper place with his own auspicious hands. In this way he brought to an end the dispute of Quraysh which was at the verge of occasioning bloody accidents. 8

1. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. I, page 123.

2. Manaqib Ibn Shehr Ashob, vol. I, page 140; Qurbul Asnad, pp. 6 and 7; al-Khisa'il, vol. II, page 37; Biharul Anwar, vol. XXII, pp. 151 – 152. Some historians say that the Prophet's male children were more than two. (Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 35 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XXII, page 166).
3. Amali, Shaykh, page 247.
4. Hayat-i Muhammad, page 186.
5. al-Isaba, vol. I, page 545; Usudul Ghabah, vol. II, page 224.
6. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 231.
7. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 222 – 223.
8. Habirah bin Wahab Makhzumi has versified this incident in a panegyric written by him. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, 213, Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, Furu'-i Kafi, vol. I, page 225, and Bihar, vol. XV, pp. 39 – 41. It is worth noting that at the time of the reconstruction of the Ka'bah it was notified to all concerned as under: "In the reconstruction of the Ka'bah spend only lawfully acquired property. Money which you have earned by improper means or by usury or oppression should not be spent for this purpose". Undoubtedly this thinking was the very sediment of the teachings of the Prophets which had still survived among Quraysh.

In fact the history of Islam commences basically from the day the Holy Prophet was appointed to the prophetic mission and brings a chain of incidents in its wake. The day the Holy Prophet was entrusted the task of guiding the people and the words "You are the Messenger of Allah" were ringing in his ears, he assumed an onerous responsibility –the same great responsibility which was shouldered by all previous Prophets.

On that day the policy of the 'honest one' of Quraysh became clearly known and his aim became more obvious. Before narrating the first incidents of the Prophethood of Muhammad it is essential that we should explain the following two matters

1. Necessity for the appointment of Prophets.

2. Influence of Prophets on the reformation of society.

Necessity for the appointment of Prophets

The Almighty Allah has infused means of development and perfection in the nature of every being and has equipped it with various facilities for traversing the path to perfection. Just cast a glance at a small plant. A large number of factors are active for its perfection. The roots of the plant operate to the maximum extent to provide it with the nutritious material and meet all its needs, and the various vessels distribute equitably the alimentary juice among all its branches and leaves.

Look at a flower, whose structure is more wonderful than that of other vegetables. The bowl of the flower performs the duty of covering the surface of the buds and of protecting the petals and corolla of the flower.

Similar is the case with the remaining mechanisms of the flower, all of which have been appointed for the nourishment of an animate being and perform their duty in the best possible manner. And if you take

a step forward and cast a glance at the astonishing structure of the animal world you will see the factors which make them reach the bounds of perfection exist with them.

If we wish to state this matter in scientific terms we would say that intuition for existence, which is a universal blessing of the mechanism of nature, has been endowed upon all created things. The Holy Qur'an has explained this real guidance in theses words: ***"He created every being and taught it how to live"***.

All creatures, right from the atom upto the great galaxies of the universe, have had their share of this common blessing. After taking complete measurement the Almighty has indicated the path of their gradual perfection and development and has specified factors for the training and evolution of everyone. And this is the very 'general guidance for existence' which rules the entire creation of the Universe without any exception.

However, the question arises whether this natural urge for existence is sufficient also for that creature, which is the pick of the basket. Certainly not. The reason for this is that man also possesses, besides his material life, another life which is the very base of his existence. If a man had to live only a material and brainless life, like the fauna and flora, the material factor would have been sufficient for his speed, advancement and perfection. As, however, he happens to have two kinds of life; the secret of his prosperity and exaltation lies in the perfection of both of them.

The first simple human being, who lived in caves and possessed a pure nature, and in whose natural disposition not the least deviation had taken place, did not need as much training as is required by the social man.

However, when man takes a step forward and transforms his life into a collective one and the idea of co-operation is firmly rooted in his life and dominates it, deviations, which are incidental to social collisions and contacts, appear in his soul and bad habits and wrong ideas replace the pivot of natural thinking and upset the equilibrium and balance of the society.

These deviations make the Creator of the world send educators to adjust the society and to reduce the evils which are the direct result of men living collectively, so that they may, with luminous torches and just laws, lead the society to the right path, which ensures all-round prosperity of the people.

It goes without saying that living collectively, notwithstanding its being useful, also carries some evils in its lap and brings about numerous deviations. For this reason the Almighty Allah has sent preceptors so that they may, as far as possible, diminish deviations and perverseness and put the wheels of the society on the right track by introducing clear laws. 1

Role of Prophets on the reformation of society

Usually it is imagined that the Prophets are divine teachers who are appointed to educate the people. People learn in the school of the Prophets and their social ways and manners are directed towards gradual perfection in a direction parallel with the teachings of those noble beings. It is just like a boy who learns a good deal during the course of his studies in the primary school, the middle school, the college and the university and moves forward, day after day, althoough on the first day he did not have the least impression of these teachings on his mind.

Similarly the people receive knowledge from the school of the Prophets, and side by side with their learning from the Prophets, their manners and social ways gain perfection. We, however, feel that the Prophets are the instructors of the people. Their business and duty is to train them and not to educate them and that the basis of their religion and laws vis-a-vis natural perception is not something fresh or a new present. And if nature had not deviated and if ignorance and avarice had not overtaken it, it would have perceived the essence of the Divine law.

Of course, what has been said above has been based on the words of the great leaders of Islam. Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful says thus in Nahjul Balaghah about the aim of the Prophets: "He selected Prophets from amongst the descendants of Adam and obtained a promise from them to convey the revelations to the people and to spread the mission with which they had been entrusted. He sent them to demand from the people to fulfil their natural promise and recollect the forgotten blessings. Moreover, by their preachings they (the Prophets) should present the people with an ultimatum and to ask them to extract the gems of wisdom which have remained hidden in the treasures of their nature".

A Patent Example

When we assert that the duty performed by the Prophets in the matter of training and reformation of the people is the same as performed by the gardener with regard to the rearing of a plant or when we say that for guiding the people and opening their natural perceptions, the Prophets are like a minerologist who extracts precious minerals from the core of the mountains, we do not say something extravagant.

It may be explained in this way: From the very first stage of the formation of its nucleus a plant possesses every kind of capacity for development, growth and maturity. As soon as this plant begins to become active with the strengthening of its roots, the operation of different pharmaceutical mechanisms in open air and the acquisition of sufficient light, a movement appears in its entire being. At this stage the gardener is required to do two things.

Firstly he has to make necessary conditions available for the strengthening of roots so that the latent vigour of the plant should develop. Secondly he has to restrain the deviations, so that as and when the internal energy of the plant takes a step, which prevents its thriving he should clip it. Hence it is not for the gardener to cause the plant to grow. On the contrary his duty is to provide and ensure necessary

conditions so that the plant should divulge its latent perfection.

The Creator or the Universe created man and endowed him with numerous innate energies and tendencies. He moulded his (man's) natural disposition with the light of monotheism and the worship of the Almighty as well as with the sense of equity, justice and compassion and the instinct of work and effort. These seeds begin growing automatically in the heart of man.

However, his social life brings about deviations in him. The instinct of work and effort assumes the shape of greed and avarice, the love for prosperity and life appears in the guise of selfishness and ambition, and the light of monotheism and His worship assumes the garb of idolatry.

In such circumstances the Messengers of Allah provide man with the light of revelation and the programme containing true conditions for growth and development, and balance the deviations and transgressions of instincts.

As you have observed, the Commander of the Faithful has said "At the time of the commencement of creation the Creator obtained a promise which is called the 'promise of creation' or the 'testament of creation and nature'.

What is the object of this promise of creation? Its object is that the Almighty Allah, after giving the people hundreds of useful instincts and by mixing with their disposition scores of decent manners, took a natural promise from them that they would follow good instincts and morals.For example, His giving the eyes to man amounts to a sort of taking promise from him that he would not fall in a well.

Similarly giving the sense of recognition of Allah and that of doing justice etc. amounts to obtaining a promise from him that he would be pious and just. The duty of the Prophets is that they should persuade the people to act according to the testament of existence and to tear asunder the inauspicious veil which is put over his nature. It is for this reason that it is said that the foundation of heavenly religions is shaped by natural matters.

You might say that man is like a mountain which has precious stones and gold atoms hidden in it, just as virtues, knowledge and morals are hidden in human nature in different shapes. When the Prophets and the spiritualists look minutely into the mountain of our soul they find that it has been kneaded into a number of high qualities and pure mentality and sentiments.

Then they turn it back to the exigencies of nature by means of their teachings and programmes. They remind it the commandments of nature and conscience. They invite the attention of man to the qualities and the personality which is hidden within himself.

The 'Honest One' Of Quraysh in The Hira Mountain

The Hira mountain is situated in the north of Makkah and one can reach its summit within half an hour.

The surface at this mountain consists of slabs of black stone and no signs of life are found in it. In its northern point there is a cave which can be approached by man after crossing the stones. Its height is about as much as the stature of a man. Sunlight penetrates into a part of this cave and its remaining part is always dark.

However. this very cave is a witness to such incidents about its close friend that even today people hasten to it with an ardent desire to hear about these incidents from its mute language and to reach its threshold, after undergoing many hardships, so as to enquire from it about the incident of 'revelation', as well as about a part of the life history of that great benefactor of mankind. And the cave also replies in its mute language:

"This is the place of worship by the honourable one of Quraish. Before he attained to the office of prophethood he spent here many days and many nights. He had selected this spot, which was away from uproar, for the purpose of prayers and worship. He spent the entire month of Ramadan here, and at other times also he took asylum in this locality every now and then. So much so that his dear wife knew that as and when he did not come home he must be busy in prayers on the mountain of Hira. And when she sent people after him they found him meditating and praying at this place".

Before he attained to the office of prophethood he used to reflect much upon two matters:

1. He studied thoroughly the book of existence and observed the luminositv, power and workmanship of Allah in the features of every existing thing. By conducting deep study of the skies and the stars and prudently considering the creatures on earth he was approaching nearer to his target day after day.

2. He meditated upon the onerous responsibility which, he knew, he had to shoulder. With all the corruption and deterioration of the human society of the that day, he did not consider its reformation to be something impossible. However, the enforcement of reformatory programme, too, was not devoid of difficulties and hardship. Hence, he observed the tumultuous life of the Makkans and the voluptuousness of Quraysh and reflected upon the ways and means of their reformation.

He wondered at the people worshipping the lifeless and ineffective idols and showing humility before them and signs of discomfort appeared in his face. However, as he had not been ordained to mention the realities, he refrained from pointing them out to those people.

Commencement of Revelation

An angel was appointed by Allah to recite a few verses to the 'honest one' of Quraysh by way of prelude and introduction to the Book of guidance and welfare, so as to bestow honour upon him by providing him with the garment of prophethood. The angel was the Archangel Jibreel himself and the particular day was the day of Muhammad's appointment to the office of prophethood. We shall speak about the determination of that day later.

There is no doubt about the fact that to confront an angel requires special preparedness. Unless the soul of a person is great and strong, he cannot bear the burden of prophethood, nor can he endure a meeting with an angel. The 'honest one' of Quraysh had acquired such preparedness by means of prolonged prayers, excessive meditations and the blessings of Allah, and as stated by numerous writers of 'Seerah', the Prophet saw, even before his appointment to the prophetic mission, dreams and visions, which were really as clear as daylight.

After some time the most delightful hours for him were those during which he prayed in seclusion. His days were passing in this manner till, on the particular day, an angel paced a tablet by his side and said: 'Recite'. And the Prophet on account of the fact that he was unlettered and had not learnt to read and write, replied that he was unable to read. The Archangel Jibreel pressed him severely and then asked him to recite.

However, he repeated the same reply. The angel again pressed him severely. This action was repeated thrice and after the third pressure he suddenly felt within himself that he could read the writing on the tablet held by the angel. He then read the following verses which are infact reckoned to be the introduction of the Book of human welfare:

Recite in the name of your Lord who created (***all things***).

He created man from a clot of blood! Recite, your Lord is the Most Bountiful One, Who by the pen taught man what he did not know. (**Surah al-Alaq, 96 1- 5**)

Archangel Jibreel accomplished his assignment and after the revelation the Prophet also descended the mountain of Hira and proceeded towards Khadijah's house. 2

The above verses clearly indicate the programme of the Holy Prophet in a nutshell, and tell in obvious terms that the foundation of his religion is provided by recitation and reading, learning and wisdom and use of pen.

The World as Viewed by a Materialist

The ever-increasing development of natural sciences has taken away from many scholars the power of going deep into some spiritual matters which are beyond the limits of the pen and the natural sciences and has bounded the light of their thinking. They imagine that this material world is the only world and anything other than matter is nothing. According to them everything not linked with material laws is fictitious and false.

It goes without saying that these scholars do not possess the least evidence about the non-existence of the other work from which revelation and inspiration emanate. All that they say is this "Experimentation, perception and natural science, do not guide us to this (i.e., the other world) and do not provide us with information about its existence.

For example, while denying the existence of the abstract soul, they say "Such a being is not seen under the knife of our own analysis and the trace of such beings is not found in our laboratories under the microscope and consequently, as our present tools do not guide us to them, they must not necessarily have an external existence "

This way of thinking is very limited, defective and mixed with vanity, whereby 'non–existence' has been concluded or account of 'lack of consciousness' and, as the tools available with the materialists do not extend to the realities in which those scholars believe who worship Allah, they (materialists) infer that they are all baseless.

There is no doubt about the fact that the materialists have not been able to realise the truth of what the religious scholars hold even in regard to the existence of the Creator, not to speak of other metaphysical matters. And it appears that if the two groups undertake discussions in a suitable atmosphere, free from spite and prejudice, the distance between materialism and Divinity will vanish quickly and the differences which have divided the scholars into two groups will disappear.

Those who worship Allah have adduced scores of proofs regarding the existence of the Almighty and have proved that these very natural sciences have guided them towards the Omnipotent and the wonderful system which governs the interior and the exterior of all beings is in itself a clear proof of the existence of its Creator. All things in the Universe, right from the Milky Way upto an atom, are advancing in accordance with a chain of regular laws and it is not at all possible that a blind and deaf nature should originate and establish such a wonderful system.

And it is this very argument of the 'good order of the Universe' which is the basis of scores of books and pamphlets published by the religious scholars. And as this argument is understandable and utilisable by different classes, most of the writings of a general nature have been based on it and everyone has relied on it in one way or the other.

As regards other arguments which are not of a general nature the same have been discussed in detail in philosophical and scholastic treatises. These books contain arguments and narrations regarding the abstract soul and metaphysics. We should like to refer to them in the following lines.

The Abstract Soul

Belief in 'soul' is one of the complicated and difficult problems which have attracted the attention of scholars. Those who want to subject everything to analysis have denied its existence and believe only in that soul which has a material aspect and works under the control of physical laws.

Existence of incorporeal spirit is one of the problems which has been studied minutely by those who worship the Almighty and believe in spiritual matters and they have adduced many proofs about the existence of such a non–material being which, if studied in a proper atmosphere, linked with perfect

acquaintance with the principles of Divine reasoning, stand

totally vindicated. And whatever the godly scholars say about the angels, soul, revelation and inspiration is based on cogent and convincing arguments. 3

Magnetic Sleep (Hypnotism)

It is possible that those who wish to understand everything by means of practical testing and experimentation may refer to numerous writings published on the subject of hypnotism. One of the founders of this branch of knowledge was a German physician, Mesmer by name. It was two centuries ago that he originated this art and with the passage of time his views are being confirmed by the scholars.

He trained some such persons as were suited, on account of their temperament and mind, to be hypnotised (to go into a state resembling sleep). He was successful in hypnotising, in the presence of many scholars, the same persons on whom he had conducted experiments previously. He released their souls from their bodies and obtained, through the souls, information about past and future events. After two centuries this art is acquiring gradual perfection in different ways. After many experiments the scholars have concluded as under:

1. Besides the external perception and intellect man has also an internal perception and intellect, which is more extensive than the external one.

2. In the state of artificial sleep both the faculties can hear from afar, see behind a curtain and briefly give information about future events – events of which there is not the slightest outward sign.

3. By applying the laws of hypnotism it is possible to separate the soul of a person from his body so that the soul can see the inanimate body.

4. The system of the soul possesses an independence of a special type.

5. The soul does not cease to exist because of the decomposition and dispersion of different parts of the body.

The scholars have also drawn similar other conclusions. Even it we are not in a position to accept all these verdicts in their entirety, the compendium of these experiments, which have been conducted during the last two centuries and witnessed by many oriental and occidental scholars, confirms the existence genuineness and independence of soul – and that is the real object of this discussion. Those interested may study the details of these experiments in the relevant books.

Inspiration or Mysterious Sense

Belief in inspiration is the foundation of all prophethoods and heavenly religions and it (inspiration) rests on a powerful abstract soul which is capable of receiving Divine knowledge either without any intermediary or through an angel. The sages have spoken thus about inspiration: "Inspiration means that the Almighty shows the true path to one of his chosen servants and imparts to him instruction in different branches of learning. This is, however, done in a mysterious and an unusual manner.

Kinds of Inspiration

On account of the accomplishments possessed by soul it comes in touch with the spiritual world in different ways. Here we record a resume of what has been narrated on the subject by the leaders of Islam: 4

1. Sometimes the person concerned is informed about the heavenly truths by means of inspiration and whatever is suggested to his mind is tantamount to self-evident sciences wherein no doubt or suspicion is admissible.

2. He hears sentences and words from a corporeal object (i.e. a mountain or a tree), just as Allah spoke to Prophet Musa.

3. Realities are disclosed to him clearly in a state of vision.

4. An angel is commissioned by Allah to convey a particular commandment to him. The Holy Qur'an was communicated to the Holy Prophet in this manner, as it says clearly in chapter al-Shu'ara 26:192 – 195:

The faithful spirit (***Jibreel***) ***brought it*** (***the Qur'an***) ***down into your heart, that you might warn mankind in plain Arabic speech.***

Myths

In order that the future generations may become acquainted with the particulars of the world-wide personalities, the writers as well as the friends and associates of those persons have recorded as far as they could the events of their lives. So much so that in order to complete their writings they also bear the hardships of journeys.

History does not know of any personality whose events of life should have been recorded like those of the Holy Prophet of Islam and whose friends and disciples should have preserved all the minute details of his life.

In the same way our attachment has assisted us in preserving the events and details of the life of the great Prophet of Islam and has been the cause of embellishment of the book of his life. Not to speak of

wise enemies, this thing is also done by foolish friends.

Hence it is necessary for a person who writes the biography of a great man that he should observe care in analysing his life and should not ignore strict historical standards in weighing the events.

Now we come to the trail of the event of revelation.

Trail of Revelation

The great soul of the Holy Prophet was illumined with the light of revelation. He recorded in his heart what he had heard from the angel (Jibreel). After this incident the same angel addressed him saying: "O Muhammad! You are the Messenger of Allah and I am Jibreel".

At times it is said that the Holy Prophet heard these words when he had descended the Hira mountain. These two occurrences frightened and agitated him to some extent. The cause of fear and agitation was that a great responsibility had been entrusted to him and he had, on that day, discerned the reality which he had been seeking for a long time.

However, this agitation of mind was natural to some extent and was not inconsistent with his faith about the truth which was communicated to him. Notwithstanding the fact that he was certain that what he had acquired was the message of Allah and he who had brought it was Jibreel, all his agitation was natural to a certain degree and was not out of place.

This is so because however strong a person's soul may be and to whatever extent he may be related to the mechanism of the occult and the spiritual world, when he faces, in the first instance, an angel, whom he has never seen before, and that too on the summit of a mountain, he is liable to experience such agitation, and that is why this agitation vanished later.

Agitation of mind and unusual weariness made him proceed to the house of Khadijah. When he entered the house his dear wife observed signs of deep reflection and anxiety in his face and asked him what the matter was. The Holy Prophet related to Khadijah what had happened and also added the sentence 'I felt afraid of myself'. 5

Khadijah looked at him with respect, prayed for him and comforted him by mentioning some of his good qualities. Amongst other things she said: 'You are kind to your kinsfolk, show hospitality to your guests and you are not afraid of bearing hardships in the right path. Allah will assist you'.

By narrating these qualities of the Holy Prophet Khadijah certainly intended to make him more hopeful about his success and advancement for the achievement of the object for which he had been commissioned. This fact can very well be confirmed by what she said.

Then the Holy Prophet felt fatigued. He, therefore, turned to Khadijah and said, "Cover me". Khadijah

covered him and soon afterwards he fell asleep.

Khadijah Goes to Waraqah Bin Nawafal

We have already referred to Waraqah in the foregoing pages and have mentioned that he was one of the sages of Arabia. It was a long time since he had embraced Christianity after studying the Injeel and was an eminent person in his own field. He was Khadijah's cousin.

The Holy Prophet's dear wife related to Waraqah what she had heard from her honourable husband. Waraqah, after hearing Khadijah, replied to his cousin: "Your cousin (i.e. the Holy Prophet) is a truthful man, and what he has met with is the commencement of prophethood and Jibreel has descended upon him".

The events, which we have so far mentioned, are extracts from historical narratives. These are the facts which have been related by successive writers and are found in all to history books. In the course of these narrations, however, we come across things which do not conform with those standards about Prophets which we have in hand.

Furthermore, they are also not compatible with those events of the life of that great man which we have studied so far. And that which we are going to place before you now should either be treated to be a part of the fiction of history or it must be explained away.

We are most surprised at the writing of Dr Haikal, the profound scholar of Egypt, who, inspite of the lengthy foreword penned by him in the introduction of his book wherein he has said that a group of persons have, on account of enmity or attachment, introduced falsehoods in the biography of the Holy Prophet, has also himself recorded matters which are decidedly incorrect, although some Shi'ah scholars, like the late Tabarsi, had given useful warnings in this regard. 6

We reproduce here some of these false stories (though it would not at all have been necessary to mention them if the ignorant friends or the cunning enemies had not published them in their books)

When the Holy Prophet entered Khadijah's house he was thinking that possibly his eyes had made a mistake or that he had become a soothsayer! Khadijah, however, dispelled his misgivings by saying that he was helpful to the orphans and kind to his kinsfolk! Then the Holy Prophet glanced at her gratefully and asked her to bring a blanket and cover him. 7

2. Tabari and other historians have written: "When he heard the words, "You are the Messenger of Allah", his entire frame began to tremble and he decided to throw himself down the mountain. In the meantime, however, the angel appeared and dissuaded him from doing so. 8

3. Afterwards Muhammad went for the circumambulation of the Ka'bah. There he met Waraqah bin Nawfal and narrated his story to him. Waraqah said: "By Allah! You are the Prophet of these people and

the Archangel who used to come to Musa has descended upon you. Some of your people will refuse to admit your claim and will do you harm. They will turn you out of your city and will be at war with you". Muhammad felt that what Waraqah had said was correct! 9

Baselessness of These Statements

We feel that all these stories are a part of the Israelite programme and have been coined by the Jews and introduced into history and Tafsir (exegesis).

Firstly, in order to evaluate these statements, we should look into the biographies of the previous Prophets. The Holy Qur'an has mentioned their activities, and detailed narratives have also come down regarding the events of their lives. We do not, however, come across a similar repulsive event in the life of anyone of them. The Holy Qur'an has narrated fully the story of the commencement of revelation to Prophet Musa and has clearly stated all the particulars of that event.

Nevertheless, it has not attributed such a fear, trembling and agitation of mind to him that, on hearing the Voice, he should become inclined to flinging himself down the mountain, although the possibility for Musa becoming afraid was more plausible, because he had heard a voice from a tree in the desert during a dark night and was thereby informed about his appointment to the office of Prophet.

As explained by the Holy Qur'an, Musa remained quite calm at that moment. And when the Almighty asked him to throw away his rod and he did so at once, his fear was only on account of the rod, which had turned into a dangerous animal. Can it be said that Musa was peaceful and calm at the time of the commencement of revelation whereas the greatest of the Prophets became so much aghast at hearing the words of the angel that he wished to throw himself down the summit of the mountain? Would it be wise to say so?

It is an admitted fact that so long as the soul of a person is not ready in all respects to receive the Divine secrets (i.e. Prophethood) the Wise Lord does not elevate him to the office of Prophet, because the object of raising Prophets is that they should guide mankind.

How can a person impress the people when his sense of security and serenity is so limited that he should be ready to commit suicide on hearing the revelation or when it is broken or ceases. The scholars of 'Kalam' (scholastic theology) are unanimous that a Prophet should be free from all those things which become the cause of people remaining at a distance from him. In the circumstances can we accept these statements, which are by no means applicable to the greatest leader of mankind?

Secondly how did it happen that on hearing the Divine voice Musa became fully satisfied that it was from Allah and at once prayed to Allah that Harun might be appointed as his companion and helper, as he could speak more eloquently, but the chief of the Prophets remained in doubt for quite some time till Waraqah removed the doubt and indecision from his mind?

Thirdly it is an admitted fact that Waraqah was a Christian. However, when he wished to remove the agitation of mind and hesitation of the Holy Prophet he mentioned the name of Musa son of Imran only: "It is the very office to which Musa son of Imran was appointed".10

Does this fact not itself testify that the hand of the Israelite story-tellers has been at work and they have concocted this story without paying any heed to the religion of its hero (Waraqah).

Besides all this, it may be said that such matters are not at all in conformity with the greatness and excellence of the Holy Prophet of Islam, of which we are aware. The writer of the book 'Hayat-i Muhammad' has been aware, to some extent, about the concoction of these stories. For this reason, therefore, he has at times quoted the above-mentioned matters with the preceding words: 'As it is said'.

The late Tabarsi, the great Shi 'ah scholar, had done justice to these matters in his Tafsir. 11 For further information, therefore, reference may be made to that book.

1. This matter can he understood very clearly from this Qur'anic verse: All people were once one nation. Then Allah sent forth Prophets to give them good news and to warn them, and with them He sent down the Book with the Truth, that it might judge the disputes of men (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:213).
2. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 236, and Sahih Bukhari, vol. I, page 3.
3. Details of these arguments may be studied in philosophical books under the title of 'discussion on soul'. Please refer in this connection to the book 'Asfar' by Sadrul Muta'allihin'.
4. Biharul Anwar, vol. XVIII, pp. 193,194, 255 and 256.
5. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 205; Tarikh-i Kamil Ibn Athir, vol. II, p. 31.
6. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. X, page 384.
7. Tabaqat-i Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, p. 289, Hayat Muhammad, vol. I, p. 195.
8. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 205.
9. Tafsir-i Tabari, vol. XXX, page 161; commentary on Surah al-Alaq and Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 238.
10. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 238. The late Allamah Majlisi has also quoted in Biharul Anwar, vol. XVIII, page 228, and 'Isa from the book 'al-Muntaqi'. However these words do not appear in Sahih Bukhari and Seerah-i Ibn Hisham on which this discussion is based.
11. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. I, page 384.

Just like the dates of birth and death of the Holy Prophet the date of his appointment to the prophetic mission is also not known definitely from the historical point of view; the Shi'ah scholars are almost unanimous that he was appointed to the prophetic mission on the 27th of Rajab and his prophethood commenced from the same day. However, the Sunni scholars usually claim that he was appointed to this mission during the holy month of Ramadan.

As Shi'ahs claim to be the followers of the progeny of the Prophet and consider their reports to be true and final in the light of 'Hadith Thaqalayn', they have accepted the report of the progeny of the Prophet's Household about the date of this appointment to the prophetic mission to be correct. The descendants of the Prophet say: "The chief of the family was appointed to the prophetic mission on the 27th of Rajab". In view of this, Shi'ahs do not entertain any doubt about the correctness of this date.

The thing which can be treated to be the basis for the other view is the very statement of the Holy Qur'an, wherein it has been stated that the verses of the Qur'an were revealed in Ramadan. And as the day of the commencement of the prophetic mission is the day of the beginning of revelation of the Holy Qur'an it may be said that the Prophet was appointed to prophethood in the very month of Ramadan. The verses of the Holy Qur'an which indicate that it was revealed in Ramadan are as follows:

1. ***In the month of Ramadan the Qur'an was revealed.*** (**Surah al-Baqarah, 2:185**).

2. ***We swear by the Glorious Book that We revealed the Qur'an on a blessed night.*** (**Surah al-Dukhan, 44:2-3**).

And that is the very night of Qadr (glory) which has been mentioned in Surah al-Qadr (verse 1) wherein it has been said:

"***We revealed the Qur'an in the Night of Glory.***"

Reply by Shi'ah Scholars

The Shi'ah traditionalists and commentators have given various replies and explanations with regard to this argument; some of them are mentioned below:

The First Reply

The above-mentioned verses show that the Holy Qur'an was revealed in one blessed night of the Holy month of Ramadan, which is called the 'Night of Glory', but they do not mention the place of its revelation and do not also denote that they were revealed to the Prophet during the same night. It is quite possible that there may have been various revelations of the Qur'an and numerous Shi'ah and Sunni narrations confirm this possibility. One of those revelations is the gradual revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet and the other is its revelation in installments from the *Lauhul Mehfuz* 1 to *Baytul Ma'mu'r.* 2

Hence there should be nothing wrong in a few verses of Surah al-Alaq being revealed to the Holy Prophet on the 27th of Rajab and the entire Qur'an, in one compact form, being revealed in the month of Ramadan from a place named by the Qur'an as *'Lauhul Mehfuz'* to another place *'Baytul Ma'mur.'* This view is confirmed by the very verse of Surah al-Dukhan which says:

We swear by the glorious Book that We revealed the Qur'an on a blessed night.

It is evident from this verse (on the strength of the pronoun which turns towards the word *'Book'*) that it was revealed in its entirety during the Glorious Night (falling in the month of Ramadan), and it is only proper that this revelation should be other than the revelation which took place at the time of the appointment of the Prophet to the prophetic mission, because at that time only a few verses were revealed.

In short the verses which indicate that the Qur'an was revealed in the month of Ramadan during the 'Night of Glory' cannot be a proof of the fact that the day of the Holy Prophet's appointment to the prophetic mission, on which only a few verses were revealed, also coincided in the same month, because the aforesaid verses show that the entire Book (the Qur'an) was revealed in that month, whereas, on the day of the Holy Prophet's appointment to the prophetic mission only five or six verses were revealed.

Hence, the two schools, while explaining the meanings of the above-mentioned verses in their narrations, say that the entire Qur'an was sent down from the 'Lahhul Mehfuz' to 'Baytul Ma'mur in that very month. The Shi'ah and Sunni scholars have quoted the said narrations and in particular Professor Muhammad Abdul Azim Zarqani of 'Al-Azhar' university has mentioned them in his book in detail.3

The Second Reply

The most sound reply, which has so far been given by the scholars, is the second one. The learned scholar Tabatabai has explained it in detail in his precious book 4 and a gist of it is given below:

The real and actual purpose of the Holy Qur'an saying that: *We revealed it in the month of Ramadan* is that it was revealed to the Holy Prophet during that month, because besides being revealed in parts the Holy Qur'an possesses a reality about which Almighty Allah informed His great Messenger in a particular night of the month of Ramadan.

As the Holy Prophet possessed knowledge of the entire Holy Book, he was directed not to make haste in divulging its contents and to wait till he received orders regarding its communication to the people gradually. The Holy Qur'an says: *Do not make haste in narrating the contents of the Qur'an till you receive orders in this behalf through revelation.*

This reply shows that the Holy Qur'an possesses a total existence which was revealed in its entirety at one time in the month of Ramadan and it also possesses a gradual existence which lasted from the day of the Holy Prophet's appointment to the prophetic mission up to the end of his life.

The Third Reply

As has been explained briefly regarding the different kinds of revelation, it has evidently various stages. The first stage is that of true visions and dreams. The second stage is that of oracular and heavenly voices which are heard without facing an angel. And the last stage is that when the Prophet sees an angel and hears the words of Allah from him and learns through him about the realities of other worlds.

As the human soul does not possess the requisite strength to bear the different stages of revelation in the very first instance, it is necessary that the capacity to bear them should develop gradually, it may be said that: on the day of his appointment to the prophetic mission (27th of Rajab) and for some time thereafter the Holy Prophet heard only those Heavenly voices which informed him that he was the

Messenger and Prophet of Allah and no verse was revealed during that period. And some time later gradual revelation of the Qur'an began in the month of Ramadan.

By this we mean that the appointment of the Prophet to the prophetic mission in the month of Rajab is not attached to the revelation of the Qur'an in that month. In view of this there should be no discrepancy between the Qur'an being revealed in the month of Ramadan and the Prophet being appointed to the prophetic mission in the month of Rajab.

Although what has been stated above does not conform to numerous texts (because many historians have said explicitly that the verses of Surah al-Alaq were revealed on the very day of the appointment of the Holy Prophet to the prophetic mission), still we possess some narratives, which tell us that on the day of the Holy Prophet's appointment to the prophetic mission he heard oracular voice, and which do not say anything about the revelation of the Holy Qur'an or its verses.

They explain the matter by saying that on that day the Holy Prophet saw an angel who said to him "O Muhammad! you are the Messenger of Allah ". And in some of the narrations only hearing of the voice by the Prophet has been mentioned and nothing has been said about his seeing the angel.5

The Faith of the Prophet before The Prophetic Mission

For quite some time the question of the religion of the Holy Prophet before his appointment to the prophetic mission has been a matter of discussion between the Shi'ah and Sunni scholars. They have raised the following issues and given reply to each one of them

1. Did the Holy Prophet profess any religion before his appointment to the prophetic mission?

2. Supposing that he was the follower of a religion, was it his own religion?

3. If he was the follower of any other religion was that religion revealed to him independently and he followed it independently or he was reckoned to be one of the followers of that religion?

4. If he acted on that religion independently or as a follower, to which of the former Prophets did that religion belong?

These are the four questions which one comes across in various books of Seerah (the Prophet's biography), history, and exegesis. However, is it necessary that we should give definite replies to these questions? Is it basically necessary that we should study various books on history, exegesis and the Holy Prophet's biography and collect the requisite answers?

We feel that discussion of these particular points is not at all necessary.6 Rather what is important is that we should conclusively prove that before his appointment to the prophetic mission the Holy Prophet believed in and worshipped only Allah the One, and was pious and chaste.

This can be proved by the following two methods:

Firstly by studying his forty years' life preceding his appointment to the prophetic mission, and secondly by scrutinizing what has been said on the subject by the leaders of Islam.

1. To sum up his forty years' life was a life of modesty and chastity, honesty and truthfulness, uprightness and righteousness, goodness and kindness to the oppressed and the needy and hatred for the idols and the idol-worshippers. So much so that once. When he performed a journey to Syria in connection with trade and the other party, to a transaction, swore by idols he said "The most obnoxious things which always arouse my wrath are these very 'Lat' and 'Manat' by which you are swearing".

Besides this he prayed continuously in the cave of Hira during the month of Ramadan and performed Haj time and again, for as the sixth Imam says, he (the Holy Prophet) performed Haj secretly ten times and according to another narration twenty times. And, as we know, all Haj ceremonies are the performance of rites to which Prophet Ibrahim invited people and wished that by this means those who believe in Allah the One should assemble at one particular place during a fixed period.

Similarly the Prophet always remembered Allah while taking his meals and refrained from eating meat of the animals which had been slaughtered in an unlawful manner, and was very much disturbed to see obscene scenes, wine-drinking and gambling; so much so that at times he sought asylum in the mountains and returned home when a part of the night had passed. Now what demands our consideration is this:

Is it possible to doubt the faith of a man who has passed his life in the manner stated above and who does not possess even the smallest weak point from the very beginning of his life, and who passes a part of his life in hills and in secluded places to meditate upon the beautiful phenomena of the world. \\'e consider an ordinary man to be pious, dutiful and righteous if we observe one tenth of these qualities in him, what to speak of the Holy Prophet?

2. The second method of finding out the real position is the study of numerous documents and narratives which have reached us from the leaders of Islam. One of them is the discourse of Imam Ali, the chief of the monotheists, in 'Khutbah-i Qasi'ah':

"From the time the Holy Prophet had been weaned, the Almighty Allah had associated the most distinguished angel with him so that he might show him the path of magnanimity and goodness during day as well as night" 7

Comparison of Prophet Muhammad with Prophet 'Isa

There is no doubt about the fact that the Holy Prophet of Islam enjoys superiority over all previous Prophets. And it has been stated explicitly in the Holy Qur'an about some Prophets that they were elevated to the position of prophethood during their very childhood and Books were also sent to them.

For example, the Holy Qur'an says about Prophet Yahya:

To Yahya we said: Observe the Scripture with a firm resolve. We bestowed on him wisdom, grace and purity while he was yet a child. (***Surah Maryam, 19:12***)

When Prophet 'Isa was in his cradle the elders of Bani Israel pressed his mother to let them know the father of the child. Maryam pointed towards the cradle so that people should get the reply to their question from the child himself. 'Isa replied to them in these words with great eloquence and firmness:

I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Injeel and ordained me a Prophet. His blessing is upon me wherever I go, and He has commanded me to be steadfast in prayer and to give alms to the poor as long as I shall live. (***Surah Maryam, 19:31***)

The son of Maryam clarifies for us the principles and regulations of his religion during his very infancy and declares that he follows the law of the worship of Allah, the One. Now we call your conscience to witness and ask you: "When Prophet Yahya and Prophet 'Isa are true believers and pronounce the realities of nature, can it be said that the unique leader of mankind and the noblest of men did not possess an extraordinary faith till the age of forty years, although even at the time of the revelation in the cave of Hira he was already busy in meditation?"

1. See: Allamah Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai, Tafsirul Mizan.
2. Ibid.
3. Manahilul 'Irfan fi 'Ulumil Qur'an, vol. I, page 37.
4. al-Mizan, vol. II, pp. 14-16
5. Biharul Anwar, vol. XVIII, pp. 184,190 and 193.
6. Biharul Anwar, vol. XVIII, pp. 271 - 281.
7. Nahjul Balaghah, vol. II, page 182.

The advancement of Islam and its penetration into different peoples took place gradually. In the terminology of the Holy Qur'an those persons who preceded all others in embracing and propagating Islam are called as-Sabiqun (the preceding ones), and in the early days of Islam this precedence was in itself a criterion of virtue and superiority and, even amongst these persons, one who preceded another one enjoyed a more honourable position. Hence, we should consult the authentic sources and decide, without any bias, as to who were the first amongst men and women who embraced Islam.

The First Amongst Women to Embrace Islam was Khadijah

It is an admitted historical fact that from amongst women Khadijah was the first to embrace Islam and there is no contradictory report on this point. We briefly mention here an important historical authority which has been quoted by the historians from one of the wives of the Holy Prophet.

A'isha says: "I was always sorry for not having seen the period of Khadijah and wondered at the

kindness and love which the Holy Prophet expressed for her, because her dear husband always remembered her more than anyone else and if he slaughtered a sheep he found out the friends of Khadijah and sent them a share of the meat.

One day, when the Holy Prophet was going out of the house, he remembered Khadijah and praised her. Eventually I could not control myself and said very boldly: "She was nothing more than an old woman and Allah has given you a better one".

My words had a very unfavourable effect on the Holy Prophet of Allah. Signs of anger and wrath appeared on his forehead and he said: "It is not at all so... I have not acquired a better one. She believed in my Prophethood when all people were drowned in infidelity and polytheism. She placed her wealth at my disposal in the most trying circumstances. Allah gave me through her issues, which I did not get through anyone else.1

Another evidence about Khadijah being the first woman in the world to embrace Islam is the very incident of the commencement of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, because, when the Holy Prophet came down from the cave of Hira and related the incident to his wife she immediately confirmed her husband's statement and consoled him.

Furthermore, she had time and again heard from the fortune-tellers and sages of Arabia about the prophethood of her husband and it was on account of the truthfulness and righteousness of the Hashmite young man that she married him.

The First Amongst Men to Adopt Islam was Ali

Almost all the Shi'ah and Sunni historians are unanimous that the first amongst men to embrace Islam was Ali. As against this well-known statement there can also be found some rare statements, in history. Their narrators have chosen to state the reverse of it. For example, it is said that the first man to embrace Islam was either Zayd bin Harith or Abu Bakr. However, most of the arguments bear evidence against these two statements. Some of these are as follows:

The First Evidence

Ali had been brought up from his very childhood in the house of the Holy Prophet and the latter endeavoured to educate him like a kind father. Most of the biographers say unanimously: "Before the appointment of Muhammad to the prophetic mission a severe drought appeared in Makkah. Abu Talib, the uncle of the Holy Prophet, had a big family to support. He was the chief of Quraysh, and his income was not at all in keeping with his expenditure and he was not as wealthy as his brother Abbas.

The financial condition of Abu Talib prompted the Holy Prophet to discuss the matter with his uncle Abbas and they decided to take some of the children of Abu Talib to their own houses so as to alleviate his burden and to help him meet his requirements. Consequently the Prophet took Ali to his house and

Abbas took Ja'far under his guardianship".2

In the circumstances it can be said that, when Ali went to the Holy Prophet's house his age was not less than eight or ten years. The reason for this presumption is that the object of the Holy Prophet in taking Ali under his patronage was to alleviate the burden of the chief of Makkah (Abu Talib) and besides the fact that separation of a child from his parents who is less than eight or ten years, is a difficult matter; it could not also have any appreciable effect on the conditions of life of Abu Talib.

Hence, it is necessary that we should presume the age of Ali at that time to be such that his being taken away from Abu Talib had an appreciable effect on the latter's conditions of life. In the circumstances how can it be said that strangers like Zayd bin Harith and others had become acquainted with the secrets of revelation, whereas the cousin of the Holy Prophet, who was nearest to him of all others and was always with him, remained ignorant of them?

The purpose of the Prophet in fostering Ali was to compensate Abu Talib to some extent for the services rendered by him and so far as the Prophet was concerned there was nothing more dear to him than to guide a person directly. Keeping all these things in view how can it be said that the Holy Prophet kept his cousin deprived of this great blessing, notwithstanding the fact that he (Ali) was an intelligent person with a highly enlightened mind?

It would be better if we learn about this matter from the lips of Ali himself: In the sermon entitled Qasi'ah he explains his rank and esteem in the eyes of the Prophet thus: "You know the esteem in which the Holy Prophet held me on account of our near relationship and the high position and respect (which I enjoyed in his eyes).

During my childhood he fostered me under his own care and stuck me to his bosom. He embraced me in his bed and I used to smell his sweet smell. I followed him just as the off-spring of a she-camel follows its mother. Every day he hoisted (showed) a sign of his moral virtues and ordered me to follow it. He stayed in Hira every year (before his appointment to the prophetic mission) and I used to go and see him there, whereas none else saw him.

At that time Islam had not reached any house except that of the Holy Prophet and Khadijah, and I was the third amongst them. I used to see the light of revelation and messengership and smelt the fragrance of prophethood".3

The Second Evidence

Narrating the life history of Afif Kandi, Ibne Hajar (in 'Al-Isabah), Ibne Abdul Bir (in Isti'ab) and many other scholars of history have quoted him to have said: "During the Age of Ignorance I once went to Makkah. My host was Abbas son of Abdul Muttalib and both of us arrived in the precincts of the Holy Ka'bah. Suddenly I saw that a man came and stood by the side of the Ka'bah. Then a boy arrived and stood on his right side. Soon after that I saw a woman came and stood behind them. I saw the boy and

the woman performing *ruku'* and *sujud* (kneeling and prostration) in imitation of the man. This unprecedented scene inspired me to enquire from Abbas about it.

He said: "That man is Muhammad son of Abdullah and that boy is his cousin and the woman standing behind them is the wife of Muhammad". Then he added: "My nephew says that a day will come when he will control the treasuries of 'Kisra' and 'Kaiser'. By Allah, there is no follower of this religion on the face of the earth except these three". Then the narrator says: "I wish that I had been the fourth of them!"

Since the above narrative is not directly concerned with Ali, even those persons, who fail to narrate his virtues have quoted it. Amongst the traditionalists only Bukhari has thought it proper to declare it 'weak', but his attitude towards the progeny of the Holy Prophet's household is quite well-known. The readers can study the said narrative in detail in the books mentioned below.4

The Third Evidence

In the sermons and dissertations of Ali we usually come across the following and other similar sentences:

"I am the servant of Allah and the brother of the Holy Prophet and the greatest truthful one, and none will utter this sentence after me except one who is a liar. I offered prayers along with the Holy Prophet for seven years5 before anyone else did so."

The author of al-Ghadir (vol. III, page 222) has quoted authorities for these narrations from the books of traditions and history and we dispense with quoting the same briefly:

The Fourth Evidence

The following traditions of the Holy Prophet narrated by successive witnesses with various explanations have been quoted to this effect:

"The first person who will meet me on the Pool of 'Kauthar' and the first person who embraced Islam is Ali son of Abu Talib".

You may also study the authorities for these traditions in the third volume of 'al-Ghadir', page 320. The evidences for both the parts have reached the stage of consecutiveness and when a person studies these ahadith without any bias he becomes definite about Ali being the foremost among the believers.

He does not, therefore, prefer at all the other two statements which are in a minority from the point of view of narration. The number of the supporters of the first statement (viz. Ali was the first person to embrace Islam), who consist of distinguished companions of the Prophet and tabe'in (companions of the companions of the Prophet) exceeds sixty.

So much so that even Tabari 6 who has left the matter open and has contented himself only with quoting

the statement says that Ibn Sa'id asked his father: "Was Abu Bakr the first person to embrace Islam? " His father replied: "No. Before he embraced Islam more than fifty persons had come round to the Prophet's way. However, his Islam was superior to the Islam of others."

Mamun's Discussion with Ishaq

Ibn Abd Rabbih quotes an interesting incident in 'Aqdul Farid' which may be summarized as under:

Mamun arranged a debating assembly and the famous scholar Ishaq occupied the foremost position in it. When Ali's precedence over others in the matter of acceptance of Islam was established, Ishaq said "When Ali embraced Islam he was only a boy but Abu Bakr was a mature man (at the time he became a Muslim). Hence his faith enjoys superiority over that of Ali".

Mamun suddenly intervened and said: "Did the Prophet invite Ali in his boyhood to adopt the faith, or his faith was due to divine inspiration? It cannot at all be said that his faith was inspired, because, not to speak of Ali, even the faith of the Prophet was not inspired but was the result of guidance and messages brought by Jibreel from Allah.

Hence, when the Holy Prophet invited him to accept Islam, did he do so on his own account or had he been ordered by Allah to accomplish the deed? We cannot imagine that the Prophet should subject himself or anyone else to hardship and responsibility without an order from Allah.

Hence there is no alternative except that we should say that the Prophet's call is supported by divine order. And does the Omniscient Lord order His Prophet to invite an untalented boy (for whom 'faith' or 'no faith' are alike) to adopt Islam? Certainly such an act is not possible from the All-Wise and All-Knowing Allah.

Hence, it should be concluded that the faith of Ali was a true and firm faith which was not at all inferior to the faith of others and it is Ali, son of Abu Talib to whom the verses of Qur'an *"and the foremost are the foremost, these are they who are drawn nigh (to Allah)",* most appropriately applies.

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. XVI, page 8.
2. Seerah Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 246.
3. Nahjul Balaghah, vol. II, page 182.
4. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II. p. 211; Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, pp. 31 - 38, and A'lamul Wara, page 25.
5. In some of the narratives the period has been mentioned to be five years and on the basis of numerous indications it may be said that a part of this period preceded to the prophetic mission.
6. 2Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 215. .

The soul of the Holy Prophet had been illuminated with the light of revelation and he continuously meditated and reflected upon the onerous duty which the Almighty Lord had entrusted to him by saying:

"O you who are wrapped up in your vestment, arise and give warning. Magnify your Lord . . ." **(Surah al-Muddaththir, (74:1-3)**

He was also expecting another message from his Lord, so that by hearing the verses and the word of Allah his mind might become more illuminated and his resolution and determination more firm. However, days and months passed, but the Divine angel who had met him in the Cave of Hira did not re-appear and the invisible voice which had inspired his soul was no longer heard. We are not aware of its reason.

Possibly the purpose of pausing in the revelation was to afford rest to the Prophet, because history tells us that the revelation is always accompanied by unusual spiritual pressure, especially in the early days of the appointment of a Prophet to the prophetic mission, because till that time his soul is not accustomed to such mysterious perception.

The date of cessation of revelation is also not very clear, but after studying the texts of history and traditions it can be concluded that the revelation was cut off before general invitation to the public and special invitation to the Prophet's kinsmen had taken place. It was at the time when the Prophet had not extended his call to the public and special contacts with the individuals had also not yet been established.

However, as quoted by the late Allamah Majlisi 1 from Manaqib Ibn Shahr Ashob, the time of cessation of relevation was after the extension of invitation by the Prophet to his kinsmen to embrace Islam. Hence, it may be said that this incident took place in the fourth year of the appointment of the Prophet to the prophetic mission, as the invitation to his kinsmen was extended exactly after three years of the commencement of his prophethood.

There are some historians 2 who have different views in this regard, which does not conform to the established facts of the biographies of the Holy Prophet and his dear wife. They say: "When the trail of revelation was cut off the disturbance of mind and doubt to which the Prophet had become subjected at the time of the commencement of his prophetic mission was revived, his wife also became agitated and said to him, "I think Allah has cut off His contact with you." After hearing these words he resorted to his permanent place (Mount Hira). In the meantime the heavenly revelation came twice and addressed him in the following verses:

By the light of day, and by the fall of night, your Lord has not forsaken you, nor does He abhor you The life to come holds a richer prize for you than this present life. You will be gratified with what your Lord will give you. Did he not find you an orphan and give you shelter? Did he not find you perplexed and guide you? Did he not find you poor and enrich you? Therefore, do not wrong the orphan, nor chide away the beggar. But proclaim the kindness of your Lord. **(Surah al-Dhuha, 93:1-11)**

The revelation of these verses gave him extraordinary happiness and he realized that whatever was being said about him by the people was baseless.

Our opinion on This Subject

We cannot accept this narrative in its entirety. The biography of Khadijah and her conversation with her husband as well as her recollections are still recorded in history. It was the same Khadijah who endeavoured at the time of the commencement of revelation to remove the agitation of her husband.

Then how could she now become the cause of his agitation, when she could still perceive the noble character and morals of Muhammad and knew that Allah, in whom she believed, was just and righteous. Yes! In spite of all this, how could she develop in her mind a strange misgiving about Allah and His Prophet?

Besides this the scholars have remarked in the books on 'Kalam' (scholastic theology) that: "After the acquisition of a chain of prominent habits which distinguish their holder from others the status of prophethood is given to that person who possesses sublime habits and praiseworthy qualities and so long as the Prophet does not possess a number of prominent qualities and does not fulfil some special conditions, this status is never accorded to him. At the top of these qualities are chastity, peace of mind, faith, and trust in Allah and because a Prophet possesses such qualities, his thoughts cannot go astray."

The scholars have said : "The gradual development of a Prophet begins from his very childhood and gradually his knowledge reaches a stage of perfection. Even the slightest doubt does not cross his mind about the things which he sees or hears. Furthermore the remarks of anyone do not create any doubt in the mind of a person who occupies this position."

The above quoted Qur'anic verses and especially the verse *"Your Lord has not forsaken you, nor does He abhor you,"* show only this that someone said these words to the Holy Prophet but do not indicate as to who said them and what effect they had on his soul.

However, some exegetes say that these words were uttered by some polytheists and in view of this probability all these verses cannot relate to the commencement of revelation, because none knew about the commencement of prophethood with the descent of revelation except Khadijah and Ali so that he might resort to criticism.

So much so that as we shall mention later the fact of the Holy Prophet's prophethood was unknown to the polytheists for full three years and he had not been ordered to proclaim his prophethood to the general public, till the verse: *"Manifest that which you have been ordered to do"* was revealed. Hence, the story of the cessation of revelation has only historical and no Qur'anic evidence and that, too, is not in a repulsive shape but in the manner as described in the beginning of this chapter.

The Holy Prophet Commenced Reformation From A Limited

Circle

The wise men and leaders of a society chalk out a very extensive programme but start their work from a limited circle and as and when they achieve success they immediately make efforts for its extension and expand the sphere of their activities in proportion to their success, and make endeavours for its gradual advancement.

A wise person3 enquired from the head of one of the big states of modern times: "What is the secret of your success in public matters "He replied: The way of thinking of westerners like us is different from that of you orientals. We always start a work with an extensive and well-calculated programme but commence it from a small place and make an attempt for its expansion after acquiring success. And if in the meantime we realize that the programme is not correct we immediately leave it and begin another business.

On the other hand you orientals enter into a business with an extensive programme and begin the work from a big place and put the entire programme into action all at once. And if in the meantime you encounter a deadlock you have no way of return left, except bearing heavy losses.

Besides this your spirit has been such that you always make hurry and haste, and you always wish to harvest your crop on the very first day. You desire to obtain the final result during the early days and this in itself is the most dangerous way of social thinking which makes man to come to a very strange deadlock.

We feel that this way of thinking is not related to either East or West. Mature, wise and knowledgeable persons always achieve their objects in this manner. The great Prophet of Islam also acted according to this admitted principle and propagated his religion for full three years without making any haste. He presented his religion to those whom he found to be deserving and ready from the point of view of thinking and capacity.

Although his target was to set up a great world-wide State so that he might bring all people under the influence of one standard (the standard of monotheism) but during these three years he did not at all resort to general invitation. He made only special contacts with certain persons and invited to his faith those persons, whom he found to be deserving, fit and ready for embracing his religion. Consequently, during this period of three years he succeeded in guiding only a few persons.

During these three years the chiefs of Quraysh were intoxicated with the guardianship of the Ka'bah. As and when the Pharoah of Makkah (Abu Sufyan) and his gang came to know about the nature of his call and claim, they displayed a mocking smile on their lips and said to themselves:

"The flame of his call too will die away soon like the call of Waraqah and Umayyah (who had become Christians as a consequence of the study of the Taurat and the Injeel and pretended to advocate

Christianity in the Arab assemblies) and it will not be long before he will also join the caravan of those who have been forgotten!"

During these three years the chiefs of Quraysh did not take the slightest liberty with the Holy Prophet and always respected him. He, too, did not openly criticize their idols and gods during this period and remained busy in maintaining special contacts with clear-sighted persons.

However, Quraysh also woke up on the very first instance when the special invitation to the Prophet's near relatives and general invitation to the public commenced and his criticism of the idols and of the anti-human ways and manners of Quraysh began to be talked about. They realized on that very day that there was a vast difference between his call and those of Waraqah and Umayyah. Secret and open opposition and strife, therefore, started. In the first instance he broke his silence before his relatives and thereafter pronounced his general call.

There is no doubt about the fact that deep-rooted reforms, which influence all spheres of human life and change the course of society, mostly stand in need of two strong forces – the force of speech and the force of defence:

1. The force of speech so that the speaker may be able to state facts in an attractive manner and should convey to the general public his own personal ideas or those which he receives from the world of revelation.

2. The force of defence so that in the event of danger he may be able to organize a defence line against the rush of the enemies. In the absence of this ability the flame of his invitation extinguishes in the very beginning.

The force of speech of the Holy Prophet was extraordinarily perfect and there is no denying the fact that he was a forceful speaker who could explain his religion with great eloquence. However, during the early days of his call, he was devoid of the second force, because, during these three years, he had been able to convert only about forty persons to his faith and it is evident that such a small group could not undertake his defence.

Hence, in order to acquire a defence line and to organize a central nucleus, the Prophet of Islam invited his own kinsmen to his faith before making a general call.

In this way he removed the deficiency of the second force and was able to construct an important an important fortification against the possible dangers. This invitation was at least useful in the sense that even if his relatives were not inclined to his faith they stood up to defend him on account of their fraternal and tribal sentiments, till the time arrived when his invitation impressed some of the chiefs of the nation and made another group inclined to him.

He also believed that the foundation of reforms rests on internal reform. Until a man attempts to restrain

his own children and relatives from evil deeds, invitation extended by him to others can never be effective, because in that event the opponents will indulge in criticism and point out to him the conduct of his own relatives.

In view of these considerations Allah addressed the Prophet about inviting his relatives with the words:

"Admonish your nearest kinsfolk" **(Surah al-Shu'ara, 26:214),**

whereas with regard to the general call He said:

"Manifest that for which you have been made responsible and remain away from the polytheists, for we will protect you from the enemies. **(Surah al-Hijr 15:94)**

The Manner of Inviting The Kinsfolk

The manner of the Prophet's invitation to his kinsfolk was very attractive, and the secrets of this manner of invitation become more clear later when the reality became manifest. While commenting on the verse "Admonish your nearest kinsfolk" almost all the exegetes and historians write that the Almighty Allah ordered him to invite his nearest kinsfolk to his faith.

After necessary circumspection the Prophet ordered Ali, son of Abu Talib, whose age did not then exceed fifteen years, to procure food and also to arrange for milk along with it. Then he invited forty five elders from amongst Bani Hashim and also decided to divulge the hidden secret on that occasion.

Unfortunately, however, when the meal was over one of his uncles (Abu Lahab) said some privolous and baseless things and made the atmosphere uncongenial for the presentation of the subject of prophetic mission. The Holy Prophet, therefore, considered it expedient to defer the matter till the following day. On the next day he again arranged a feast. After the meal was over he turned to the elders of his family and began his talk by praising Allah and announcing His Oneness.

Thereafter he said: "Indeed, the guide of a community never lies to his people, I swear by Allah, besides whom there is no god, that I have been sent by Him as His Messenger, especially towards you and generally towards all the inhabitants of the world.

Yes! O my kinsmen! You will die as if you were going to sleep and sometime thereafter you will be brought to life again and will receive a recompense according to your deeds. This recompense is the eternal Paradise of Allah (for the righteous) and His perpetual Hell (for the evil-doers)".

Then he added: "No human being has ever brought a better thing for his people than that which I have brought for you. I have brought for you the blessings of this world as well as of the Hereafter. My Lord has ordered me to invite you towards Him. Which one of you will be my supporter so that he may become my brother, wasi (vicegerent) and successor amongst you?"

When the speech of the Prophet reached this point, perfect silence had prevailed over the whole gathering and every one of those present was reflecting upon the greatness of the target and of his own fate in the long run.

All of a sudden Ali, who was then a fifteen year old young man, broke the silence prevailing in the assembly. He stood up and said in a forceful tone: "O Prophet of Allah! I am prepared to support you." The Prophet ordered him to sit down. He repeated the aforesaid words thrice but none except the same fifteen year old young man gave him the same reply. He then turned to his kinsmen and said "People! This young man is my brother, vicegerent and successor amongst you. Listen to his words and follow him".

At this stage the meeting came to an end and those present turned to Abu Talib with smiling faces and said: "Muhammad has directed you to follow your son and to take orders from him and has declared him to be your elder".4

What has been written above is the gist of the detailed version quoted by most of the exegetes and historians in different words except for Ibn Taymiyah, who holds specific views about the members of the Prophet's family, none has doubted the authenticity of this tradition and all consider it to be admittedly a historical fact.

Crimes and Breach of Trust

Distortion and misrepresentation of facts and concealment of realities is a clear case of crime and breach of trust; and during the course of Islamic history there has been a group of biased writers who have treaded this path and reduced the worth of their treatises on account of misrepresentations. The course of history and evolution of knowledge has, however, exposed them. Here is a specimen of misrepresentation of this type:

1 As has been observed by the readers, Muhammad bin Jarir Tabari (died 310 A.H.) has narrated the incident of invitation to the kinsfolk in detail in his history. In his Tafsir 5 however, while commenting on the verse "Admonish your nearest kinsfolk" he mentions what he has written in his history along with the text and authority, but when he reaches the sentence: "Ali is my brother, vicegerent and successor" he alters the sentence and says: "Ali is my brother, and this and that". And there is no doubt about the fact that to omit the words "my vicegerent and successor" and to substitute for them the word "etc." is nothing short of breach of trust.

He has not contented himself with this alone and has not only altered the interrogative remark of the Holy Prophet, but has also altered the sentence which the Prophet himself uttered about Ali (This is my brother and vicegerent and successor) and has again used the very word "etc.".

A historian should be free and unbiased in recording facts and should write that which he has assessed

and found correct, with unmatched bravery and candour. It goes without saying that the thing which prompted Tabari to omit these two words and to substitute two allusive words for them is the very religious bias of his, because he did not consider Ali to be the vicegerent and immediate successor of the Prophet.

And as these two words clearly indicated that Ali was the wasi and the immediate successor, Tabari considered it necessary to defend his own religious attitude also, while commenting on the occasion of the revelation of the verse.

2. Ibn Kathir Shami, who died in the year 732 A.H. has also treaded the same path in his history 6 which was treaded earlier by Tabari in his Tafsir. We cannot excuse Ibn Kathir on any account, because Tarikh-i Tabari itself forms the foundation of his history and he has clearly referred to Tarikh-i Tabari in arranging this portion of his book, but, in spite of this, he has failed to quote this matter from the said history and has, contrary to expectations, mentioned the event according to Tafsir-i Tabari.

3. And then we come across the crime which has been committed by Dr Haykal, the former Education Minister of Egypt and the writer of "Hayat-i Muhammad" who has opened the path for the new generation for resorting to distortion of facts. It is rather strange that whereas in the preface of his book he has used very harsh words for the orientalists and accused them of distortion of facts and forgery, he himself commits the same thing, rather goes a step forward, because:

Firstly: In the first edition of the said book he quoted the incident in a mutilated manner and, out of the two essential sentences, recorded only one (viz. the Prophet turned to the elders and said: "Who amongst you will be my supporter in this task so that he may be my brother, wasi and successor) but totally omitted the other sentence which the Prophet uttered about Ali after expression of support by him, and did not at all mention that the Holy Prophet said about him: "This young man is my brother, vicegerent and successor."

Secondly: In the second and third editions he went one step forward and omitted both the sentences from the two places and thus struck an irreparable blow to his own position as well as to that of his book.

Prophethood and Imamate are Linked Together

The proclamation of the successorship (imamate) of Ali in the early days of the Prophethood of Muhammad goes to show that these two offices are not separated from each other, and when the Prophet of Allah was introduced to the people, his successor was also appointed and introduced on the same day and this shows by itself that prophethood and imamate are linked together and there is no distance between them.

This event clearly proves the spiritual heroism and bravery of Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful. For, in an assembly in which experienced and aged persons were drowned in reflection and

astonishment, he pronounced his support and devotion with perfect boldness and expressed his enmity with the enemies of the Holy Prophet without treading the path of self-seeking politicians.

Although at that time he was the youngest amongst those present so far as age was concerned, but this association with the Holy Prophet for a long time in the past had prepared his mind for the acceptance of the realities which the elders of the nation were reluctant to accept.

Abu Ja'far Askafi has been very eloquent about this event. Readers may refer in this connection to Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah. 7

1. 1Biharul Anwar, vol. XVIII, page 197.
2. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. I, pp. 48-52.
3. One of the Qajar Monarchs when he visited London.
4. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, pp. 62-63; Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, pp. 40-41; Musnad Ahmad, vol. I, page 111 and Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XIII, pp. 210-221.
5. Tafsir-i Tabari, vol. XIX, page 74.
6. al-Bidayah wan Nihayah, vol. III, page 40.
7. Ibn Abil Hadid (Egyptian edition, vol. XIII, pp.215 onward).

Three years had passed since the commencement of the prophetic mission of the Prophet. After inviting his nearest kinsfolk, the Prophet resorted to general invitation. During these three years he had guided some persons by special contacts to accept the Islamic faith, but this time he invited the general public openly to the religion of worshipping Allah, the One and the Unique One. One day he took his place on a high rock and said aloud: 'Ya Sabahah'! 1

The Holy Prophet's call received attention. Some persons belonging to different families of Quraysh ran up to him. Then he turned to those assembled there, and said: "O people! Will you believe me if I tell you that your enemies have taken positions on the other side of this hill (Safa) and intend attacking your lives and property?" All of them said, "We have never heard anything false from you throughout our lives". Then he said: "O people of Quraysh! Save yourselves from fire. I cannot do anything for you in the presence of Allah. I warn you of painful torture!" Then he added: "My position is like that of a watchman, who observes an enemy at a far-off point and immediately runs to his people for their safety and warns them of the impending danger by saying 'Ya Sabahah' in the particular manner".

These sentences indicate the basis of his invitation and religion. Quraysh were more or less aware of his religion, but these sentences created such a fear in their hearts that one of the leaders of infidelity (Abu Lahab) broke the silence of the people and said: "Woe be to you! Did you call us for this thing?" Then the people dispersed.

The Role of Faith and Fortitude

The secret of everyone's success lies in two things: Firstly, faith in one's aim and secondly steadfastness and effort in the path of its attainment. Faith is the inner stimulant which perforce pushes man to his object and invites him day and night to attain his aim, because he firmly believes that his welfare, supremacy, prosperity and good end are associated with it.

And, in view of the interest which man takes in himself, whenever he develops faith and confidence the strength of his faith automatically directs and persuades him to overcome all difficulties and keeps him away from every doubt, notwithstanding the fact that his prosperity may be dependent upon the attainment of a specific target.

For example, a sick man, who knows that his remedy and welfare lies in taking a bitter medicine, takes it easily, and a diver who believes that there are precious gems beneath the tides of the sea throws himself into the mouth of the tides without any apprehension; and returns to surface, after achieving his purpose.

However, if the ailing person or the diver are doubtful about the achievement of their objects or do not at all believe in the usefulness of their job, they either do not take any steps in that direction or, even if they do, they are faced with hardship and anguish. Hence, it is the very strength of belief and faith which solves all difficulties.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt about the fact that achievement of one's target is associated with difficulties and obstacles. It is, therefore, necessary for us to combat against those hurdles and to make necessary efforts in that behalf, so that all the obstacles may be removed with our full might. It has been said since olden times that wherever there is a flower (a prized object) there is also a thorn (difficulty) with it. The flower should, therefore, be plucked in such a way that the thorn does not prick one's hands or feet.

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned this subject (that the secret of success lies in faith in one's aim and steadfastness in its attainment) in a short sentence and has said:

***"As for those who say: 'Our Lord is Allah,' and take the right path....."*(Surah al-Fussilat, 41:30).**

(Viz. those who have faith in Allah and believe in a particular aim and then display steadfastness and fortitude, will definitely achieve their object and are helped by the angels).

Steadfastness and Fortitude of The Holy Prophet

As a result of the special contacts of the Prophet before the 'general invitation' and his indefatigable efforts thereafter, a selected and faithful team came into existence against the forces of infidelity and

idolatry. The Muslims, who had embraced Islam secretly before the 'general invitation', developed complete acquaintance with those who responded to the Prophet's call thereafter and the bells of danger rang in all the assemblies of infidelity and polytheism.

No doubt it was quite easy for the strong and well-equipped Quraysh to crush a newly-born movement, but the reason for their being afraid was that the members of the movement did not belong to only one family but persons belonging to various families had also embraced Islam. Hence it was not easy for Quraysh to take a decisive action.

After mutual consultations the chiefs of Quraysh decided to remove the very foundation of this faith and the founder of the new religion by different means. They proposed to achieve this purpose by approaching him sometimes with allurements and at other times by extending to him various promises and occasionally by using threats and torture. For ten years Quraysh behaved in this manner and eventually they decided to kill the Holy Prophet. In order to save him, therefore, Allah ordered him to quit Makkah.

During the aforesaid period the chief of the family of Bani Hashim was Abu Talib. He was a man who possessed a noble nature and a magnanimous spirit, and his house was an asylum for the needy and the orphans. Besides being the chief of Makkah and possessing some offices with regard to the Holy Ka'bah he enjoyed a very high position in the Arab society and as he had been the guardian of the Prophet after the demise of Abdul Muttalib, the other chiefs of Quraysh approached him in the form of a group 2 and addressed him thus: "O Abu Talib!

Your nephew abuses our gods, speaks ill of our religion, laughs at our thoughts and beliefs and considers our forefathers misguided. Ask him to keep aloof from us or surrender him to us and refrain from supporting him".3

The elder of Quraysh and the head of the family of Bani Hashim replied to them in a tactful manner and in a soft tone, and consequently they abandoned their activities. However, Islam was penetrating and expanding day after day and the spiritual rapture of the religion of the Prophet and the attractive and eloquent words of the Heavenly Book (the Qur'an) were lending support to it.

The Prophet especially presented his religion before the people in the months in which fighting was prohibited, when a large number of pilgrims gathered in Makkah. His eloquent and sweet speeches and his attractive beliefs impressed many persons. In the meantime the Pharoah of Makkah also realized that the Holy Prophet had gained popularity amongst all the tribes and had acquired many followers amongst the settled and unsettled Arab tribes.

They, therefore, decided to approach the Prophet's only supporter (Abu Talib) once again and to make known to him the dangers to which the liberty of the Makkans and of their religion had become subjected owing to the propagation and expansion of Islam. Hence, they once again approached him jointly, and referring to their former demands spoke to him thus:

"O Abu Talib! You are superior to us in the matter of nobility and age. However, we met you earlier and requested you to restrain your nephew from propagating the new religion, but you did not pay any heed to our words. The position had now become unbearable for us. We cannot tolerate any longer that a person should abuse our gods and should consider us to be foolish and ignorant. It is necessary for you to restrain him from all these activities, failing which we will fight against him as well as against you, who are his supporter, so that the duty of each group should become specific and one of them should be wiped out".

Abu Talib, the distinguished supporter and defender of the Prophet realized through his sagacity and perfect wisdom that it was appropriate to show forbearance to the people whose entire dignity of existence was now open to danger. He, therefore, adopted a peaceful attitude and promised that he would convey the sentiments of the chiefs to his nephew. No doubt this reply was given primarily with the object of quenching the fire of their wrath so that an appropriate way of solving the difficulty could be adopted later. Hence, after the departure of the chiefs he contacted his nephew and conveyed their message to him and incidentally, in order to test his faith in his own object, demanded a reply from him.

However, while replying, the Holy Prophet uttered a sentence which is considered to be one of the outstanding and golden lines of history. Here is the text of his reply: "Dear uncle, I swear by Allah that even if they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand (i.e. even if they provide me with rule over the entire world) I shall not desist from propagating my religion and pursuing my object, and shall continue my efforts until I overcome the difficulties and achieve my final goal or lay down my life for its sake".

Thereafter the Prophet's eyes were filled with tears on account of his love and enthusiasm for his object and he stood up and departed from his uncle's presence. His penetrating and attractive speech made such a wonderful impression on the chief of Makkah that, notwithstanding all the dangers to which he was exposed, he called back his nephew and said to him: "By Allah! I will not give up my support to you and you may very well pursue your object to its end". 4

Quraysh Approached Abu Talib for The Third Time

The ever-increasing expansion of Islam disturbed Quraysh very much and they were keen to find out a solution to this problem. They assembled once again and were of the view that Abu Talib's support to Muhammad was possibly due to the fact that he had adopted him as his son and if that were so it was possible that they might take the most handsome young man to him and ask him to adopt him as his son.

They, therefore, took with them 'Ammarah bin Walid bin Mughayrah, who was the most handsome of the Makkan young men, and approaching Abu Talib for the third time began complaining and threatening in these words: "O Abu Talib! Walid's son is a young man, who is a poet and is also handsome and intelligent. We are prepared to hand him over to you so that you may adopt him as your son and cease

supporting your nephew".

On hearing this Abu Talib was cut to the quick and shouted upon them with a burning face and said: "You are doing a great injustice to me. You wish that I should nurture your son and surrender my dearest child to you so that you may kill him. I swear by Allah that it will not be so".

Mut'am son of Adi then stood up and said: "The offer made by Quraysh is quite fair, but you are not going to accept it". Abu Talib replied: "You have not been just and I am sure that you want to humiliate me and to instigate Quraysh to fight against me. However, you are free to do what you can".

Quraysh Try to Allure The Holy Prophet

Quraysh became sure that it was not at all possible to make Abu Talib agree to their suggestion and, although he did not declare openly to be a follower of Islam, he had a great faith in his nephew and dearly loved him. They, therefore, decided to refrain from entering into any discussion with him.

They, however, thought of another plan and it was that they should allure Muhammad by offering him status, wealth, gifts and beautiful women so that he might abandon his call. They, therefore, went to the house of Abu Talib in the form of a group at a time when his nephew was also sitting with him.

The spokesman of the group opening the talk said: "O Abu Talib! Muhammad has scattered our united ranks and has created dissension amongst us. He has laughed our intellect down and has ridiculed us and our idols. If he has been prompted to do so on account of his poverty and indigence we are prepared to place enormous wealth at his disposal. If he wants status we are ready to accept him as our ruler and will listen to him. And in case he is invalid and needs medical treatment we will bring an expert physician to attend upon him....."

Abu Talib turned his face to the Prophet and said: "The elders of your tribe have come and request that you should refrain from criticizing the idols so that they, too, may leave you alone". The Holy Prophet replied to his uncle thus: "I don't desire anything from them. As against these four offers they should accept one word from me so that, under its auspices they may rule the Arabs and make non-Arabs their camp followers".

At this stage Abu Jahl stood up and said: "We are prepared to hear you ten times". The Prophet replied: "My only word is that you should admit Oneness of the Lord". The unexpected words of the Holy Prophet were like cold water thrown on a hot kettle. They were so much engulfed in amazement coupled with disappointment and despair that they said involuntarily all at once: "Should we forsake 360 gods and worship only one Allah?"

Quraysh left the house while their faces and eyes were burning with anger and they were thinking about the means for achieving their object. In the following verses of the Holy Qur'an this very incident has been related: 5

It seems strange to the pagans that a man from their own people should come to them as a Prophet. The unbelievers have said, "he is only a lying magician ". They say, "Has he condemned all other gods but One? This is certainly strange". A group of the pagans walked out of a meeting with the Prophet and told others, "Let us walk away. Be steadfast in the worship of your gods. This man wants to dominate you. We have heard nothing like this in the latest religion. This is only his own false invention. (**Surah Sa'd, 38:4–7**)

An Example of The Tortures and Persecutions by Quraysh

One of the most tragic periods of the life of the Holy Prophet began on the day on which he broke the seal of silence and the elders of Quraysh lost all hope of his accepting their offers in view of his well–known words: "By Allah! Even if you place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand so that I may abandon my call, I will not rest until Allah makes my religion prevail or I lay down my life for its sake".

Till that time Quraysh had, during all their encounters with him, preserved his respect, but when they saw that all their conciliation offers had failed they were compelled to change the course of their thinking and to forestall the expansion of Islam at all costs and to utilize all means for this purpose. Hence the council of Quraysh decided unanimously to practice ridicule, torture and intimidation to restrain the Prophet from pursuing his object.

It is evident that a reformer who is anxious to guide the people of the whole world must observe patience and fortitude in the face of inconveniences, intimidations, dastardly attacks and corporal and mental blows, so that by and by he should be able to overcome difficulties, and this has been the policy of other reformers as well. We give below an account of some of the persecutions and tortures of Quraysh so that the extent of the Holy Prophet's patience and fortitude may become manifest.

Besides the mental and spiritual factor (faith, steadfastness and fortitude) which helped him internally the Prophet also possessed an external factor which ensured safety and support for him, and that was the support of Bani Hashim with Abu Talib at their head, because when Abu Talib came to know that Quraysh had taken a final and irrevocable decision to persecute his nephew, he called all the members of Bani Hashim and asked them to protect Muhammad.

Some of them undertook to support and protect him on account of their faith and others agreed to do so in view of the bond of kinship. Out of them only three (namely Abu Lahab and two others whose names will be mentioned later along with other enemies of the Prophet refrained from endorsing his decision.

However, in spite of this, these defensive measures could not protect him from some unpleasant incidents and as and when the enemies found him alone they did not desist from doing him all sorts of harm. Here is an example of the tortures inflicted by Quraysh:

1. One day Abu Jahl saw the Prophet in Safa and abused and grieved him. The Prophet did not speak to him at all and went away to his house. Abu Jahl also went to join Quraysh who had assembled by the side of the Ka'bah. Hamzah, who was the uncle and foster-brother of the Prophet, also returned on that day from hunting and was carrying his bow on his shoulder.

It was customary with him that after returning to Makkah and before seeing his children and relatives, he went to the Ka'bah and performed 'tawaf' (circumambulation) and then went over to the different groups of Quraysh who gathered round the Ka'bah and exchanged greetings with them.

On that day, after performing these ceremonies, he went to his house. By chance a slave-girl of Abdullah Jad'an, who had witnessed the aforesaid incident, came forward and said "O Abu 'Ammarah, (the patronymic of Hamzah) I wish that you had been here a few minutes earlier and had seen the incident which I have seen! Then you would have learnt how Abu Jahl has abused and persecuted your nephew".

The words of the slave-girl made a strange impression on Hamzah and he decided to avenge his nephew's insult upon Abu Jahl before doing anything else. He, therefore, returned and saw Abu Jahl sitting amongst a group of Quraysh.

Without speaking to anyone he raised his hunting bow and struck it on the head of Abu Jahl and his skull was injured. Then he said to him: "You abuse him (the Prophet) and I have embraced his religion and am treading the same path which he treads. If you possess any strength, come on and fight with me".

A group of persons belonging to the family of Makhzum then stood up to support Abu Jahl. However, as he was a clever and diplomatic person, he avoided every sort of quarrel and defence and said "I misbehaved with Muhammad, and Hamzah is entitled to feel uneasy about it". 6

This admitted historical fact shows that Hamzah, who later became one of the greatest commanders of Islam was a highly influential and brave personality. He did all he could to protect and defend the Holy Prophet and strengthen the group of Muslims.

As Ibn Athir says,7 Quraysh considered the Islam of Hamzah to be one of the greatest factors for the advancement and strength of the Muslims and they, therefore, resorted to other plans which will be mentioned later.

Some Sunni historians like Ibn Kathir Shami insist that:

"The effect of the Islam of Abu Bakr and Umar was no lesser than the effect of the Islam of Hamzah, and the Islam of these two great caliphs became the means of the glory, strength and freedom of the Muslims".8

Of course, there is no doubt about the fact that every person contributed to the strength and expansion of Islam, but, in spite of this, it can never be said that the effect of the Islam of these two caliphs was at

par with the effect of the Islam of Hamzah. The reason for this conclusion is that Hamzah was the man who, on hearing that an elder of Quraysh had abused the Holy Prophet, went in quest of the culprit without informing anybody of his intention and took a very hard revenge on him.

And none had the courage to oppose him or to fight with him. On the other hand Ibn Hisham, the great biographer of Islam, narrates an incident with regard to Abu Bakr which shows that when he joined the circle of the Muslims he did not possess the requisite strength to defend either himself or the Holy Prophet.9 The details of the incident are given below:

One day the Prophet was passing by a group of Quraysh. Suddenly those people encircled him and everyone of them began repeating, by way of ridicule, his words about the idols and the Day of Judgement and said: "Do you say this?" The Prophet replied to them: "Yes. I am the person who says this".

As Quraysh saw that there was none to defend the Holy Prophet they decided to kill him. A man, therefore, came forward and held the ends of his dress. Abu Bakr happened to be there by the side of the Prophet.

With tears in his eyes he stood up to support the Prophet and said: "Is it proper that you should kill a man who believes in monotheism?" Later (for some reasons) those people desisted from maltreating the Prophet and he went his own way, whereas Abu Bakr proceeded to his own house with an injured head.

Although this incident may be an evidence of the Caliph's sentiments for and interest in the Prophet it is, first of all, a firm evidence of his weakness and fear. It shows that at that time he did not possess either strength or an appreciable social status. And as a practical step by Quraysh against the Prophet might have entailed evil consequences, they left him alone and directed the severity of their action towards his companion and broke his head.

If you place the incident of Hamzah which clearly shows his valour and bravery side by side with this episode you can very well decide as to whose Islam had a greater effect in the early days of Islam on the honour, strength and fear of the unbelievers.

You will soon read about the Islam of Umar. His Islam also, like that of his old friend, did not strengthen the defensive power of the Muslims. But for 'As bin Wai'l it was possible that the blood of the Caliph might have been shed on the day he embraced Islam, because he ('As bin Wai'l) came and addressed the group, who wanted to kill Umar, in these words: "What do you want from a man who has adopted a faith for himself? Do you think that the family of Adi will surrender him easily?"

This sentence shows that it was the fear of his family which made others spare him and defence by the families of those who belonged to them was something natural and usual and there was no difference in this regard between the low and the high.

Yes! The base of defence of the Muslims was the house of Bani Hashim and the heavy burden of the task lay on the shoulders of Abu Talib and his family, for, as regards other persons who joined the Muslims they did not possess the requisite strength even to defend themselves, and the question of their Islam becoming the source of the dignity and exaltation of the Muslims did not, therefore, arise.

Abu Jahl Lies in Ambush for The Holy Prophet

The ever-increasing advancement of Islam had made Quraysh very much uneasy. Every day a report regarding the inclination (to Islam) of one member or another of their tribe reached them. On this account, therefore, their anger was flaming out. One day the Pharaoh of Makkah, Abu Jahl, said in the assembly of Quraysh: "O people of Quraysh! You can see how Muhammad considers our religion to be worthless and abuses the faith of our forefathers and their gods, and declares us to be ignorant. By God I will lie in ambush for him tomorrow and will place a stone by my side; and when Muhammad goes into sajdah (prostration) I will strike that stone on his head. On the following day the Holy Prophet arrived in Masjidul Haram to offer his prayers and stood between 'Rukn-i Yamani' and the 'Black Stone'.

A group of Quraysh who were aware of the intention of Abu Jahl were wondering whether or not he would succeed in his campaign. The Holy Prophet went into sajdah and his old enemy came out of the ambush and approached him.

However, it was not long before he was struck with awe and he returned to Quraysh, trembling, and aghast, with a countenance distracted. All of them ran forward and said "O Aba Hakam! what has happened?" He said with a very weak voice which betrayed his fear and disturbance of mind "There appeared before my eyes a scene which I had never seen before in my life. It was for this reason that I abandoned my plan".

It goes without saying that an unseen force had arisen by the command of Allah and had created a spectacle which protected the Prophet of Islam from harm by the enemies in accordance with the Divine promise: *"We shall protect you from the mischief of those who mock".*

Numerous instances of torture by Quraysh are recorded in the pages of history. Ibn Athir has allocated a chapter to this subject and has mentioned the names of the foremost enemies of the Prophet in Makkah and the atrocities perpetrated by them. 10Whatever has been said above is only a specimen. The Prophet found himself faced every day by a new persecution. For example, one day 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'it saw the Prophet performing 'Tawaf' and abused him. He twisted his turban round his neck and dragged him out of the Masjid. Some persons freed the Prophet from his hands on account of fear of Bani Hashim. 11

The torture and persecution to which the Holy Prophet was subjected by his uncle, Abu Lahab and his wife, Umme Jamil was unprecedented. He happened to be a next-door neighbour of theirs. They did not refrain from throwing any sort of dirt on him, and one day they threw the entrails of a sheep on his head.

Eventually Hamzah, with a view to take revenge, thrust the same on the head of Abu Lahab.

Persecution of Muslims by Quraysh

In the early days of the prophetic mission the advancement of Islam was the result of a number of factors, one of which, was the steadfastness of the Prophet and his companions and supporters. Examples of the patience and fortitude of the leader of the Muslims have already been stated, whereas the forbearance and perseverance of the Muslims who lived in Makkah (the centre of polytheism and idolatry) deserves attention.

An account of their sacrifices and steadfastness will be given in the chapters relating to events after Hijrah (migration to Madina). For the present we mention the tragic events connected with the lives of some old devotees of the Prophet who lived in the shelterless environments of Makkah.

Bilal, The Ethiopian

The parents of Bilal were amongst those persons who had been brought from Ethiopia to Arabia as captives. He himself (who later became the mu'azzin of the Prophet) was the slave of Umayyah bin Khalaf. Umayyah was one of the sworn enemies of the great leader of the Muslims. As the kinsmen of the Prophet had undertaken his own defence, Umayyah, with a view to take revenge, used to torture openly his slave who had been newly converted to Islam. He made him lie naked on hot sand during the hottest days, placed a big red-hot stone on his chest and addressed him in these words: "I will not release you until you die in this condition or abjure the faith of Muhammad, and worship 'Lat' and 'Uzza'.

In spite of all this torture, however, Bilal replied him with only two words which are a clear proof of his firm faith. He said, 'Ahad! Ahad!' (viz. Allah is One and I will never revert to the religion of polytheism and idolatry). Others wondered at the steadfastness of this black slave who was a captive in the hands of a hard-hearted person. So much so that Waraqah bin Nawfal, the Christian Arab scholar, wept on the condition of Bilal and said to Umayyah: "By Allah! If you kill him in this manner I will make his grave a sacred place to be visited by pilgrims ".12

At times Ummayah acted with still greater severity. He put a rope round the neck of Bilal and handed it over to the children so that they might drag him in the streets.13

Ummayah and his son were captured in the Battle of Badr, the first battle of Islam. Some Muslims were not in favour of killing Umayyah, but Bilal said: "He is the leader of infidelity and must be killed". On his insistence the father and the son were recompensed for their crimes and were put to death.

Self-Sacrifice of Ammar and His Parents

Arnmar and his parents were amongst the early Muslims. They embraced Islam when the Prophet had selected the house of Arqam bin Abil Arqam as the rendezvous for the propagation of Islam. When the

idolaters became aware of their having adopted the Divine religion they did not neglect torturing and persecuting them.

Ibn Athir[14] says: "The idolaters compelled these three persons to quit their house in the hottest season and to spend their time in the heat and the scorching wind of the desert. This torture was repeated so many times that Yasir succumbed to his troubles. One day his widow Sumayyah quarrelled with Abu Jahl on this account. That hard-hearted and cruel person thrust a spear in her heart and killed her also. The Holy Prophet was very much moved on account of the persecution to which they were subjected. One day he saw them being tortured. He turned his face to them with tears in his eyes and said "O family of Yasir! Be patient, for your place is in Paradise ".

After the death of Yasir and his wife the idolaters tormented and tortured Ammar as well, as they had tormented Bilal. To save his life he had no alternative left but to abjure Islam, but he repented soon and ran to the Prophet with a palpitating heart.

He related the incident to the Prophet, who enquired of him: "Has any instability taken place in your inner faith?" He replied: "My heart is abounding with faith". The Prophet then said: "Do not entertain the least fear in your mind and keep your faith hidden to save yourself from their mischief".

The following verse was revealed with regard to the faith of Ammar: [15]

(***There shall be a grievous punishment for him***) ***who disbelieves in Allah after believing in Him, other than him who is compelled while his heart is firm in his faith.*** (**Surah Nahl, 16:106**)

It is said that Abu Jahl decided to take to task the family of Yasir who belonged to the class of the most unprotected persons in Makkah. He, therefore, ordered that fire end scourage might be made ready. Yasir, Sumayyah and Ammar were then dragged to the appointed place and tormented with the point of the sword and with the flames of fire and whipping. This persecution was repeated so many times that Yasir and Sumayyah consequently breathed their last, but they did not forsake the praise of the Prophet till their last moments.

The men of Quraysh who had witnessed this calamitous and tragic scene, notwithstanding the fact that they had unity of interest in defeating Islam, got the wounded and grief stricken Ammar released from the clutches of Abu Jahl so that he might bury his parents.

Abdullah Bin Mas'ud

The Muslims who had embraced Islam secretly were telling among themselves that Quraysh had not heard the Holy Qur'an and it would be quite appropriate if one of them went into Masjid ul-Haram and recited some verses of the Holy Book with a loud voice. Abdullah, son of Mas'ud expressed his willingness to do so. He came into the Masjid when Quraysh had assembled by the side of the Holy Ka'bah and recited the following verses with a loud and melodious voice:

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. It is the Merciful who has taught the Qur'an. **….. (Surah al-Rahman, 55:1-2)**

The eloquent verses of this surah struck Quraysh with a strange awe. And in order to forestall the effect of the heavenly call which was reaching their ears through a defenceless person they all stood up and beat him so much that blood began to flow from his entire body and he returned to the companions of the Holy Prophet in a pitiable condition. They were, however happy that the invigorating voice had eventually reached the ears of the enemies.16

Whatever has been said above was by way of example, for otherwise the number of self-sacrificing devotees of Islam who endured the gravest hardships during the early days of the Prophet's mission, and showed steadfastness in the path of achievement of their aim, is much larger However, we refrain from mentioning their names and the events of their lives for the sake of brevity.

Ruthless Enemies of The Holy Prophet

Recognition of some enemies of the Prophet is necessary in connection with some Islamic events which took place after migration, and we give below briefly the names and particulars of some of them:

Abu Lahab: He was the neighbour of the Prophet. He did not miss any opportunity of contradicting and torturing him and the Muslims.

Aswad bin Abd Yaghus: He was a clown. As and when he saw the helpless and indigent Muslims he ridiculed them and said: "These poverty-stricken people consider themselves to be the kings of the world and think that they will soon possess the throne and the crown of the Emperor of Iran". However, death did not allow him to see with his own eyes as to how the Muslims had acquired the lands, thrones and crowns of Kaiser and Kisra.

Walid bin Mughayrah: He was an old man of Quraysh who possessed enormous wealth. We shall record his conversation with the Holy Prophet in the following chapter.

Umayyah and Abi sons of Khalaf: One day Abi brought the decayed and worn out bones of some dead persons to the Holy Prophet and asked: "Can your Allah restore these bones to life?" Right came the reply from the source of revelation:

"Say, the Lord who created them first will bring them to life again". These two brothers were killed in the Battle of Badr.

Abul Hakam bin Hisham: The Muslims used to call him Abu Jahl (father of ignorance) on account of his unwarranted enmity and fanaticism against Islam. He, too, was killed in the Battle of Badr.

'As bin Wai'l: He was the father of Amr 'As. He was the person who had given the nickname of *'Abtar'*

(issueless) to the Holy Prophet.

'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'it:17 He was one of the most fierce enemies of Islam and never missed an opportunity to do harm to the Holy Prophet and the Muslims.

There was also another group of the enemies of Islam including Abu Sufyan and others. The historians have recorded the particulars in detail and for the sake of brevity we refrain from reproducing them here.

Umar Ibn Khattab Embraces Islam

The acceptance of Islam by everyone of the early Muslims was the effect of one cause or another and at times a very small incident became the means of the conversion of an individual or a group. The stimulant for the adoption of Islam by the second caliph is interesting.

Although from the point of view of the chronological order of the events it would have been appropriate to record this incident after describing the migration of Muslims to Ethiopia, but we have considered it expedient to describe it here, as we have here mentioned some of the companions of the Holy Prophet.

Ibn Hisham 18 says, "Out of the family of Khattab (father of Umar) only his daughter Fatimah and her husband Sa'id bin Zayd had embraced Islam. As in the early days of Islam Umar's relations with the Muslims were very inimical and he was considered to be one of the most obstinate enemies of the Prophet, therefore, his sister and her husband always kept their faith concealed from him. In spite of this Khubab bin Art used to come to their house at appointed hours and taught them the Holy Qur'an.

The confused condition of the people of Makkah had made Umar very sentimental, for he saw that dissension and disorder prevailed amongst them and the bright day of Quraysh had been changed into a dark evening.

Umar, therefore, decided to go and cut off the root of dissension by killing the Holy Prophet. To achieve this purpose he was looking for the place where the Prophet could be found. He was informed that he was in a house situated by the side of the bazaar of Safa, and forty persons like Hamzah, Abu Bakr, Ali etc. had undertaken to protect and defend him.

Na'im bin Abdullah who was one of the close friends of Umar says: "I saw Umar carrying his sword. I enquired about the purpose for which he was going. He replied thus: "I am going in search of Muhammad who has created dissension amongst Quraysh. He laughs at their wisdom and intellect, declares their religion to be worthless and belittles their gods. I am going to kill him".

Na'im says: "I said to him: You are deceived. Do you think the descendants of Abd Munaf will spare your life? If you are a peaceable person you should first reform your own house. Your sister Fatimah and her husband have become Muslims and follow the religion of Muhammad".

Na'im's words created a storm of wrath in the mind of Umar. Consequently he abandoned his previous plan and went to the house of his brother-in-law. When he reached near the house he heard the humming of someone who was reciting the Holy Qur'an with an impressive voice. The manner of Umar's arrival in his sister's house was such that she and her husband also became aware that he was about to enter. They, therefore, concealed the teacher of the Holy Qur'an in the back part of the house so that he might remain hidden from Umar's eyes. Fatimah also concealed a leaf on which verses of the Holy Qur'an were written.

Umar said without any salutation or greeting: "What was this humming that I have heard?" They replied 'We have heard nothing". Umar said: "I have been informed that you have become Muslims and follow the religion of Muhammad". He uttered this sentence with great fury and attacked his brother-in-law. His sister then stood up to protect her husband. Umar attacked her also and seriously injured her head with the point of his sword. While blood was flowing from her head, the helpless woman said with great fervour of faith: "Yes. We have become Muslims and believe in Allah and His Holy Prophet. Do whatever you like".

The tragic plight of the sister, who was standing by the side of her brother with her face and eyes besmeared with blood and was speaking to him, made Umar tremble and he was sorry for what he had done. He, therefore, insisted that they should show him the relevant leaf so that he might ponder over the words of Muhammad. His sister fearing lest he should tear it up, put him on oath that he would not do so, and he also made a promise and confirmed it on oath that he would return the leaf after having gone through it. Then he took the sheet in his hand. A few verses were written on it. Their translation is given below:

Taha. It was not to distress you that We revealed the Qur'an. It is to admonish those who fear Allah. It is a revelation from Him who has created the earth and the lofty heavens. The Merciful who is firm in power. His is what the heavens and earth contain. He has knowledge of all that is secret and all that is yet more hidden. (**Surah Taha, 20:1-6**)

These eloquent verses and the clear and firm words impressed Umar very much. The man, who was the most ruthless enemy of the Qur'an and Islam a few minutes earlier, decided to change his mind. He went to the house about which he had already learnt that the Holy Prophet could be found there and knocked at the door.

One of the companions of the Prophet peeped through a hole and saw Umar standing with a sword in hand and waiting for the door to be opened. He returned at once and informed the Prophet about the matter. Hamzah, son of Abdul Muttalib said: "Let him come in. If he has come with good intentions we shall welcome him, but if his intentions are not good we shall kill him".

Umar's attitude towards the Prophet reassured them and his open countenance and expression of sorrow and shame proved his real intentions. Eventually he embraced Islam at the hands of the Prophet

in the presence of his companions and thus joined the ranks of the Muslims.19

1. Instead of ringing a bell of danger the Arabs use these words and generally begin alarming reports with them.
2. Ibn Hisham has mentioned the names and particulars of these person in his 'Seerah'.
3. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. X, page 265.
4. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 265–266.
5. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, pp. 66,67; Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I. pp. 295,296
6. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, p. 313 and Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, p. 72.
7. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 59.
8. al–Bidayah wan Nihayah, vol. III, page 26.
9. Seerah, page 311. Tabari has quoted the entire incident in his history vol. II page 72, except that the head of the Caliph was injured.
10. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 47.
11. Biharul Anwar, vol. XVIII, page 204.
12. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 318.
13. Tabaqat–i Ibn S'ad, vol. III, page 233.
14. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 45.
15. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 320.
16. Seerah Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 314.
17. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, pp. 47–51; Usudul Ghabah; al–Asabah al–Ist'iab etc.
18. Seerah Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 365.
19. Ibn Hisham has given another version of the embracement of Islam by Umar. (vol. I, page 368)

A discussion, which is purely about the essence of a miracle and the miraculous nature of the Holy Qur'an is beyond the scope of this book. However, historical discussions tell us that this Heavenly Book was the greatest and sharpest weapon of the Holy Prophet–so much so that the expert poets and the circles of prosody and oration were puzzled and astonished at the eloquence, melody and attraction of its words, sentences and verses, and all of them admitted that the Holy Qur'an of Muhammad stood at the highest level of eloquence and clarity and its mastery over the words and its way of expression was unparalleled.

The impression, penetration, rapture and attraction of the Holy Qur'an was such that even the most severe enemies of the Holy Prophet trembled within themselves when they heard some of its verses and at times they became so much ecstasized that for quite some time they could not move from their places owing to amazement. Here is an example.

Judgement of Walid

Walid was one of the judges of Arabia. Many difficulties of the Arabs were solved through him. He possessed enormous wealth. A group of Quraysh went to him for the solution of the problem of penetration of Islam in all houses and explained the matter to him and sought his opinion about the Qur'an of Muhammad.

They said to him: "Is the Qur'an of Muhammad magic or divination or is it a sermon or a rhetoric which has been prepared by him". The sage of Arabia requested for time so that he might express his view after hearing the Qur'an. Then he rose from his place and came to the Prophet. He sat with him in 'Hajar–i Isma'il' and said "Read something from your poetry".

The Holy Prophet replied: "What I say is not poetry. Rather it is the word of Allah which He has sent down for your guidance". Then Walid insisted that he should recite the Qur'an. The Prophet recited the first thirteen verses of Surah al–Fussilat and when he reached this verse:

If they give no heed, say "I have given you warning of the scourge which overtook Thamud and 'Ad',

Walid trembled violently within himself. All his hair stood straight on his body and he got up in a state of astonishment and went home. He did not come out of his house for many days –so much so that Quraysh began ridiculing him and said: "Walid has given up the creed of his forefathers and has adopted the faith of Muhammad".1

Tabarsi says: "When Surah al–Ghafir was revealed to the Holy Prophet he recited it in a very attractive voice in order to communicate the Divine verses to the people. By chance Walid was then sitting by his side and heard these verses without being attentive:

This Book is revealed by Allah, the Mighty One, the All–Knowing, Who forgives sin and accepts repentance; the Bountiful One, Whose punishment is stern. There is no god but He. All shall return to Him. None but the unbelievers dispute the revelations of Allah. Don't be deceived by their activities in the land.....

These verses impressed the sage of Arabia very much. When Bani Makhzum came round him he commended the Holy Qur'an in these words: "Today I have heard from Muhammad a speech which does not belong to the category of the speeches of the human beings and the genii. It is very melodious and possesses a special beauty. Its branches are full of fruits and its roots abound with blessings. It is an outstanding narration and no other narration is as outstanding as this."

He uttered these sentences and went his way and Quraysh thought that he had begun to believe in Muhammad's religion.2

According to a great scholar 3 this was the first commendation and praise of the Qur'an by a human being and a careful study of this speech makes the miraculous nature of the Holy Qur'an vis–a–vis Arab ignorance absolutely clear and it becomes evident that the reason of the Holy Qur'an being a miracle in their eyes was its unusual rapture, attraction, sweetness and melody, because they did not find such deliciousness and elegance in any other thing except the Qur'an.

Another Example

'Utbah bin Rabiyyah was one of the elders of Quraysh. At the time when Hamzah embraced Islam the entire assembly of Quraysh was stricken with sorrow and grief and their chiefs feared that the Islamic faith would expand further. At that stage 'Atbah said: "I shall go to Muhammad and shall make some offers to him. It is possible that he may accept one of them and abandon the new religion". The chiefs endorsed his view.

He, therefore, got up and went to the Prophet who was then sitting in the Masjid. He offered to him wealth, authority and medical treatment in very gentle words. When he stopped speaking the Prophet said to him: "Was it all that you wanted to say?" He replied: "Yes." Then the Prophet said: "Just listen to these verses, for this is the reply to all that you have said".

Ha Mim. A revelation from the Compassionate, the Merciful. It is a Book, the verses of which have been well expounded; an Arabic Qur'an for those who have understanding. Bearing good news and warning. But most of them ignore it and give no heed. (**Surah Ha Mim, 41:1–4**).

The Holy Prophet recited some verses of this Surah. When he reached the thirty seventh verse he performed *'sajdah'.* After this he turned to 'Utbah and said: 'O Aba Walid! Have you heard the Message of Allah?" 'Utbah had been somewhat enchanted by the Word of Allah. He had placed his hands behind his head, which rested on them.

In this very condition he kept gazing on the face of the Holy Prophet for quite some time, as if he had been deprived of his power of speech. Then he got up from his place and went to the place where Quraysh had assembled. The chiefs of Quraysh had realized from his condition and countenance that he had been impressed by the words of Muhammad and had returned in a condition of humility coupled with distraction of mind. They were all watching intently to see 'Utbah's face.

All of them asked him: "What has happened?" He said: "By Allah! I have heard from Muhammad a speech which I had never heard from anyone. By Allah! It is neither poetry, nor magic nor divination. I consider it expedient that we should leave him alone so that he may propagate his religion amongst the different tribes. If he is successful and acquires a land and a kingdom it will be considered to be a matter of pride for you and you will also benefit from it. And if he is defeated, others will kill him and you, too, will be at ease".

Quraysh ridiculed 'Utbah for his remarks and views and said that he had been enchanted by the speech of Muhammad. 4

These are two specimens of the views of two outstanding eloquent speakers of the Age of Ignorance and other specimens are also available.

Strange Stratagem of Quraysh

One day, after sunset, the chiefs of Quraysh like 'Utbah, Shaybah, Abu Sufyan, Nazar bin Harith, Abul Bakhtari, Walid bin Mughayrah, Abu Jahl, 'As bin Wai'l etc. assembled by the side of the Ka'bah and decided to call the Prophet and discuss the matter with him directly. They, therefore, sent someone to ask the Prophet to participate in the meeting.

On having been informed about the matter the Prophet came hurriedly and joined their assembly, hoping to guide them to the right path. Conversation started from all sides and Quraysh repeated their grievances. They complained that dissension and discord had taken place amongst Quraysh, and expressed readiness for every sacrifice. In the end they made requests to the Prophet which have been depicted in the following verses:

***They say: "(O Muhammad!) We will not believe in you until you make a spring gush from the earth before our very eyes, or cause rivers to flow in a grove of palms and vines; until you cause the sky to fall upon us in pieces, as you have threatened to do, or bring down Allah and the angels in our midst; until you build a house of gold, or ascend to heaven; nor will we believe in your ascension until you have sent down forus a book which we can read (and which confirms your prophethood)."* (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:90–93)**

It is evident that all that they said was mere deceit, because palm and vine groves have nothing to do with the prophethood of a person and causing the sky to be torn to pieces and to fall down on earth is quite incompatible with the prophetic mission, whose object is to guide the people.

Amongst their demands there was only one thing, which had a miraculous aspect and that was the Prophet's ascension to heaven. And even if the Prophet had performed this miracle they would not have believed in him, because they had made it clear that he must also send down a book which should confirm his prophethood!

If Quraysh had been really keen to verify the truth of the Prophet's claim his ascension –to heaven would have been a sufficient proof of it. However, they said that they would not be satisfied with it, because all demands of theirs were based on particular motives. The Holy Prophet replied to them: "Surely I am no more than a Messenger and cannot perform a miracle without the permission of Allah".5

Stimulant for The Obstinacy of the Chiefs of Quraysh

This portion of the history of Islam is one of the points which deserves discussion, because one ponders as to why Quraysh quarrelled with the Prophet to this extent, notwithstanding the fact that all of them considered him to be truthful and honest and had not till that time observed even the smallest shortcoming in him, and had heard fascinating and eloquent words from him, and had often seen him perform unusual deeds which were beyond the ambits of the laws of nature.

A few things may be considered to be the cause or causes of this obstinacy:

1. Quraysh were jealous of the Holy Prophet

Some of them did not follow the Prophet, because they were jealous of him and wished that they themselves should possess this divine office.

The Holy Qur'an says:

They also say: 'Why was this **Qur'an not** ***revealed*** **to** ***some mighty man from the two towns'?*** **(Surah al-Zukhruf,43:31)**

The exegetes while explaining the reason for the revelation of this verse (viz. the unbelievers objected as to why the Qur'an was not revealed to one of the chiefs of Makkah or Ta'if) write thus:

"Walid son of Mughayra once met the Prophet and told him that he (Walid) was more suited for the office of Prophet as he enjoyed precedence over him (the Prophet) in the matter of age, wealth and children.6

Umayyah bin Abi Salt was a person who used to talk about a prophet before the advent of Islam and was anxious to assume this high office himself. He did not, however, follow the Holy Prophet till the end of his life and used to instigate the people to oppose him.

Akhnas, who was one of the enemies of the Prophet, said to Abu Jahl: "What is your opinion about Muhammad?" He replied: "We and Abd-i Munaf quarrelled about nobility and greatness and we vied with them and adopted all possible ways and means to become their equals. Now that we have become their equals they say that revelation descends from heavens on a member of their family. By Allah! We will never believe in him.7

These are some specimens which clearly indicate the jealousy of the chiefs of Quraysh. There are also other such specimens which can be found in the pages of history.

2. Fear of the Day of Judgement

This was the most effective cause for the obstinacy of Quraysh, because they were pleasure-seeking, voluptuous and easy-going people. The call of the Holy Prophet was opposed to the old habits of these persons who had enjoyed absolute freedom for centuries; and to give up bad habits entails great suffering and toil.

Furthermore, hearing of the verses regarding torture, which threaten the pleasure-seeking, unjust and ignorant persons with severe punishment, created a strange fear in their hearts and made them very much disturbed and uneasy. When the Holy Prophet recited the verses mentioned below in the general gatherings of Quraysh with a pleasant voice, there appeared a tumult, which disturbed their merry-making.

The Arabs who used to equip themselves for warding off all sorts of occurrences, cast lots with arrows, took omens with stones to procure safety, and considered the coming and going of birds to be the signs of occurrences, were not at all prepared to sit still unless they had acquired a guarantee against the torture of which Muhammad warned them. They, therefore, quarrelled with him so that they might not hear his good tidings and threats. Here are some of the verses which greatly disturbed the minds of the pleasure-seeking and ignorant Arabs:

When the Day of Judgement comes man will avoid his brother, mother, father, wife and children. On that day everyone will be concerned with himself **(Surah 'Abasa, 80:34-37)**

While sitting by the side of Ka'bah and drinking wine they suddenly heard these words:

No sooner will their skins be consumed than We shall give them other skins, so that they may truly taste Our scourge. **(Surah al-Nisa, 4:56).**

This made them so much disturbed and agitated that they involuntarily cast aside their cups and began trembling with fear.

There were other reasons also which made them refrain from admitting the truthfulness of Islam. For example, one day Harith bin Nawfal, son of Abd-i Munaf came to see the Holy Prophet and said: "We know that what you warn us of is true and correct. However, if we express our belief in you the polytheist Arabs will turn us out of our land". The following verse was revealed in reply to such persons:

They say: 'If we accept your guidance, we shall be driven from our land.' But have We not given them a sanctuary of safety ..... **(Surah al-Qasas, 28:57)**

Some objections by the Polytheists

At times they said: "Syria is the land which fosters prophets in its lap, and it has not been observed so far that a person should have been appointed to the prophetic mission in this desert (Makkah)". In imitation of the Jews some polytheists said: "Why is the Qur'an revealed piecemeal? Why has it not been sent down as a whole like the Injeel and the Taurat?" The Holy Qur'an reproduces their objection in these words: *"The unbelievers say: 'Why was the Qur'an not revealed to him in a single revelation?"*

Then it gives the following reply:

We have revealed it thus, so that We may strengthen your faith. **(Surah al-Furqan, 25:32)**

Undoubtedly unpleasant events and harsh occurrences have a great effect on human spirit and the only source of satisfaction for the Holy Prophet was the fresh words which he heard from his Lord, who ordered him to practice forbearance and fortitude, and by this means created a fresh spirit in his entire frame. It was for this purpose that the Holy Qur'an was revealed piecemeal.

Furthermore, in the early days of Islam, some rules were formally recognized, but it was not appropriate to let them continue. It was not, therefore, possible that the Holy Qur'an should have been revealed in a single revelation.

1. A'lamul Wara', pp. 27–28 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XVII, pp. 211–222.
2. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. X, page 387.
3. Kitabul Mu'jizatil Khalidah by Allamah Shahristani, page 66.
4. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 293 – 294.
5. Some of the Christian missionaries have argued on the basis of this and other verses that the Holy Prophet of Islam did not possess any miracle other than the Qur'an. The falsity of this argument has, however, been clearly proved and the object of such verses made manifest in the Persian book entitled 'Risalati Jahani Pyambaran'.
6. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 361.
7. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 316.

Migration of a group of Muslims to Ethiopia is a clear proof of their faith and deep sincerity. With a view to get rid of the mischief and atrocities of Quraysh and to acquire a peaceful atmosphere for observing their religious ceremonies and worshipping Allah the One, they decided to leave Makkah and to forsake their wealth, business, children and relatives.

They, however, wondered what to do and where to go, for they saw that idolatry prevailed throughout the Arabian Peninsula and there was not a single point where the name of Allah could be proclaimed aloud or the laws of Islam could be introduced. They, therefore, decided to place the matter before the Prophet –the foundation of whose religion was laid on:

"Allah's land is spacious. Worship Me alone" (**Choose that place for residence where you can worship Allah**). (**Surah al–Ankabut, 29:56**).

The Holy Prophet was fully aware of the pitiable condition of the Muslims. Although he himself enjoyed the support of Bani Hashim and they protected him from every harm, his devotees mostly consisted of slave–girls and slave–boys and some unprotected free men.

The chiefs of Quraysh persecuted these helpless persons incessantly and, in order to forestall tribal wars, the powerful chiefs of various tribes tortured those persons of their tribes who had embraced Islam. An account of the torture and persecutions to which Quraysh subjected the people has already been given in the foregoing pages.

It was on this account that when the companions of the Prophet sought advice from him regarding migration he replied: "If you travel to Ethiopia it will be very profitable for you, because, on account of the presence of a mighty and just ruler, nobody is oppressed there and the land of that country is good and pure and you can live there till Almighty Allah provides you relief."1

No doubt a pure environment, where a worthy and just person is at the helm of affairs, is a specimen of

Paradise and the only object of the companions of the Holy Prophet in occupying such a land was that they might perform their religious duties with perfect security and peace of mind.

The penetrating words of the Holy Prophet had such a wholesome effect that soon after that those, who were already quite ready, packed their luggage and proceeded to Jeddah at night, either mounted or on foot, without their enemies (idolaters) becoming aware of their departure. The total number of those who migrated this time was ten and they included four Muslim women as well.

It is worthy of note why the Holy Prophet did not mention other places. However, when the conditions then prevailing in Arabia and other places are studied the secret of the selection of Ethiopia becomes quite clear. The reason for this was that migration to places inhabited by the Arabs, who were usually idolaters, was dangerous.

The idolaters were reluctant to receive the Muslims, either because they wished to please Quraysh, or because they loved the religion of their forefathers. The places in Arabia inhabited by the Christians and the Jews were not at all fit for migration, because they were fighting and quarrelling with each other for their spiritual penetration, and there was no room for a third rival. Furthermore, these two groups considered people of the Arab descent to be inferior and humble.

Yemen was under the influence of the King of Iran and the Iranian authorities were not prepared to accommodate Muslims in that land, so much so that when Khusro Pervez received the letter from the Holy Prophet he at once wrote to the Governor of Yemen to arrest the new Prophet and send him to Iran. Hira, too, was under the domination of Iran like Yemen. Syria was far away from Makkah.

Furthermore, Yemen and Syria were the markets for Quraysh and they had close relations with the people of these areas. If the Muslims had taken shelter there those people would have expelled them on the request of Quraysh, who had made a similar request to the King of Ethiopia who turned it down.

During those days journey by sea, particularly with women and children, was an extraordinarily difficult job. Undertaking such a journey and abandoning means of livelihood was a sign of devotion and pure faith. Jeddah (and according to Jurji Zaydan the port of 'Shoaibiyah' of those days) was a developed trading port, and by chance two trading vessels were then ready to sail from there for Ethiopia.

The Muslims, fearing pursuit by Quraysh, made known their intention to perform the journey and boarded the vessel in much haste, on payment of half a dinar. A report regarding the departure of the Muslims had also reached the ears of the chiefs of Makkah and they sent some persons to bring them back, but by the time they reached there, the vessel had left the coast of Jeddah and could not be seen.

Pursuit of those, who had taken refuge in a foreign land only for the safety of their faith, is a clear proof of the villainy of Quraysh. The migrants had forsaken their property, children, residences and business, but the chiefs of Makkah were not prepared to leave them alone The elders of 'Darun Nadwah' feared the outcome of this journey and discussed amongst themselves the matters, which will be mentioned

later.

The members of this group did not belong to one family and according to Ibn Hisham,2 everyone of these ten persons belonged to a separate family. Another migration took place after this and the leader of these migrants was Ja'far son of Abu Talib. This migration was arranged with perfect freedom and some of the migrants were, therefore, successful in taking their women and children also with themselves.

Consequently the number of the Muslims in Ethiopia reached eighty three and if we take into account the children who were taken there or were born in that land the number would exceed this figure.

As the Prophet had described, the Muslims found Ethiopia to be a prosperous country with a calm and free atmosphere. Umm Salama, the wife of Abi Salama, who later had the honour of marrying the Prophet, says thus about that country: "When we settled in Ethiopia we found ourselves under the protection of the best patron. We did not meet with any trouble or hear any bad word from anyone".

From the verses composed by some migrants it transpires that the atmosphere of Ethiopia was very pleasant. Details may be seen in the Seerah–i Ibn Hisham.3

Quraysh Send Their Representatives to The Court of Ethiopia

When the chiefs of Makkah learned about the freedom and peaceful life of the Muslims in Ethiopia, the flames of rancour kindled in their hearts, they were disturbed by the happy life being led by them there, because that country had proved to be a haven for them. They were very much afraid lest the Muslims should have access to the Negus (ruler of Ethiopia) and they might be able to attract him to the religion of Islam and thus arrange the invasion of the Arabian Peninsula by a well–equipped army.

The elders of 'Darun–Nadwah' conferred once again and unanimously decided to send representatives to the court of Ethiopia and to arrange for proper presents for the King and his ministers to earn their good will, and then to accuse the migrant Muslims of stupidity and ignorance and of inventing a religion.

In order that their plan might meet with an immediate success they selected from amongst themselves two persons known for their cunning and deceitful activities. One of whom later became a juggler in the field of politics. The lot fell upon 'Amr bin As and Abdullah bin Rabi'ah.

The president of 'Darun Nadwah' instructed them that before meeting the ruler of Ethiopia they should present gifts to the ministers and have conversation with them in advance and should try to bring them round, so that when they met the king, they (the ministers) might support them. After having been briefed on these lines the said two persons proceeded to Ethiopia.

The ministers of Ethiopia met the representatives of Quraysh and the latter, after presenting the gifts, spoke to them thus: "A group of our young men have abjured the creed of their forefathers and have

invented a religion which is opposed to our religion as well as yours. They are now residing in your country. The elders and chiefs of Quraysh earnestly request the King of Ethiopia to expel them as soon as possible.

Incidentally, we also desire that the council of ministers may support us in the presence of the King. And as we are fully aware of the shortcomings and ways and manners of these persons it will be expedient that the matter is not discussed with them at all and the head of the State should not also grant them an audience".

The greedy and short-sighted persons (i.e. the ministers) assured them of their full support. On the following day the representatives of Quraysh were admitted in the royal court and after conveying their greetings and presenting the gifts they communicated the message of Quraysh to the King in the following words:

"O honourable ruler of Ethiopia! Some foolish young men of ours have taken steps to propagate a religion which does not conform either with the official religion of your country or with that of their ancestors. These people have recently taken refuge in your country and are taking undue advantage of the freedom available in this State. The elders of Quraysh earnestly request your Majesty that orders may be issued for their expulsion so that they may return to their own country....."

As soon as the speech of the representatives of Quraysh ended the voices of the ministers, who were sitting round the royal throne, became loud. All of them supported the representatives of Quraysh and confirmed what they had said. However, signs of anger appeared on the face of the wise and just Ruler of Ethiopia.

Opposing his courtiers he thundered: "This cannot be. I can't hand over to these two persons, without proper investigation, the people who have taken refuge in my country. It is necessary that the condition and particulars of these refugees should be looked into. And I will return them to their country only after the statements of these two persons about them have been substantiated thorough scrutiny. On the other hand, if what these persons have said about them is not based on reality, I will not forsake them, but will render them more assistance".

Thereafter a special emissary of the royal court was sent to the emigrant Muslims and he brought them before the King without providing them any prior information. Ja'far bin Abu Talib was introduced as the representative of those persons. Some of the Muslims were worried as to how he would address the Christian monarch of Ethiopia. To alleviate their anxiety Ja'far told them that he would communicate to the King exactly what he had heard from the Holy Prophet.

The King of Ethiopia turned to Ja'far and said: "Why have you abjured the creed of your forefathers and adopted a faith which does not conform either to our religion or to that of your ancestors?"

Jatfar replied: "We were an ignorant and idolatrous people. We did not avoid eating the dead bodies. We

always indulged in abominable deeds. We had no respect for our neighbours. The weak and the helpless were oppressed by the strong. We quarrelled and fought with our kinsmen. We spent quite a long time in this manner till a person from amongst us, who has a very brilliant and pure past, rose up and invited us, under the commandment of Allah, to worship the One and only Deity, and declared the praise of idols to be despicable.

He also ordered us to return the things entrusted to us by others; to avoid impurities, to behave well with our kinsmen and neighbours and to shun bloodshed, unlawful contacts, false evidence, usurpation of the property of orphans and imputing bad deeds to women.

He has ordered us to offer prayers, to fast, and to pay taxes on our wealth. We have believed in him and occupied ourselves with the praise and worship of Allah the One. We consider that which He has declared lawful to be lawful. However, Quraysh have behaved with us cruelly and have tortured us day and night so that we might abjure our faith, revert to the worship of stones and idols and do all sorts of evil deeds.

We resisted them for quite some time till our energy was exhausted. Despaired of our life and property we have taken refuge in Ethiopia to save our faith. The fame of the justice of the Ruler of Ethiopia attracted us like magnet and now also we have perfect faith in his justice."[4]

The appealing and fascinating speech of Ja'far impressed the King so much that he, with tears in his eyes, said to him: "Read something from the Heavenly Book of your Prophet". Ja'far recited some verses from Surah Maryam. He continued reciting these verses and fully explained the view-point of Islam about the chastity of Maryam and the elevated position of Prophet 'Isa. He had not yet finished the Surah when the King and the bishops began to cry loudly and their beards and the pages of the books, which were lying open before them, became wet with their tears.

For some time after this silence prevailed in the assembly and the humming ceased. Then the King intervened and said: "The words of their Prophet and that which Prophet 'Isa brought have emanated from one and the same source of light. Be gone. I will never surrender them to you".

Contrary to what the ministers and the representatives of Quraysh had expected, this meeting ended to their disadvantage and no ray of hope was left for them.

'Amr As, who was a diplomatic and cunning person, had a conversation with his friend Abdullah bin Rabi'ah and said to him: "We had better adopt another method tomorrow and it is possible that that method may end in the annihilation of the emigrants. Tomorrow I shall tell the King of Ethiopia that the leader of these refugees has a particular belief about Prophet 'Isa, which does not at all conform to the fundamentals of Christianity".

Abdullah checked him from doing so and pointed out that amongst the refugees there were also persons who were related to them. His advise was not, however, effective. On the following day they went to the

royal court along with all the ministers.

This time they pretended sympathy and support for the official religion of Ethiopia and criticized the beliefs of the Muslims with regard to Prophet 'Isa and said: "These people have specific beliefs about 'Isa which do not at all conform to the fundamentals and beliefs of the Christian World and the presence of such persons is dangerous for the official religion of your country. It should be possible for Your Majesty to enquire about it from them".

This time also the wise Ruler of Ethiopia decided to investigate the matter and ordered that the immigrants should be brought before him. The Muslims pondered over the reason for their being called again. It appeared as if it had been revealed to them by inspiration that the purpose of their being called was to enquire about their beliefs with regard to the founder of Christianity. Once again Ja'far was introduced as their spokesman.

He had already promised his friends that he would say only those things on the subject which he had heard from the Holy Prophet.

The Negus turned to the representative of the refugees and said: "What is your belief about Prophet 'Isa?"

Ja'far replied: "Our belief with regard to 'Isa is that which has been taught to us by our Holy Prophet. He was the servant and Prophet of Allah. He was the Spirit and Word of Allah with which He blessed Maryam".

The King of Ethiopia was very much pleased to hear the remarks of Ja'far and said: "By Allah! 'Isa did not enjoy a higher position than this". The ministers and the deviated persons did not like this observation of the King.

However, notwithstanding their views, he praised the beliefs of the Muslims and allowed them full freedom. He threw the presents of Quraysh before their representatives and said: "God has not taken any bribe from me while giving me this authority. It is not, therefore, appropriate that I should accumulate wealth by such means".5

Return from Ethiopia

Some persons who had migrated to Ethiopia left that country and returned to the Hijaz on account of false reports to the effect that Quraysh had embraced Islam. On their return, they came to know that the reports received by them were false and the pressure and persecution of the Muslims by Quraysh had not yet abated. Most of them, therefore, returned to Ethiopia and only a small minority entered Makkah, either secretly or under the protection of some mighty person of Quraysh.

Uthman bin Maz'un entered Makkah under the protection of Walid bin Mughayrah 6 and became safe

from the atrocities of the enemy. He could, however, see with his own eyes that other Muslims were being persecuted and tortured by Quraysh. Uthman was very much grieved to observe this discrimination.

He, therefore, requested Walid to declare publicly that the son of Maz'un was no longer under his protection so that he might also be in the same position in which other Muslims were, and should share their grief and sorrow. Walid, therefore, declared in the mosque: "From this moment Ibn Maz'un is not under my protection". And Uthman also said aloud: "I confirm it".

Soon thereafter Labid, the Arabian poet, entered the mosque and began reading his well-known Qasidah (laudatory poem) in the big assembly of Quraysh.

He said: "Everything except Allah is unreal and illusory". Uthman said: "You are right". Labid then read the second hemistich:

"All the blessings of Allah are unstable". Uthman was disturbed and said: "You are mistaken. The blessings of the Hereafter are permanent and eternal". Labid took ill the objection of Uthman and said: "O Quraysh! Your circumstances have changed.

In the past your assemblies were in good order and your companions did not feel any grief. Since when has this change occurred in your condition? Who is he?" One of those present said: "He is a foolish man who has abjured our creed and follows a man like himself. Don't pay heed to his words".

Then the man rose and gave Uthman a strong slap in the face and blackened it. Walid bin Mughayrah said: "O Uthman! Had you remained under my protection you would not have suffered all this". Uthman replied: "I am under the protection of Almighty Allah". Walid said: "I am prepared to offer you protection once again". Uthman replied: "I shall not accept it at all".7

Mission of The Christians

Consequent upon the propagation of Islam by the Muslim immigrants an inquiry mission visited Makkah on behalf of the religious centre of the Christians of Ethiopia. They met the Prophet in the mosque and asked him certain questions. The Prophet gave replies to their questions and invited them to embrace Islam and recited some verses of the Holy Qur'an before them.

The Qur'anic verses changed their mentality in such a way that tears began to flow from their eyes involuntarily and they immediately expressed belief in his prophethood and confirmed all the signs of the promised Prophet about whom they had read in the Injeel.

Abu Jahl disliked this enthusiastic and well-concluded meeting. He said to those persons with much harshness: "The people of Ethiopia sent you on an inquiry mission and it was not the intention that you should abjure the religion of your ancestors. I don't think there are more stupid persons than yourselves

on the face of the earth".

Those persons uttered conciliatory words in reply to the Pharaoh of Makkah, who wanted to hide the invigorating rays of the sun, like a dark cloud, and thus put an end to the dispute.8

The Mission of Quraysh

The mission of the people of Ethiopia became a means of the awakening of Quraysh and they also decided to make investigation. A group of persons including Harith bin Nasr and 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'it left for Yathrib (Madina) as representatives of Quraysh with a view to place the question of the 'prophethood' and 'call' of Muhammad before the Jews. The Jewish scholars advised the mission to ask Muhammad the following questions:

1. What is the reality of the soul?

2. Story of the persons who disappeared in bygone times (the people of the Cave).

3. The adventures of the man who travelled in the east and in the west of the world. (Dhulqarnayn).

They told them that if Muhammad was in a position to reply to these questions they should rest assured that he is the chosen one of Allah, but if he failed to give the requisite replies they should consider him to be a liar who must be got rid of as early as possible.

The representatives returned to Makkah in a very happy mood and informed Quraysh of the above-mentioned questions. A meeting was, therefore, arranged to which the Prophet was also invited. The Prophet told them that he was waiting for Divine revelation in connection with the three questions.9

Heavenly revelation came. Reply to the first question (regarding 'soul') is contained in Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:85. As regards the other two questions they have been replied to in detail in Surah al-Kahf 9-28 and 83-98. Detailed replies of the Holy Prophet to these three questions are found in the books of exegeses and need not be repeated here.

1. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 321 and Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 70.
2. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 245.
3. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham,vol. I, page 353.
4. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, pp. 54-55
5. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 338.
6. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 369.
7. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 371.
8. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 392.
9. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 300 - 301.

The ruling forces of idolatry were in a state of readiness throughout the Arabian Peninsula. Quraysh had

organized their ranks to campaign against the worship of Allah the One. At the early stages they wished to make the Prophet abandon his mission by alluring him and offering him wealth and authority, but were faced with his well-known reply: "By Allah! Even if you place the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left hand (i.e. give me authority over the entire world) I shall not abandon this mission". Then they started threatening, humiliating and persecuting his friends and were never tired of harming and torturing them.

However, the heroism and steadfastness of his sincere friends made them succeed in this ordeal also, so much so that they purchased their perseverance in the path of Islam by abandoning their homes, and endeavoured to spread this sacred religion by migrating to Ethiopia. However, the operations of the ruling forces of idolatry to uproot the sapling of Islam had not yet ended. Rather they now sought to use a sharper weapon.

This weapon was that of anti-Muhammad propaganda. Evidently torture and oppression could prevent from adopting Islam, only those persons, who were residing in Makkah. It could not be effective in respect of those who came to Makkah in groups during the sacred months, to perform the pilgrimage of the House of Allah.

The pilgrims contacted the Prophet in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity and even if they did not embrace his religion they at least became shaky about their own creed (idol-worship). And when they left Makkah after a few days and returned to their homes, they carried the name of the Prophet and the story of the new religion to all the corners of Arabia. And this in itself was considered to be a severe blow to the rule of idolatry, and was a wonderful factor leading to the expansion of Islam.

The elders of Quraysh, therefore, put another destructive programme into practice and wished to withhold by this means the expansion of the Prophet's religion and thus to cut off his contacts with the Arab society.

Undue Calumnies

The character of man can be understood best from under the veil of the abuses and calumnies of his enemy. In order to misguide the people the enemy always endeavours to make such accusations against his opponent as are palatable to the society to the extent of even one per thousand so that by spreading falsehoods and baseless things he may, as far as possible, diminish his honour and position.

A wise enemy endeavours to impute such things to his opponent as are believed by some particular persons or are at least doubted by them. He does not, however, circulate about his opponent those things, which do not at all apply to him and have no bearing on his well-known and obvious mentality and deeds, because otherwise he would achieve results contrary to those desired by him.

As such a proficient historian can study the real countenance of the other party from behind the

falsehoods and calumnies and can learn about his social success and mentality even from behind the control tower of the enemy.

It is so because a shamelessly fearless enemy does not avoid publishing a false charge which is to his advantage and derives maximum benefit from the sharp weapon of propaganda to the extent his thinking, intelligence and knowledge of the situation permit him. If, therefore, he does not associate anything undue with the other party it is because that person is free from every such weakness and the society is not, therefore, prepared to accept that stuff.

The history of Islam shows that although Quraysh entertained unusual enmity and rancour against the Prophet and were keen to pull down the newly–built edifice of Islam at all costs and to diminish the personality and position of its founder, they could not make full use of this weapon (i.e. calumny). They wondered what to say when the property of some of their own people was lying at his house (i.e. as trust) and his forty years' noble life had proved film to be an honest man.

Could they possibly accuse him of sensuality? But how could they bring this word on their tongue? He began his manhood with a comparatively old woman and was still spending his days with her when Quraysh met to organize propaganda against him! They then reflected as to what they should say so that it might apply to him and at least one per cent of the people might accept it to be probably true.

The elders of Darun Nadwah were puzzled as to how they should use this weapon against him. They, therefore, decided to place the matter before one of the sages of Quraysh and to implement his advice. An assembly was formed.

Walid turned to Quraysh and said: "The Haj season is near and during these days people come to this city in large numbers to perform various obligations and ceremonies attached to Haj. Muhammad will make use of the opportunity afforded by the freedom available during these days and will propagate his religion. It will be better if Quraysh express their final view about him and his new religion. Hence, all should communicate only one opinion to the Arabs, because diversity of opinions will make their words ineffective".

Having said this the sage of Arabia thought over the matter and said: "What should we say?" One of them suggested: "We should say that he is a soothsayer". Walid did not like this suggestion and said: "What Muhammad says is not like the words of the soothsayers".

Another person proposed that they should call him insane. This proposal was also rejected by Walid, who said: "No signs of insanity are found in him". After much discussion they decided unanimously thus: "We should say that he is a magician, because his way of saying things is magical and the proof of this is that by means of his Qur'an he has created dissension amongst the Makkans, whose harmonious relations were proverbial, and has destroyed their unity.1

While commenting on Surah al–Muddaththir the exegetes have given another version of this matter.

Thev say: "When Walid heard some verses of Surah al-Fussilat from the Holy Prophet, he was spell bound and it made his hair stand on end. He left for his house and did not come out again. Quraysh began ridiculing him and said that Walid had become a follower of the religion of Muhammad. They went to his house collectively and enquired from him about the reality of Muhammad's Qur'an.

Whenever anyone of those present made a suggestion on the above lines he rejected it. Eventually he expressed the view that they should call the Holy Prophet a magician, on account of the discord which he had created between them, and should say that he has a magical way of saying things!

The exegetes believe that the verses (11-26) of Surah al-Muddaththir commencing with

"Leave to Me the man, whom I have created alone, **up to** ***"I shall make him suffer the torment of Hell',***

have been revealed about Walid ibn Mughayrah.2

Persistence in Attributing Insanity

It is an admitted fact of history that from his early manhood the Prophet was known for his uprightness and truthfulness, and even his enemies bent down their heads involuntarily before his high qualities. One of his outstanding attributes was that the people called him truthful and honest, so much so that the idol-worshippers used to deposit their belongings with him till ten years after the general invitation.

As the invitation of the Prophet was very unpleasant and indigestible for his enemies, their only effort was that they should turn away the people from him by means of words which could completely contaminate their minds. As they knew that attributing falsehood and calumny to the Prophet would not impress the minds of the artless and simple idolaters they were compelled to deny his invitation by saying that the source of his views and thoughts was insanity which was incompatible with the qualities of piety and righteousness. They made many evil designs and practiced cunning and deceit in propagating this hypocritical imputation.

On account of acute hypocrisy they pretended to be quite honest while making this imputation and expressed the matter in ambiguous terms and said:

"Has he invented a lie About Allah, or is he mad?" **(Surah Saba, 34:8).**

And this is the very devilish method which the enemies of reality adopt while denying great men and reformers of the society. The Holy Qur'an tells that this abominable method was not peculiar to the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet, as the enemies of earlier Prophets had also used this weapon to contradict them. It says:

Thus whenever an apostle came to those that flourished before them they cried: 'Sorcerer!' or

'Madman!' Have they handed down this cry from one generation to the next? Surely they are transgressors all". **(Surah al-Zariyat, 51: 52-53)**

The present Injeel also tells that when 'Isa gave counsel to the Jews they said: 'There is satan in him and he talks incoherently. Why do you listen to him?' (St. John, chapter, 10:20 and chapter, 7:48, 52)

No doubt if Quraysh had been in a position to slander the Prophet on any other account they would not have desisted from doing so. However, for more than forty years the honourable life of the Prophet checked them from uttering any other calumny against his character although they were ready to use the smallest thing against him.

For example, he used to sit at times near Marwah with a Christian slave named Jabr. His enemies immediately took advantage of this practice of his and said: "Muhammad learns the Qur'an from this Christian slave". The Holy Qur'an replies thus to their baseless accusation: "We know that they say that a man teaches him the Qur'an. However, the language of the man whom they mention is non-Arabic, whereas this (the Qur'an) is in clear Arabic." 3

Imposture of Nazar Bin Harith

The rusty weapon of propaganda against the Prophet did not prove effective at all, because people realized through their wisdom and intelligence that the Qur'an possesses a wonderful charm. They also felt that they had never before heard such sweet and meaningful words which immediately impressed one's mind. When the enemies did not profit by calumniating the Prophet they thought of another childish plan and hoped that by putting it into practice they would be able to deprive him of the attention and belief of the people.

Nazar bin Harith, who was one of the intelligent and experienced men of Quraysh who had spent a part of his life in Hira and Iraq possessed knowledge about the status of the kings and warriors of Iran like Rustam and Asfand Yar and of the beliefs of the Iranians about good and evil, was selected to campaign against the Prophet. Darun Nadwah approved the idea that by displaying his art in the streets and bazaars and relating the stories of the Iranians and the adventures of their kings, Nazar should divert the attention of the people from the Prophet to himself.

In order to diminish the status of the Prophet and to show his words and the verses of the Qur'an to be valueless, he said repeatedly: "O people! What is the difference between my words and those of Muhammad? He tells you the tales of the people who were subjected to Divine wrath and fury, and I tell you the story of those who were very much blessed and have been ruling on the face of the earth for long long years".

This plan was so foolish that it did not last for more than a few days. So much so that Quraysh themselves got tired of Nazar's words and deserted him.

Some verses of the Qur'an were revealed in this regard: ***"They say: 'Fables of the ancients he has written: they are dictated to him morning and evening'. Say: 'It is revealed by Him Who knows the secrets of the heavens and the earth. He is Forgiving and Merciful'.*** **(Surah al-Furqan, 25:5-6)**

Persistence of Quraysh in Their Faith

The Prophet of Islam knew very well that most of the people practiced idol-worship in imitation of the chiefs of the tribe and this practice was not deeply rooted in their hearts. In case, therefore, a change was brought about in the chiefs and he was successful in guiding one or two of them, most of the difficulties would be solved.

He was, therefore, very keen to attract Walid bin Mughayrah (whose son Khalid later became a Muslim commander and conqueror), because he was the most aged and the most influential person amongst Quraysh and enjoyed respect and authority. He was called the sage of Arabia and his views were respected in various disputable matters.

One day when the Holy Prophet was conversing with him (Walid) Ibn Umme Muktum, a blind man, approached the Prophet and requested him to recite some verses of the Holy Qur'an for him. He insisted so much that the Prophet disliked it, because it was not known as to when another opportunity to converse with the sage of Arabia in a peaceful atmosphere would come. He, therefore, turned away his face from Ibn Umme Mukrum and, with a frown on his brow, ignored him.

This incident was over. However, the Prophet was thinking about the matter when the first fourteen verses of Surah 'Abasa were revealed:

He frowned and then turned away from a blind man who had come up to him. You never know. Perhaps he wanted to purify himself, or receive some **(*Qur'anic*)** ***advice which would benefit him. Yet you pay attention to a rich man, though you will not be questioned even if he never purifies himself. As for the one who comes to you earnestly*** **(*striving for guidance*)** ***and who has fear of God, you ignore him. This is an admonition. These verses are a reminder, so let those who want to follow its guidance do so.*** **(Surah 'Abasa, 80: 1-17)**

Distinguished Ulema and research scholars amongst the Shi'ah consider this portion of the episode to be baseless and inconsistent with the good nature of the Holy Prophet and they say that the verses themselves do not indicate that it was he who frowned and turned away his face from the blind man.

It has been quoted from Imam al-Sadiq that the person meant was one who belonged to the family of Umayyah. When Ibn Umm Muktum approached the Prophet that man showed hatred for him and these verses were revealed to admonish him.4

They Prohibit Hearing of The Qur’an

The idolatrous administration of Makkah had chalked out an extensive programme to check the expansion of Islam. They put their schemes into operation one after another, but failed to achieve their purpose.

They carried on extensive propaganda against the Prophet from time to time, but did not meet with any success. They saw that he was steadfast in his mission and the rays of the light of Divine monotheism were penetrating further day after day.

The chiefs of Quraysh decided to prohibit the people from hearing the Qur'an and in order to ensure the success of their scheme they posted spies in all parts of Makkah so that they might restrain the pilgrims and tradesmen, who visited Makkah, from contacting Muhammad and might stop, by all possible means, their hearing of the Qur'an. The spokesman of the group circulated a declaration amongst the Makkans, about which the Holy Qur'an says:

"The disbelievers say: 'Do not listen to this Qur'an but make a lot of unnecessary noise while it is being read so that perhaps you will defeat it'." **(Surah al-Fussilat, 41:26)**

The most effective weapon used by the Holy Prophet which created a strange awe and fear in the hearts of the enemies was the Qur'an itself. The chiefs of Quraysh could see that many sworn enemies of the Holy Prophet went to meet him just to ridicule or harm him, but as soon as they heard a few verses of the Holy Book they became his sincere followers. To prevent such occurrences Quraysh decided to prohibit their subordinates and supporters from hearing the Qur'an and declared conversation with Muhammad to be unlawful.

The Law-Breaking Legislators

The same people who strictly prohibited the hearing of the Qur'an and punished all those who defied the declaration, came, after a few days, under the category of law-breakers and practically broke secretly the very law which they had themselves approved!

One night Abu Sufyan, Abu Jahl and Akhnas bin Shariq left their houses and proceeded to the residence of the Prophet, without the knowledge of one another. Everyone of them concealed himself in a corner and their object was to hear the Qur'an of Muhammad, which he used to recite at night with a pleasant voice, while performing his prayers. All of them remained there till morning, without being aware of the presence of others, and heard the Qur'an.

In the morning they had to return to their houses. They met on the way and reproached one another saying that if the simple-minded people came to know about their activities what would they think about them?

The same thing was repeated during the next night. It would seem that an inner urge and charm attracted them to the house of the Holy Prophet. At the time of their return they met again and exchanged mutual reproaches and decided not to repeat their action. However, the attraction of the Qur'an was such that they again went to his house without the knowledge of one another and sat round it and heard the Qur'an till morning. When they heard the Qur'anic verses their fear increased every moment and they said to themselves: "In case the promises and the threats of Muhammad be true, we have led sinful lives".

When it was dawn they left the house of the Prophet for the fear of the simple-minded people and again met one another. All of them admitted that they could not withstand the attraction of the 'call' and the law of the Qur'an. However, to prevent any unpleasant occurrences, they concluded a mutual agreement that they would not resort to this action again.5

Preventing People from Embracing Islam

After implementing the first programme of hearing the Qur'an to be unlawful, they started the second one. People residing in near and far off palaces, as and when they were inclined towards Islam, proceeded to Makkah The spies of Quraysh contacted them on the way or at the time of their arrival in Makkah and prevented them under different pretexts from embracing Islam. Here are two clear examples:

1. A'asha was one of the great poets of the Age of Ignorance and his verses were quoted in the assemblies of Quraysh. He heard about the commandments of Allah and the splendid teachings of Islam at the time when he had grown old. He lived at a place which was at a far-off distance from Makkah.

The 'call' of the Holy Prophet had not yet been extended fully to that area, but even that which he had heard about Islam in brief terms created a great love for it in his heart. He composed a marvellous panegyric in praise of the Prophet and did not consider a gift better than that he should recite it in the presence of the Prophet.

Although the number of the verses of this panegyric does not exceed twenty four, these are the best and the most eloquent verses recited in the praise of the Holy Prophet during those times. The text of these verses may be seen in his poetical works.6 The poet commends upon the sublime teachings of the Prophet which had illuminated his mind.

A'asha had not yet been fortunate enough to come to the Prophet when the spies of the idol-worshippers contacted him and became aware of his feelings. They knew well that A'asha was a sensual person and was addicted to wine. They at once took advantage of his weak points and said: "O Abu Basir! The religion of Muhammad does not conform to your mentality and moral condition!" He said "Why not?"

They replied: "He has declared adultery unlawful." He said: "I have nothing to do with it and this thing does not stand in the way of my embracing Islam". They added: "He has also banned drinking of wine". On hearing this he became somewhat uneasy and said: "I am not yet satiated with wine. I shall return now and shall drink wine to my fill for a period of one year and shall come next year and embrace Islam at his hands". He then returned, but death did not permit him to do what he had said, for he died the same year.7

Another Example

Tufayl bin 'Amr, who was a wise man and a melodious poet and enjoyed great respect in his tribe, came to Makkah. It was very detestable and annoying for Quraysh that Tufayl should embrace Islam. The chiefs of Quraysh and the jugglers of diplomacy, therefore, gathered round him and groaned and said: "That man who is offering his prayers by the side of the Ka'bah has destroyed our unity and created dissensions amongst us by his magical narrations and we are afraid that he would create a similar discord in your tribe also. It will, therefore, be much better if you do not converse with him at all".

Tufayl says: "Their words impressed me so much that fearing that Muhammad's magical narrations might affect me, I decided not to speak with him or to hear what he said. In order to ward off the influence of his magic, therefore, I decided to put some cotton in my ears while performing 'tawaf', so that his voice should not reach me, while he was reciting the Qur'an and offering his prayers. In the morning I entered the mosque after having put cotton in my ears and was not at all inclined to hear him speak.

However, I don't know how it happened that all of a sudden some extremely sweet and charming words reached my ears and I enjoyed them very much. Upon this I said to myself: "Curse upon you! You are an eloquent and intelligent person. What is the harm if you hear what this man says? If he says something good you should accept it, otherwise you can very well reject it. I waited, however, so that I might not contact the Prophet openly.

At last the Prophet proceeded to his house and entered it. I also obtained permission and entered his house. I told him the entire story and said: "Quraysh ascribe so many things to you, and in the beginning I had no intention of seeing you. However, the sweetness of the Qur'an has drawn me to you. I now request you kindly to explain the nature of your religion and recite a portion of the Qur'an to me".

"The Holy Prophet made his religion known to me and recited some verses of the Qur'an".

Tufayl adds: "By Allah! I had never heard a narration more appealing and had never seen a law more moderate!"

Then Tufayl said to the Prophet: "I am an influential man in my tribe and shall take steps for the propagation of your religion".

Ibn Hisham writes8 that he (Tufayl) was with his tribe till the Battle of Khayber and remained busy in

propagating Islam and joined the Holy Prophet in that very battle along with seventy or eighty Muslim families.9 He remained steadfast in Islam till he met his martyrdom in the Battle of Yamamah.

1. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 270.
2. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. X, page 387.
3. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 393.
4. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. I, page 437
5. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 337.
6. Diwan–i A'asha, pp. 101–103.
7. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 386 – 388.
8. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 410.
9. Dr Haykal says: "He joined the Prophet after the conquest of Makkah and we have not yet found any evidence for this statement.

It is possible that some of the readers may like to know the origin of the myth of 'Gharaniq', which has been quoted by some Sunni historians, and may incidentally become aware of the hands which have been busy in inventing and propagating falsehoods.

The Jews, and especially their religious leaders, have been and are sworn enemies of Islam. A group of theirs like Ka'b Ahbar who had ostensibly embraced Islam was continuously busy in concealing the realities of Islam by coining falsehoods and publicizing baseless things by ascribing them to the Prophet, and some of the Muslim writers, reposing confidence in all their co–religionists, accepted most of their forgeries without proper scrutiny and compiled them in the shape of tradition and history.

Nowadays, however, more opportunities are available to the scholars for scrutinizing such matters and particularly a set of rules and methods has come into existence as a result of the efforts of the Muslim research scholars for distinguishing historical facts from myths. In the circumstances it is not at all proper for a writer, who is well–versed in religious matters, to accept as final whatever he comes across in a book and to quote it without verification.

What is the Fiction of 'Ghayraniq'?

It is said that the chiefs of Quraysh like Walid, 'As, Aswad and Umayyah met the Prophet and proposed that, in order to remove their mutual differences, both the parties should acknowledge the gods of each other. At that moment 'Surah al–Kafirun' was revealed in reply to their proposal and the Prophet was ordered to speak thus: "I do not worship that which you worship, nor do you worship Him whom I worship."

Nevertheless, the Prophet was fiery keen to reconcile with his people and wished that an order might be revealed which should lessen the gap between him and his kinsmen. One day he was sitting near the Ka'bah and reciting Surah al–Najm in a sonorous tone. When he reached these two verses. "Have you thought on al–Lat and al–Uzza and thirdly on Manat?"

Satan suddenly made him utter another two sentences viz. "These are 'Gharaniq' 1 who are high in position and their intercession is acceptable", and then he recited the remaining verses. When he reached the verse of sajdah (the last verse of the surah) the Prophet himself as well as all others present, whether Muslims or idolaters, performed sajdah before the idols, with the exception of Walid who was too old to do so.

There was tumult and rejoicing amongst those who were present in the mosque and the idolaters said that Muhammad had spoken well of their gods. The news about the reconciliation of Muhammad with Quraysh reached those who had migrated to Ethiopia and consequently some of them returned from their place of residence (Ethiopia).

However, on their return they found that once again the conditions had undergone a change and the angel had brought revelation to the Prophet and had asked him again to oppose the idolaters and had told him that Satan had made him utter those words and he (the angel) had never spoken them!

This is the gist of the fiction of 'Gharaniq' which the orientalists are very keen to quote with much grandiloquence. 2

A Simple Accountability of This Fiction

You may suppose that Muhammad was not one of the chosen ones of the Almighty, but his wisdom and intelligence cannot be denied in any case. Now how can a wise man resort to such an act? Is it possible that an intelligent person who observes that the number of his followers is becoming larger day by day and the split in the ranks of the enemy is increasing, should, at such a juncture, do something which may lower down his position before his friends as well as of his enemies?

Can you believe that the person who refused all offers of status and wealth by Quraysh for the sake of the Divine religion should once again introduce polytheism and idol-worship? Not to talk of the Holy Prophet, we cannot expect any such thing even from a reformer or an ordinary statesman.

Judgement of Intellect on This Myth

1. According to the verdict of intellect the Divine teachers are always immune from all sorts of errors on account of the strength of innocence they possess. But if it be agreed upon that they too are liable to commit mistakes and errors in religious matters the very basis of the confidence, which people repose in their words, crumbles down.

Hence, it is necessary that we should test such historical events with the touchstone of our rational beliefs and should solve these ambiguities of history with our firm faith. And it goes without saying that the uprightness of Muhammad in propagation of the Divine religion would not allow the occurrence of such events.

2. The myth rests on the assumption that the Prophet was tired of the responsibility which Allah had laid on his shoulders and was very much perturbed on account of the deviation and remoteness of his people. He was therefore, anxious to find out ways and means to improve their condition. However, wisdom ordains that the prophets should be very patient and forbearing, their fortitude should be proverbial amongst all and they should never think of abandoning their mission.

If this myth be a true and confirmed incident it would mean that the hero of our narrative had lost his fortitude and patience and his spirit had become depressed and tired. This thing is not, however, in consonance with the verdict of wisdom and does not also accord with the Prophet's past and future life, as we know it.

The inventor of this story has ignored the fact that the Qur'an bears testimony to the falsehood of this story, because Allah has given him good tidings that falsehood would not enter his path.

This is a Mighty Scripture. Falsehood cannot reach it from before or behind. (**Surah al-Fussilat, 41:42**)

Allah has also given an absolute promise that He would protect the Qur'an from every harm throughout human history.

Surely we have revealed the Qur'an and We will most surely be its Guardian. (**Surah Hijr, 15:9**)

Hence, could it be possible that an outcast (Satan) should overpower the chosen one of Allah, insert falsehood in his Qur'an and make the Qur'an, whose very foundation is laid on campaign against idol-worship, a promoter of the system of idolatry.

It is strange that the inventor of this myth has sung a tuneless song and has calumniated the Oneness of Allah at that spot where a few moments earlier the Holy Qur'an has itself contradicted this calumniation, because in the second and third verses of the same Surah the Almighty Allah says:

He (***the Prophet***) ***does not speak out of his own fancy. This is an inspired revelation. He is taught by One who is Powerful and Mighty.*** (**Surah al-Najm, 53:3 - 5**)

In spite of this positive tiding how could He leave His Prophet unprotected and allow that Satan should take possession of his mind and thoughts?

We are sorry to discuss this myth to a greater extent than it deserves. But the fact is that our remarks are based on rational arguments and are useful for those who believe in the prophethood of the Prophet. However, these arguments are not sufficient for the orientalists, whose hearts have not yet been illuminated by faith in the Prophet and who quote and explain such myths to prove this religion to be of no consequence. With them, therefore, we should discuss the matter in another manner.

Contradiction of The Story in Another Way

History tells us that when the Prophet was reciting Surah al-Najm, the chiefs of Quraysh, most of whom were great poets and men of letters, were present in the mosque. One of them was Walid who was a sage and poet of Arabia and was well known for his wisdom and intelligence. And all of them heard the surah up to its end and performed sajdah when it ended with the verse necessitating sajdah.

The question, therefore, arises as to why these persons, who were great poets and scholars, were satisfied with only two sentences in praise of their gods, when the verses preceding and succeeding these sentences consist totally of admonition and condemnation of their gods.

It is not known what opinion the inventor of this white lie had formed about those persons, whose mother-tongue was Arabic, who were considered to be the champions in the field of eloquence in the entire Arab society, and who knew the allusions and metaphors (not to speak of explicit things) of their language better than anyone else.

Was it proper for them to be satisfied with the two sentences in praise of their gods and ignore the preceding and succeeding sentences? Not to talk of others, it is not possible to deceive even ordinary persons by fascinating sentences which are placed in a context which consists entirely of condemnation of their beliefs and conduct.

Now we write down the relevant verses and place dots instead of these two sentences. You can very well decide whether these two sentences can be accommodated in the verses which have been revealed in condemnation of the idols:

*Have you thought on Lat and Uzza, and, thirdly on Manat?*3 *Is He to have daughters and you sons? This is indeed an unfair division! They* (*The idols*) *are but names which you and your fathers have invented. Allah has vested no authority in them.*

Can even a common man agree, on the basis of such contradictory sentences, to give up his enmity against, and to come to terms with a man whose religion he has endeavoured to uproot for ten years, and has placed his very existence in danger for that cause?

Argument against the Myth from The Point of View of Language

The distinguished Egyptian scholar Muhammad Abdoh says: The word 'Gharaniq' has never been used for 'gods' in the Arabic language and poetry. The words 'Gharnuq' and 'Gharniq' are found in the lexicon and they mean a particular aquatic bird or a fair and handsome young man, and neither of these conveys the meaning of 'gods'.

Evidence put forward by some orientalists

Sir Willian Muir has considered the myth of 'Gharaniq' as an established fact of history and the evidence relied upon by him is this: "More than three months had not yet passed since the migration of the Muslims to Ethiopia and they were leading a peaceful life under the protection of the Negus.

They would not have returned to Makkah to see their kith and kin if they had not received news about the reconciliation of Muhammad with Quraysh. It was, therefore, necessary that Muhammad should provide a means for peace and that means was the very story of 'Gharaniq'.

However, one may very well ask this noted orientalist firstly as to why it should be necessary that the return of those people to Makkah was the result of a correct news. In every day life self-interested persons circulate thousands of false news amongst the people every now and then.

It is, therefore, quite possible that some persons coined the news of reconciliation between Muhammad and Quraysh with a view to make the Muslims return to their own country from Ethiopia and consequently some of them believed in the news and returned, whereas others were not deceived and stayed on in Ethiopia.

Secondly, even if it is supposed that the Prophet wanted to make peace with Quraysh why should the foundation of that peace be laid on these two spurious sentences? As a matter of fact it would have been sufficient to win their hearts if he had made a solemn promise to keep absolutely quiet about their beliefs.

In short the return of the migrants is no proof of the correctness of this myth and peace and reconciliation do not also depend upon uttering these two sentences.

1. 'Gharaniq' is the plural of Gharnuq or Gharniq which means a sort of aquaic bird or a handsome youth.
2. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, pp. 75-76.
3. If you fill in the blank by inserting the translation of the two sentences in question ('These are gharaniq, who are high in position and their intercession is acceptable') you will certainly observe they will be contradictory to the verses preceding and succeeding them.

The easiest and the most convenient method of knocking down the minorities of a society is a negative campaign which is based on unity and concord.

A positive campaign necessitates various sources, because it becomes necessary that the fighting group should use modern weapons and should achieve their end by making physical and financial sacrifices and by surmounting hundreds of obstacles.

It is evident that this type of campaign is associated with innumerable pains and sufferings. The wise rulers resort to such a campaign after making necessary arrangements and full preparations and do not

implement such a programme unless no alternative except war is left for them.

A negative campaign does not, however, require all this. It needs only one factor and that is the unity and concord of the majority. It means that a group of persons, whose object is to knock down the minority, unite sincerely and make a pact and swear that they would cut off relations with the opposing minority, disallow transactions with them, discontinue matrimonial alliances with them, would not permit them to partake in collective affairs and would not co-operate with them in personal matters. In such circumstances the earth, with all its extensiveness, becomes like a small and narrow prison for the minority and its pressure threatens them with annihilation every moment.

At times the opposing minority submits at this juncture and obeys the decisions of the majority. However, such an opposing minority must consist of people whose opposition is not prompted by a spiritual aim. For example, they might have been campaigning to acquire wealth, important posts and official positions.

When such persons sense danger and are faced with the hardships of blockade they, on account of their having no spiritual stimulant and their motives being purely material, prefer greater possible advantages to the transient pleasures and submit to the wishes of the majority.

However, the people whose opposition is based on faith are not cowed down by such hardships. The pressure of blockade strengthens their faith and they face the blows and attacks of the enemy with the shield of patience and fortitude.

Pages of human history bear testimony to the fact that the strongest factor for the perseverance and steadfastness of the minorities against the aims of the majorities is their strength of faith, and sometimes they sacrifice the last drop of their blood to achieve their object. And there are hundreds of evidences to prove the correctness of this statement.

Declaration By Quraysh

The chiefs of Quraysh were very much disturbed due to the amazing advancement of Islam and were anxious to find a way out of this difficult situation. Embracing Islam by persons like Hamzah and inclination of the clear-sighted men of Quraysh towards it, as well as the freedom enjoyed by the Muslims in Ethiopia had also added to the perplexity and astonishment of the rulers of the time.

They were also very sad on account of the failure of their plans, and, therefore, thought of a new one. They decided upon 'economic blockade' of the Muslims so as to withhold the penetration and expansion of Islam and restrain the founder and the followers of the Divine religion from activity.

Hence the chiefs of the administration hung within the Ka'bah an agreement written by Mansur bin Akramah and endorsed by the grand council of Quraysh and they swore that the community of Quraysh would act till their death in the following manner:

1. Every sort of trade and business with the supporters of Muhammad shall be banned.

2. Association with them is strictly prohibited.

3. Nobody is entitled to establish matrimonial alliances with the Muslims.

4. Opponents of Muhammad should be supported in all circumstances.

The text of the covenant with the above contents was endorsed by all the prominent persons of Quraysh and was put into operation in letter and spirit. Abu Talib, the distinguished supporter of the Prophet, invited his kinsmen (descendants of Hashim and Abdul Muttalib) and made them responsible for the support of the Prophet. He also decided that all the families should quit Makkah and take up their abode in a valley, known as the 'valley of Abu Talib', situated between the mountains of Makkah, should set up small houses and tents there, and be away from the environments of the idolaters. To forestall sudden attacks by Quraysh he also planned to construct watch towers there and to post there observers, who should report upon every new development.1

This blockade lasted for three years and the pressure and hardship suffered by them assumed unprecedented dimensions. The heart–rending cries of the children of Bani Hashim reached the ears of the stonehearted people of Makkah, but had no effect on them. Young persons and men ate only one date per head and at times they divided a date into two parts.

Throughout these three years Bani Hashim came out of the valley only during the prohibited months (of fighting) when peace prevailed throughout the Arabian Peninsula. During these periods they made small purchases and again went back to the valley. Their great leader, the Prophet too could propagate his religion only during these months.

However, the right hand men and agents of Quryash practiced economic pressure even during these months, because they usually came to the shops and stores and as and when Muslims wished to purchase something they paid higher price for it and purchased it themselves, making it beyond the means of the Muslims to acquire it.

Abu Lahab was especially active in this respect. He loudly addressed the people in the bazaar: "O people! Raise the prices and deprive the followers of Muhammad of their purchasing power".

Hence, in order to ensure stabilization of the prices at a high level he himself purchased things at higher cost. For this reason the level of prices always remained high.

The Pitiable Condition Of Bani Hashim

The pressure of hunger had reached such a stage that Sa'd Waqqas says: "One night I was coming out of the valley in such a condition that I was about to exhaust all my faculties. Suddenly I saw a dried hide

of a camel. I picked it up, washed, baked, and ground it. Thereafter I kneaded it with some water and used it for three days".

The spies of Quraysh kept vigil on all the paths leading to the valley so that no one might carry any provisions to Bani Hashim. However, in spite of all this control, Hakim bin Hizam, nephew of Khadijah, Abul 'As bin Rabi' and Hisham bin Umar, loaded, every now and then, wheat and dates on camels at midnight and brought them near the valley. Then they wound the bridles of the camels round their necks and released them.

At times rendering this assistance also created problems for them. One day Abu Jahl saw that Hakim had loaded a camel with provisions and was carrying it to the valley. He was very much annoyed with him and said: "I think I should take you before Quraysh and humiliate you".

Their conflict was prolonged. Abul Bakhtari, who was one of the enemies of Islam, disapproved of the action of Abu Jahl and said: "He is carrying food for his aunt (Khadijah). You have no right to stop him from doing so". He did not content himself with this sentence only but also assaulted Abu Jahl.

The severity of the action of Quraysh in implementing their covenant did not diminish the patience and fortitude of the Muslims. Eventually the piteous clamouring of the infants and the children, and the tragic condition of the Muslims aroused the sentiments of some persons. They very much regretted having endorsed the covenant and began to consider ways and means for the solution of the problem.

One day Hisham bin Umar went to see Zuhayr bin Abi Umayyah who was the grandson (daughter's son) of Abdul Muttalib and said to him: "Is it proper that you should eat food and wear the best clothes whereas your kinsmen should remain hungry and naked? By Allah! If you had taken such a decision about the kinsmen of Abu Jahl and asked him to implement it he would never have agreed to do so".

Zuhayr said: "I alone can't reverse the decision of Quraysh, but if someone else joins me I will tear up the covenant." Hisham said: "I am with you". He said: "Find out a third person also". Hisham stood up and went out to find Mut'am bin Adi. He met him and said to him: "I don't think you would like that two groups (viz. Bani Hashim and Bani Muttalib), of the descendants of Abd Munaf, to which family you too have the honour to belong, should die". He said: "What can I do? One person can't do anything in the matter".

Hisham replied: "Two other persons are also with you and they are myself and Zuhayr". Mut'am said: "It is necessary that some other persons should also cooperate with us". Hisham, then, mentioned the matter to Abul Bakhtari and Zam'a also, and asked them to co-operate. Consequently all of them agreed to meet in the mosque on the following day, early in the morning.

The meeting of Quraysh took place and Zuhayr and his confidants participated in it. Zuhayr said, "It is only proper that today Quraysh should steer clear of this shameful stain. It is necessary that this cruel covenant should be torn up today, because the pitiable condition of the children of Hashim has made

everyone uncomfortable".

Abu Jahl interfered and said: "This proposal is not practicable at all and the covenant of Quraysh must be respected". From the other side Zam'a rose to support Zuhayr and said: "It must be torn up and we were not in favour of it from the very outset". From another corner some others, who were keen that the covenant should come to an end, supported Zuhayr. Abu Jahl realized that the matter was serious and prior consultations had taken place, and those people had already taken a decision in his absence.

He, therefore, did not press his point and sat quite. Mut'am availed of the opportunity and went to the place where the covenant was lying so as to tear it down. He, however, observed that the entire sheet had been eaten up by termite and only the words: "In the name of the Lord" (with which Quraysh commenced their writings) had survived."2

After observing the developments, Abu Talib related the matter to his nephew and consequently those who had taken refuge in the valley returned to their houses.

1. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 350 and Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 78.
2. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 375 and Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 79.

Economic blockade of the Muslims by Quraysh ended in failure on account of the intervention by some good-natured persons. The Holy Prophet and his supporters came out of the "Valley of Abu Talib" and proceeded to their homes after three years of exile, boycott and hardship. Their business and trade with the Muslims was restored and it could be hoped that their conditions would improve.

However, the Prophet was suddenly faced with a very painful event which left a very unwholesome effect on the morale of the helpless Muslims. The extent of the impact of this occurrence at that critical moment cannot be measured by any scale or balance, because the growth of an idea and thought depends on two factors i.e. freedom of speech and necessary strength to defend oneself against the dastardly attacks of the enemy.

Hence, it so happened that when the Muslims were blessed with freedom of belief they lost the second factor because the distinguished supporter and defender of Islam breathed his last.

On that day the Prophet lost a supporter and defender who had been responsible for his protection and safety from the time he was only eight years of age till the day when he was passing through his 50th year. It was he who hovered round his person in the same manner in which a moth hovers round a candle. It was he, who provided the Prophet of Islam with means of his livelihood till he himself became a man of means and gave him priority over himself as well as over his offspring.

The Prophet lost a personality whom Abdul Muttalib (the grandfather of the Prophet) while breathing his last, had made his guardian with the following words:

"O Abd–i Munaf![1] "I am making you responsible for the protection of one who is the worshipper of One Allah like his father".

Abu Talib said: "Dear father! Muhammad does not stand in need of any recommendation, because he is my own son as well as that of my brother".

Specimens Of The Kindnesses And Love Of Abu Talib

Specimens of mutual love and kindness of different persons have been recorded in the pages of history. Usually, however, they are based on material and formal considerations and move round the pivot of wealth and beauty and the flame of love quenches within their selves in a very short time and is extirpated. However, the sentiments which are based on ties of kinship or faith in the spiritual excellence of the loved one do not peter out so soon.

It so happened that the love of Abu Talib for the Prophet was based on both these considerations, that is he believed in him and considered him a perfect man and a unique specimen of humanity, and he was also his nephew (real brother's son) whom he gave the position of brother and son in his heart.

Abu Talib believed so much in his spirituality and purity that at the time of drought he took him to musallah (the prayer carpet) with himself and invoked Allah in the name of his proximity to Him and requested for rains for the afflicted people, and his prayer was granted by the Almighty. Many historians have quoted the following incident:

Once Quraysh were faced with a terrible drought and the earth and the heavens withheld their blessings from them. They came to Abu Talib with tears in their eyes and requested him earnestly to go to musallah and pray to Allah for rains. Abu Talib held the hand of the Prophet, who was then a young boy, and leaned on the wall of the Ka'bah and raising his head towards the sky, said: "O Lord! Send rains for the sake of this young boy (pointing towards the Prophet) and favour us with your unlimited blessings".

The historians write unanimously: "He prayed to Allah for rains when there was not a single patch of cloud on the sky, but a cloud then appeared immediately from the horizon. A part of the cloud spread in the sky above Makkah and the places round it. Thunder and lightening created great noise. All the places were flooded with water and everyone was happy."[2]

Change In The Programme Of The Journey

The Prophet was not yet twelve years of age when Abu Talib decided to go to Syria with a trading caravan of Quraysh. When the camels had been loaded and were about to move, and the bell for departure had been rung, the nephew of Abu Talib suddenly held the bridle of his camel and said with tears in his eyes: "Dear uncle! To whom are you entrusting me? I must go with you". A tear in the eyes of Muhammad then brought a flood of tears in the eyes of Abu Talib.

At this critical time he decided, without any prior planning, to take his nephew with himself. Although Muhammad's place in the caravan had not been taken into account Abu Talib decided to bear the hardships involved in his accompanying him.

He accommodated him on his own camel and was careful about him throughout. During that journey he observed some extraordinary things in Muhammad and composed verses about them. They are recorded in his poetical works.3

Defence Of His Sacred Beliefs

From the point of view of stability no strength equals that of faith. The strength of faith in one's aim is the most powerful factor for the advancement of man in all walks of life. It prepares him to endure all inconveniences and hardships and makes him sacrifice his very life for the achievement of his sacred ideal.

A soldier equipped with the strength of faith is totally successful. When he believes that to kill or to be killed in this path is a blessing, his victory and success is ensured. Before a soldier is armed with modern material weapons he must be equipped with the strength of faith, and his heart must be imbued with love for reality. His movements at the time of war and peace should be guided by faith. His going to war or his making peace are entirely for the defence of his faith.

The thoughts and beliefs are the offspring of one's spirit and intellect. Just as a man loves his children, he also loves his ideas which issue from his intellect and spirit. Rather, his love for his faith is even greater than that for his children. Hence, he is prepared even to embrace death for the defence of his faith, but does not go to that extremity for the protection of his children.

Man's love for wealth and position is limited. He goes after them only to that extent that he is not threatened with sure death. In the matter of his faith, however, he is prepared to court death and prefers honourable death to a life in which he is not allowed the freedom of faith. He observes that real life is that of a 'mujahid' (one who struggles) and repeatedly says:

"Real life consists of faith and jihad".

Just cast a glance at the life of Abu Talib, the distinguished supporter and defender of Islam and Prophet Muhammad. What was the stimulant for him in this path and what was the factor which persuaded him to go up to the edge of the precipice of annihilation, to forsake his life, wealth, position and tribe, and to sacrifice all of these things for the sake of Muhammad?

It is an established fact that he had no material motives and he was not at all anxious to obtain any worldly gain from his nephew, because in those days the Prophet himself did not possess any wealth. He did not want to acquire any position or office, because he already possessed the highest office in the society of those times and was the chief of Makkah and Batha.

As a matter of fact it was possible that he might have lost even his prominent position and status on account of his defending the Prophet, because his defence was the cause of the chiefs of Makkah rising against the family of Hashim and Abu Talib.

A False Idea

It is possible that some shortsighted persons may think that the reason for the sacrifices made by Abu Talib was his close relationship with Muhammad and it was on this account that he was prepared to lay down his very life for his sake.

However, this idea is so baseless that a very brief reflection makes its stupidity evident, because the tie of blood relationship is never so strong that a person should sacrifice his entire being for one of his relatives and should offer his own son (Ali) as a sacrifice for his nephew, and be ready to see the one being cut to pieces for the sake of the other.

At times fraternal sentiments do pull a man to the precipice of annihilation, but there is no sense in these sentiments being so acute for a particular person only, whereas Abu Talib made all these sacrifices for a particular person from amongst his relatives (i.e. the Prophet) and did not do so with regard to other descendants of Abdul Muttalib and Hashim.

The Real Stimulant For Abu Talib

In view of what has been stated above the real stimulant for Abu Talib's sacrifices was spiritual and not material, and he was prepared to face every pressure of the enemy for the sake of Muhammad. It was so because he considered him to be a perfect specimen of excellence and humanity and had found his religion to be the best programme for acquisition of prosperity and happiness. As he was a lover of reality he naturally defended reality.

This fact becomes evident from the verses of Abu Talib, as giving vent to his feelings he says that Muhammad is a Prophet like Prophets Musa and 'Isa. Here is the translation of his verses:

"Distinguished personalities should be aware that Muhammad is a Prophet and a guide like Prophets Musa and 'Isa and every Prophet takes responsibility for the guidance of the people under the command of Allah. You may read about his qualities in the Heavenly Books with perfect correctness and this is a true statement and not a calumny on the unseen".4

In another laudatory poem about his nephew he says thus:

"Don't you know that we consider Muhammad to be a Prophet of Allah like Musa bin Imran and read about him in the earlier Books?"5

The above-mentioned verses as well as many others which are found in the poetical works of Abu Talib and also in the inner folds of history and the books of traditions and exegeses clearly testify that the real

stimulant for Abu Talib's defending the Prophet was the defence of the true religion of Islam. We mention below some of the sacrifices made by him and you can very well decided, after necessary scrutiny, whether they could be motivated by anything other than true belief.

A Short Account Of The Sacrifices Made By Abu Talib

The chiefs of Quraysh held a meeting in the house of Abu Talib when the Prophet was also present. They conversed with one another. The chiefs got up without achieving any result, and 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'it began saying loudly: "Leave him alone. Advice is of no use. He should be assassinated; he should be finished off".

Abu Talib was very much disturbed on hearing these sentences but could not do anything, because those people had come to his house as guests. It so happened that the Prophet went out of his house that day and did not return till evening. His uncles went to his house but did not find him there. Suddenly Abu Talib recollected the words of 'Uqbah which he had uttered a few hours earlier and said to himself: "They have certainly killed my nephew and have finished his life".

He thought that the die had been cast and it was necessary to protect Muhammad and take vengeance on the Pharaohs of Makkah. He called the descendants of Hashim and Abdul Muttalib and gave instructions that all of them should conceal sharp weapons under their clothes and arrive in Masjidul Haram collectively.

Further, that each one of them should sit by the side of one chief of Quraysh and as soon as he himself said loudly: "O chiefs of Quraysh! I want Muhammad from you", they should rise up at once and each of them should kill the man sitting by his side and thus all the chiefs should meet their fate.

When Abu Talib was about to leave, Zayd bin Harith entered the house all of a sudden and saw them in a state of readiness. He was wonder-struck on seeing this and said: "No harm has came to the Prophet. He is in the house of a Muslim at present and is busy propagating Islam".

Having said this he immediately went to the Prophet and informed him of the dangerous decision taken by Abu Talib. The Prophet then proceeded hastily to his house. As soon as Abu Talib saw his nephew's face tears trickled from his eyes and he said: "My nephew! Where have you been? Were you quite happy and safe from every harm during this time?" The Prophet assured his uncle that no harm came to him from any quarters.

Throughout that night Abu Talib kept thinking. He pondered over the matter and said to himself: "My nephew has not become the target of the enemy today, but Quraysh will not sit still until they kill him". He considered it expedient to got into the mosque along with the descendants of Hashim and Abdul Muttalib after sunrise, when Quraysh had assembled there, and to inform them about his decision so that they might possibly be over-awed and might not plan to kill Muhammad.

The sun rose and the time arrived for Quraysh to leave their houses and to go and join their assemblies. They had not yet started conversing when the figure of Abu Talib appeared at a distance and they saw that some brave men were also accompany him. All became attentive and waited to see what Abu Talib had to say and with what aim he had come to the mosque along with all those men.

Abu Talib stood before their gathering and said: "Yesterday Muhammad disappeared from us for some time. I thought that you had acted upon what 'Uqbah had said and had killed him. Hence, I decided to come to Masjidul Haram along with these men. I had also instructed them that each one of them should sit by the side of each one of you and as soon as they heard me speak aloud they should get up and attack you with their concealed weapons. However, luckily I found Muhammad alive and safe from any harm from you". Then he asked his men to take out their concealed weapons and ended his speech with these words: "By Allah! If you had killed him I would not have spared even one of you and would have fought with you to the last ....."[6]

If you look into the biography of Abu Talib you will find that he supported the Prophet for full forty two years and peculiarly displayed great bravery and sacrifice during the last ten years of his life which were significant because of the appointment of the Prophet to the prophetic mission and to his 'call' during that time. The only factor which kept him so steadfast was his strong faith and his pure belief in the sacred mission of the Prophet of Islam. And if the sacrifices of his son, Imam Ali are also added to his own, the meaning of the verses of Ibn Abil Hadid, as translated below, becomes quite clear:

"If Abu Talib and his son had not been there the religion would not have been successful. He supported and protected him (the Prophet) in Makkah, and his son dived in the whirlpools of death in Yathrib for him."

The Will Of Abu Talib At The Time Of His Death

At the time of his death Abu Talib said to his children:

"I recommend Muhammad to you, because he is the trusted one of Quraysh and the truthful one of Arabia and possesses all the virtues. He has brought a religion, which has been accepted by the hearts, but the tongues have chosen to deny it on account of fear of taunts. I can see that the weak and the helpless of Arabia have got up to support Muhammad and believe in him, and he has also risen to help them breaking the ranks of Quraysh.

He has humiliated the chiefs of Quraysh and devastated their homes and has made the helpless strong and given them status". He concluded his remarks with these words: "O my kinsmen! Become the friends and supporters of his faith (Islam). Whoever follows him becomes prosperous. If death had given me some more time, I would have warded off all the dangers that came to him".[7]

We have no doubt about it that he was quite sincere in expressing this wish, because his services and sacrifices, especially during the last ten years of his life, bear testimony to his truthfulness.

Another evidence of his truthfulness is the promise he made to Muhammad at the commencement of the latter's prophethood, because when the Holy Prophet gathered all his uncles and kinsmen round himself and presented Islam to them Abu Talib said to him: "Arise, O' my nephew! You enjoy a high position. Your religion is the noblest of all religions. You are the son of a great man. If a tongue harms you, severer tongues will come forth to defend you and sharp swords will cut off the tongues of your enemies. By Allah! The Arabs will be as meek before you as the off-spring of an animal is before its mother".

The Last Journey

It would be better if we enquire about the sincerity of faith of Abu Talib from his honest near ones, because the owner of a house knows better what is within it.

1. When Ali informed the Prophet about the death of Abu Talib the latter wept bitterly. He directed Ali to arrange for his bathing, shrouding and burial ceremonies, and prayed to Allah for the salvation of the departed soul.8

2. A mention was made about Abu Talib before Imam Zaynul Abidin, the fourth Imam. He said: "I wonder why people doubt the faith of Abu Talib, when a woman cannot continue her matrimonial alliance with a non-Muslim husband after she has embraced Islam and Fatimah, daughter of Asad, was amongst those women who embraced Islam at a very early stage and still remained his wife till he breathed his last".

3. Imam Muhammad Baqir says: "The faith of Abu Talib was superior to the faith of many people and Ali, the Commander of the Faithful ordered that Haj should be performed on his behalf." 9

4. Imam Ja'far Sadiq says: "Abu Talib was like the People of the Cave. They had faith in their hearts but pretended to be polytheists. For this reason they will be rewarded twice". 10

The Viewpoint Of Shi'ah Scholars

Following the people of the Prophet's household the Imamiyah Ulema are unanimous about the fact that Abu Talib was one of the distinguished personalities of Islam and when he breathed his last he possessed a heart which had perfect faith in Islam and was very sincere to the Muslims. These scholars have written many books and treatises on this subject.

1. Sometimes it is said that the real name of Abu Talib was Imran. Some scholars are of the view that 'Abu Talib' was his real name and not his 'kunniyah' (patronymic).
2. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. I, page 125.
3. Diwan-i Abu Talib, page 33.
4. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. VII, page 37 and al-Hujjah, pp. 56 – 57.
5. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. VII, page 36. Ibn Hisham has quoted fifteen verses of the poem in his Seerah vol. I, pp. 352 – 353.
6. Tara'if, page 85 and al-Hujjah, page 61.
7. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. I, page 390.
8. Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XIV, page 76.
9. Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah, vol. XIV, page 68.

10. Usulul Kafi, page 244.

Me'raj According To The Qur'an, Hadith And History

The darkness of night had spread in the horizon and silence reigned over the face of nature. The time had arrived when the living creatures take rest and sleep so that they might recuperate for their activities on the following day.

The Prophet was also not an exception to this law of nature and he wished to take rest after offering his prayers. However, he suddenly heard a voice. It was the voice of the Archangel Jibreel who said to him: "This night you have to perform a very unique journey and I have been ordered to remain with you. You will have to traverse different parts of the world mounted on an animal named 'Buraq'."

The Prophet commenced his grand journey from the house of Umme Hani (sister of the Commander of the Faithful) and mounted on Buraq proceeded to Baytul Maqdis, situated in Jerusalem, which is also called Masjidul Aqsa. After a very short time he dismounted there and visited different parts of the mosque as well as Bethlehem which is the birth place of 'Isa and also saw various other places associated with different Prophets. At some of these places he also performed two rak'ats of prayers.

Thereafter he commenced the second part of his journey and proceeded from that place to the skies. He then observed the stars and the system of the world and conversed with the souls of the previous Prophets and also with the angels of the heavens. He saw the centres of blessing and torture (Paradise and Hell) and also saw the places of the dwellers of Hell and Paradise1 from close quarters, and a consequently became fully aware of the secrets of creation, the extent of the Universe and the signs of the Omnipotent Allah.

Then he continued his journey and reached 'Sidratul-Muntaha'2 and found it fully covered with splendour, magnificence and grandeur. At this time his journey came to an end he returned through the way he had gone.

During his return journey also he first came to Baytul Maqdis and then proceeded to Makkah. On the way he met a trading caravan of Quraysh who had lost a camel and were making a search for it. He drank some water from a container of theirs and threw the remainder on the ground and according to another narrative placed a cover on it.

It was before daybreak when he dismounted in the house of Umme Hani from the animal which had taken him to the heavens. She was the first person to whom he related this matter and on the day following that night he made it known to the assemblies of Quraysh as well. The story of his 'ascension' and grand journey which was considered by Quraysh to be something impossible spread from mouth to mouth in all centres and made the chiefs of Quraysh all the more perplexed.

According to their old habit Quraysh decided to refute him and said: "Even now there are some persons in Makkah who have seen Baytul Maqdis. If what you say is correct then give an account of its structure". The Prophet not only described the structure of Baytul Maqdis but also mentioned the incidents which had occurred between Makkah and Baytul Maqdis and said: "On my way I met the caravan of such and such tribe who had lost a camel.

They had a container full of water which was a part of their equipment. I drank some water from it and then covered it.3 At another place I met a group of persons whose camel had run away and had broken its leg". Quraysh said: "Tell us about the caravan of Quraysh". The Prophet replied:

"I saw them at Tan'im (a place from where the 'Haram' commences). A brown camel was going ahead of them and they had placed a litter on it and are now entering Makkah". Quraysh became very much excited on account of these definite news and said: "We shall now come to know about your truth or falsehood". However, it was not long before Abu Sufyan, the leader of the caravan, appeared and people made known to him in detail what the Prophet had said.

The above account is a gist of what has been stated in the books of exegeses and traditions. 4

Does Me'raj Have A Qur'anic Origin?

The event of me'raj' of the Prophet in the heavens has been mentioned clearly in two surahs of the Qur'an and has also been alluded to in other surah(s). We give here briefly the verses which clearly make a mention of me'raj.

In Surah al-Isra' it has been said

Glory be to Him Who made His servant go by night from Masjidul Haram to Masjidul Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs. He alone hears all and observes all.

This verse apparently mentions the following points:

1. In order to tell us that the Prophet travelled through these worlds in a short time, not with human strength but through Divine strength, the Almighty commences His statement with "Glory be to Him!" which points to the fact that Allah is free from all defects and needs. He has also not contented Himself with this and has introduced Himself as the Agent of the journey by saying 'Asra' (Allah made him perform the journey).

This favour was bestowed upon him so that the people might not think that the journey was performed according to natural laws and with usual means, and might, therefore deny its possibility. It has therefore, been clarified that it was undertaken through Divine Will and special favour of the Almighty.

2. This journey was undertaken at night.

3. Notwithstanding the fact that this journey commenced from the house of Umme Hani, daughter of Abu Talib, the Almighty has mentioned its starting–place to be Masjidul Haram. This is perhaps due to the fact that the Arabs consider entire Makkah to be the House of Allah and as such all its places are treated to be 'Masjid' and 'Haram'.

Hence, Allah's saying that: "He made him journey from Masjidul Haram" is perfectly in order. According to some narratives, however, the journey started from Masjidul Haram itself.

Although this verse states the starting point of the journey to be 'Masjidul Haram' and the end to be Masjidul Aqsa' there is nothing in it which may be inconsistent with the Prophet's performing another journey to the heavens, because this verse mentions one part of the journey and the verses of Surah al–Najm deal with the another part of the schedule of the journey.

4. The Prophet performed the journey with his body and soul together and not with his soul only. The words 'to His servant bear testimony to this, because the word 'servant' applies to 'body with soul'. In case me'raj had been only spiritual the proper words to be used would have been 'to His servant's soul'.

5. The object of this grand journey was to make known to the Prophet the various aspects of the existence of the great Universe. We shall elaborate this point later.

The other surah which clearly mentions the event of me'raj is 'Surah al–Najm' and the verses which you will read below were revealed in this connection. When the Prophet told Quraysh that he had seen physically the Archangel Jibreel, when he brought the first revelation, they disputed with him. The Holy Qur'an replies thus to their objection:

"Why do you contend with the Prophet about his having seen Jibreel? He beheld him once again near Sidratul Muntaha which is in the proximity of Paradise, which is the abode of good ones. It was when Sidratul Muntaha was covered with grandeur. His eyes did not wander, nor did they turn aside, for he saw some of his Lord's greatest signs".

Reports About Me'raj

The exegetes and the traditionalists have quoted many things about me'raj and the things observed by the Prophet but all of them are not final and indisputable. The great Shi'ah commentator and expert exegete, the late Allamah Tabrasi, has divided these narratives into four groups:

1. One group of the narratives is final and indisputable, for example, the fact of me'raj and some of its particulars.

2. The reports which have been quoted in a correct manner but have not reached the stage of finality,

although they conform to the principles and verdict of wisdom, for example, survey of Paradise and Hell, journey in the skies and conversation with the souls of the Prophets.

3. The reports which are not apparently acceptable but are capable of interpretation, for example, the Prophet's conversation during the night of me'raj with the dwellers of Paradise and Hell which can be explained away by saying that he observed their phantoms, figures and qualities.

1. Exaggerated reports coined and circulated by the liars. For example, it is said at times that the Prophet sat that night with the Almighty or that he heard the sound of His pen.5

History Of This Event

Though it was appropriate that this grand event should have been properly recorded in all respects, yet, for some reasons, differences have risen about it and one of them is about the date of its occurrence. Two great historians of Islam (Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham) say that this event occurred in the tenth year of the Prophet's prophethood.

The renowned historian Bayhaqi believes that it took place in the twelfth year of his prophethood. Some say that it occurred in the early days of his prophetic mission, whereas others say that the time of its occurrence was the middle period of the prophethood. And at times, in order to add up all these statements, it has been said that the me'raj of the Prophet took place more than once. However, we are of the view that the me'raj in which daily prayers were made compulsory took place after the death of Abu Talib which occurred in the tenth year of the prophethood of the Prophet.

We conclude this, because it is one of the established facts of history and tradition that during the night of me'raj the Almighty ordered that the Prophet's followers should offer prayers five times a day and it is also learnt from history that prayers had not been made obligatory till the death of Abu Talib, because when he was on his death-bed the chiefs of Quraysh approached him to settle the dispute between them and his nephew and to prevent him from his activities and to take whatever he wanted as a recompense for it. The Prophet who was present there addressed the chiefs thus: "I don't want anything from you except that you should confirm that there is no god but Allah and give up worshipping the idols".6

He uttered these words and did not at all mention *'salat'* (prayers) or other articles of faith. This in itself shows that prayers had not been made obligatory till then, for, otherwise, mere declaration of faith devoid of a compulsory action like prayers would have been useless. And as regards the fact that he did not mention his own prophethood, it was because witnessing of monotheism implicitly means confirming of his prophethood.

Besides this, the historians have also mentioned the embracement of Islam by persons like Tufayl bin 'Amr Dosi which took place a little earlier than migration (to Madina). At that time, too, the Prophet

contented himself with giving them instructions to acknowledge monotheism and his own prophethood but did not mention 'prayers'. Such incidents go to show that the time of the occurrence of the event in which prayers were made compulsory was only a little earlier than migration.

Those who think that me'raj took place earlier than the tenth year of the prophethood of the Prophet are very much mistaken, because from the eighth up to the tenth year he was besieged in the 'Valley' and the pitiable condition of the Muslims did not make it expedient that they should have been subjected to an additional responsibility like 'prayers'.

And as regards the years before the eighth, besides the fact that the pressure of Quraysh was so hard on the Muslims that they could not bear additional responsibilities, their number was also very small. At such a time, therefore, when the light of faith and its principles had not been infused in the hearts of an appreciable number of persons it appears very unlikely that an unusual responsibility like prayers should have been imposed on them

As regards the mention made in a number of narratives that Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful performed prayers along with the Prophet for three years before the appointment of the latter to the prophetic mission and continued them later, it may be said that it meant special and unlimited prayers and not limited and conditional prayers with a fixed time.7 It is also possible that they might have been 'recommended' and 'nonobligatory' prayers.

Was Me'raj Of The Prophet Physical?

The quality of me'raj of the Prophet has been a subject of discussion for long and much has been said about its being physical or spiritual, although the Qur'an and the traditions clearly state that it was physical.8

However, some scientific notions have prevented a group of persons from accepting this reality. Consequently they have resorted to their own interpretations and considered the me'raj of the Prophet to be purely spiritual and have said that only his spirit travelled through all the worlds and then returned to his sacred body. Some have gone a step further and say that all these events were a vision and the Prophet saw different places and travelled through them in a dream.

The statement of the last group is so much distant from logic and reality that it should not at all be considered as a part of the traditions and opinions relating to me'raj. The reason for this is that when Quraysh heard that Muhammad had claimed that he had travelled through all these places during a night they became very uneasy and got up seriously to give him the lie, so much so that his me'raj became the subject of discussion in all the assemblies of Quraysh.

In case his travelling through these worlds had been only a vision there was no point in Quraysh rising up to refute him and to create all the tumult. This is so because if a person says that one night, while

asleep, he has dreamt this and that it cannot become an object of dispute and strife, for a dream is after all a dream and many impossible things can be seen in it.

For this reason, therefore, this view is not worth further scrutiny. Unfortunately, however, some Egyptain scholars like Farid Wajdi have adopted this idea and supported it with baseless statements. In spite of all this, however, it is only proper to pass it over.

What Is Spiritual Me'raj?

Those people who have not been able to solve some minute points related to physical me'raj have been compelled to resort to interpretation and have considered the Prophet's me'raj to have been a spiritual one.

Spiritual me'raj means meditation about the things created by the Almighty and observation of His Grandeur and Beauty and absorption in thoughts about Him and glorifying His name and eventual freedom from material ties and worldly interests and crossing through all possibilities and entering into internal and non-material stages. And after going through all this process a special proximity to Allah is acquired, and it is not possible to define it.

If spiritual me'raj means meditation about the Grandeur of the Almighty and the extent of the creation, such a me'raj is undoubtedly not peculiar to the Prophet of Islam as many Prophets and other enlightened and pure-hearted persons have also enjoyed this position, whereas the Qurtan mentions his me'raj as something peculiar to him and an extraordinary distinction for him. Furthermore, the Prophet had been in the aforesaid condition during many nights9 whereas me'raj has been proved to be related to a particular night.

The thing which has obliged these persons to hold the said view (i.e. the me'raj was spiritual only) is the hypothesis of the well-known Greek astronomer, Ptolemy, which has enjoyed great value in the scientists' circles of East and West for a period of two thousand years and hundreds of books have been written about it, and it was considered till recently to be one of the established laws of natural sciences. It may be summarized as under:

There are two types of bodies in the world, elemental and celestial. An elemental body consists of the four well-known elements (water, earth, air and fire). The first sphere which we observe is the sphere of earth which is the centre of the world. Then come the spheres of water, air and fire and everyone of them surrounds the other.

Here the spheres come to an end and the celestial bodies begin. Celestial bodies means the nine skies which are connected with one another like the layers of an onion and are not at all capable of rending and conciliation and separation and union and no creature can move straight through them, because this would necessitate separation of the components of the sky from one another.

The Prophet's me'raj being physical necessitates that he should ascend from the centre of the world in a straight line and should cross the four spheres and also rend the skies one after the other and the rending and conciliation of the skies is not possible and practicable according to Greek astronomy, the said thinkers have been obliged to consider the Prophet's me'raj to be only spiritual, as nobody can restrain a spirit from performing a journey.

Reply To The Above Criticism

These statements had some worth in those days when Ptolemy's astronomy had not yet lost its value in scientific circles and some persons sincerely liked it and were inclined to it. In such circumstances it was possible that we might have played with the intricacies of the Qur'an and had explained away the clear verses of the Qur'an as well as the traditions. These hypotheses have, however, lost their all-pervasive value and their baselessness has become evident. Only at times a mention of Ptolemy's astronomy is made in connection with the history of science.

Furthermore, in view of the invention of various astronomical implements and powerful telescopes and descending of Apollos and Lunas on the surface of the moon, Venus and Mars and journeys of the astronauts on the moon have left no ground for these imaginary hypotheses. Nowadays the scientists consider the existence of four elemental spheres and nine inter-connected skies to be a mere myth and have not have not succeeded in seeing, with the help of scientific implements, astronomical tools and well-equipped eyes, the worlds which Ptolemy had created with his imagination and they consider to be valueless even view which is founded on his wrong hypothesis.

An Unrhythmical Song

The leader of the Shaykhiyah sect (Shaykh Ahmad Ehsai) has sung another song in the pamphlet entitled 'Qatifiyah' and has tried to satisfy both the groups in a new manner. He says that the Prophet went for me'raj with a 'barzakhi'[10] (Herculian) body. In this way, according to his own thinking, he has satisfied those who believe in physical me'raj, because he has admitted that the me'raj took place along with body and has also removed the difficulty with regard to the skies, because, in order to penetrate through the skies, it is not necessary for a 'barzakhi' body to rend them.[11]

Nevertheless, the enlightened, truth-seeking and unbiased persons consider this view also to be worthless and opposed to the Qur'an and clear text of the traditions, just like the previous view (the me'raj being spiritual), because, as has already been said, when you place the verse of the Qur'an relating to me'raj before a linguist he will say that the speaker means the worldly elemental body for which the word 'abd' (servant) has been used in the Qur'an and not the word 'Herculian', because the Arab society was not at all conversant with this and other similar words and in Surah al-Isra' only the common groups and individuals have been addressed.

Now the factor which has prompted him to adopt this forced interpretation is that very Greek myth about

the system of existence according to which it is firm like Lawh-i Mehfooz (The Protected Tablet). But now that all the scientists refute this view it is not at all proper that we should continue to follow it blindly.

If the scholars of the past have said something on account of their being optimistic about the old astronomy they can be excused and are not much to blame, but it is not proper for us, during the present times, to ignore the Qur'anic realities on account of a hypothesis which has been refuted by the body of scientists.

Me'raj And Modern Scientific Laws

Some of those interested in natural sciences, who are anxious to fix a natural cause for every event and a physical agent, for every phenomenon, have chosen to deny the very basis of me'raj and think that modern natural and scientific laws do not confirm to the me'raj of the Prophet. For example, they say:

1. Modern science says: In order to get away from the earth it is necessary to neutralize its gravity. If you fling a ball in the air, the power of gravity brings it back to the earth. With whatever force you fling it, it will come back to the earth again. If we wish to neutralize the gravity of the earth fully, so that the ball should move on and should not return to the earth, it will be necessary to fling at the minimum speed of 25,000 miles per hour.

Hence, the Prophet went out of the zone of gravity and became weight-less. But here the question arises as to how he performed the journey at this speed without necessary facilities.

2. The atmosphere in which one may breathe does not exist beyond a few kilometers of the earth. Thereafter, as we go higher, air becomes thinner and still more unfit for breathing and occasionally we reach a point where there is no air at all. How did the Prophet manage to live without oxygen while performing his journey in the aforesaid regions?

3. The mortal rays and celestial stones destroy every terrestrial body which is touched by them. They do not, however, reach the earth on account of their collision with the regions of air and in fact these regions serve as a coat-of-mail for the inhabitants of earth. In the circumstances, by what means did the Prophet remain safe from these mortal rays?

4. Human life is deranged as and when the pressure of air increases or decreases and man can live in only a particular pressure of the air which does not exist in the upper regions.

5. The speed at which the Prophet performed his journey was decidedly more than the speed of light. Light travels at the speed of 300,000 kilometers per second and modern science has proved that no body can travel at a higher speed than that of light. Keeping this scientific law in view, how did the Prophet commence his journey at a speed higher than that of light and then returned safe and sound?

Reply To The Above Objections

When we stretch the natural laws to this extent the number of difficulties crosses the limit of those enumerated above. However, we enquire from these gentlemen the purpose of explaining these natural laws. Do they mean to say that journey in the upper worlds is impossible?

It should be said in reply that fortunately the scientific research by the astronomers of Eastern and Western blocs has made this matter something usual and possible, because, by their sending into space the first artificial satellite in 1957, which was given the name of 'Sputnic', it became clear that the power of gravity can be neutralized by means of a rocket.

Similarly by their sending space-ships carrying astronauts by means of rockets it became clear that the thing which man considered to be an obstacle in the way of his journeying in the upper worlds is remediable with the help of science and technology, and, with these industrial and scientific tools available to him, man can solve the problems of mortal rays and the difficulty about the lack of air in which one could breathe.

And even now the sciences relating to space are in a state of expansion and the scientists are confident that after some time it will be possible for them to lead their lives in one of the celestial spheres and they will travel quite easily to the moon and to Mars.[12]

These scientific and technical developments clearly show that such an activity is hundred per cent possible and is not something beyond reason.

It is possible that some persons may argue that such a journey cannot be undertaken without scientific and mechanical implements and as the Prophet did not possess these resources during the night of me'raj how could he travel in such worlds without them?

Reply to this statement becomes quite clear from our foregoing discussions about the miracles of the Prophets and especially from the detailed narrative which we have penned earlier about the events of the 'Year of the Elephant' and the incident of Abrahah's army being killed with small stones, for it is an established fact that the things which ordinary persons do with implements and scientific tools can be done by the Prophets with the blessings of Allah, and without any apparent and external means.

The Prophet of Islam went to me'raj with the blessing of Almighty Allah to Whom the entire creation belongs and Who is the Creator of this wonderful system. It is He who has given gravity to the earth and cosmic rays to the sun, and has created different layers in the atmosphere. And He can take these things back and control them whenever He likes.

In case the schedule of the historical journey of the Prophet was accomplished under the command of Allah all these laws decidedly surrender before His absolute Will and are in the grip of His power every moment. In the circumstances what difficulty should there be if the Lord who has given gravity to the

earth and cosmic rays to the heavenly bodies should take His chosen servant out of the centre of gravity with His unlimited power and without any apparent means? Allah who has created oxygen can certainly create air for His chosen Prophet in the areas where air does not exist.

The efficacy of a miracle is basically different from that of the natural causes and the strength of man. We should not consider the strength of Allah limited like our own. If we cannot perform a job without means we should not say that the Omnipotent Allah cannot also perform it. From the point of view of difficulty and its solution the bringing to life of the dead, the transformation of a rod into a boa and keeping Prophet Yunus alive in the belly of a fish in the depth of the sea–the events which have been confirmed by the Heavenly Books and have been narrated for us–are not unlike the me'raj of the Prophet of Islam.

In short all the natural causes and external impediments are controlled and conquered by the Will of Allah. His Will does not concern only that which is an impossibility, but besides that He can do whatever He likes, whether or not man possesses strength for it or not.

No doubt we are addressing here those people who recognize Allah with the qualities and attributes which are peculiar to Him and who believe that He is Omnipotent and can do whatever He wills.

The Object Of Me'raj

A person asked the fourth Imam: "Is there a particular place for Allah?" He replied: "No". The man said: "Then why did He make His Prophet journey through the skies?" The Holy Imam replied: "He made him ascend so that he might become aware of the expanse of the Universe and see and hear wonderful things, the like of which had not been seen and heard by the eyes and ears before".

It is no doubt necessary that the last Prophet should enjoy such a position that he should rely on his vast information and should be able to send a message to the people of the 20th century, who are still thinking of travelling to the moon and to Mars, that he did this performance without any means and his Creator was kind to him and made him fully aware of the system of creation.

1. Majma'ul Bayan Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:1, vol. III, page 395.
2. For understanding fully the meaning of 'Sidratul Muntaha' refer to books of exegeses.
3. Some narrators have quoted thus: "I dropped the remainder". Possibly the difference between the two versions is due to the action having been repeated.
4. For further details the readers are advised to refer to the chapters on 'Ascension' of Biharul Anwar, vol. XVIII, pp 282 – 410 and of Tafsir–i Burhan, vol. II, pp. 390 – 404.
5. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. III, page 395.
6. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 27.
7. For further information regarding the time when wuzu, prayers and call to prayers were made obligatory please refer to Furu'–i Kafi, vol. I, p. 135.
8. The great Shi'ah jurist, the late Shaykh Tabrasi, has stated in Tafsir–i Majma'ul Bayan that all Shi'ah scholars are unanimous that the 'Me'raj' was physical, vol. III, page 395.

9. Wasa'il, Book of Fasting, chapter–prohibition of fasting.

10. Barzakhi body is like the body with which man performs all deeds in a dream.

11. The pamphlet entitled 'Qatifiyah' is one of his 92 pamphlets which were published collectively in 1273 with the name of "Jawame'ul Kalim". The text of his remarks is as under: "In the event of ascension as the body goes above it abandons the elements connected with every one of the spheres at that very place and moves on. For example, it leaves the element of air in the sphere of air and that of fire in the sphere of fire. And at the time of its return it regains all that it had abandoned". Hence, at the time of 'Me'raj', the Prophet abandoned everyone of the four elements of his body (in the past the basic elements were considered to be four) in their respective spheres and went for me'raj with a body which was devoid of these elements. Such a body cannot be an elemental body and can be nothing else than 'barzakhi' (according to his terminology a 'Herculian' body). In the book entitled 'Sharh–i Ziarat (pages 28 – 29) the Shaykh states that the nine skies are not capable of rending and conciliation.

12. After artificial moons had been sent in the space, a twenty seven year–old Russian named Major Gagarin first commenced his journey into space in a space ship on Wednesday, 12th April 1961. He was the first human being to undertake such a journey. His spaceship went 302 kilometers above the earth and he travelled round the earth for one hour and thirty minutes. Thereafter spaceships were sent into space by America as well as by the Soviet Union. Eventually Apollo–12 with all its occupants landed on the moon and it was for the first time that man set his foot on it. This schedule has been put to test a number of times thereafter and has been usually successful. All these activities go to show that landing of man on the surface of the spheres is possible. And the thing which man does by scientific methods is done by his Creator by means of His Great Will.

The tenth year of the prophetic mission came to an end with all its agreeable and disagreeable events. During this year the Prophet lost two great defenders and supporters. In the first instance the chief of the family of Abdul Muttalib, the distinguished defender of the Prophet and the prominent personality of Quraysh viz. Abu Talib breathed his last.

The pangs of this tragedy were still fresh in the heart of the Prophet when the death of his dear wife Khadijah1 aggravated his pain. Abu Talib was the protector of the life and honour of the Prophet and Khadijah served Islam with her immense wealth.

From the commencement of the eleventh year of the prophetic mission the Prophet was spending his time in an atmosphere which was replete with enmity and grudge against him. His life was in constant danger and he was deprived of all the possibilities of the propagation of Islam.

Ibn Hisham writes2 that after a few days of the death of Abu Talib a Qurayshite threw some dust on the head of the Prophet and he entered his house in the same condition. The eyes of one of his daughters fell on his pitiable condition. Crying loudly and with tears trickling from her eyes she rose, brought some water and washed the head and face of her dear father. The Prophet consoled her and said: "Don't cry. Allah is the Protector of your father". then he said: "While Abu Talib was alive Quraysh did not succeed in doing anything unpleasant against me".

On account of the biting atmosphere of Makkah the Prophet decided to go to some other environments. In those days Ta'if was a thriving centre. He, therefore, decided to go there alone and contact the chiefs of 'Saqif' tribe and invite them to Islam so that he might possibly achieve success in this manner. After

arriving at Ta'if he met the chief and elders of that tribe and explained to them the religion of monotheism, and asked for their support and assistance.

However, his words had not the least effect on them and they said: "In case you are the chosen one of Allah it will be inviting torture to refute you and if your claim is false you are not fit to be talked to".

The Prophet understood from this flimsy and childish logic of theirs that they wanted to avoid him. He, therefore, rose and took a promise from them that they would not say anything about the matter to others, because it was possible that the low and mean elements of 'Saqif' tribe might make it a pretext to harm him and might take undue advantage of his being alone and away from his home town.

However, the elders of the tribe did not keep their promise and instigated the loafers and simpletons against him. Suddenly the Prophet found himself encircled by a group of person who wanted to use all methods to tease him. He saw no alternative but to take refuge in a garden which belonged to two persons named 'Atbah and Shibah.

The Prophet entered the garden with great difficulty and then the said persons ceased to pursue him. 'Atbah and Shibah were wealthy Qurayshites who also possessed a garden in Ta'if. When the Prophet entered the garden sweat was flowing down his head and face and some parts of his sacred body had also been hurt. He sat down involuntarily under the vine which rested on the trellis and began to utter the following supplication:

"O Lord! I present my weakness and lack of strength before You. You are the kind Nourisher. You are the helper of the weak. To whom are You abandoning me?

These and many other invocations which we have briefly quoted, strongly impress the hearts, because they are supplications by a person who has spent fifty years of his life with great honour and dignity under the protection of self-sacrificing supporters, but now his circumstances have undergone such change that he has taken refuge in the enemy's garden and is waiting for his fate with an exhausted and wounded body.

The sons of Rabiyyah, though idol-worshippers and enemies of Islam, were very much touched to see the pitiable condition of the Prophet They, therefore, ordered a Christian slave of theirs, named Adas, to take to him a receptacle full of grapes. 'Adas took the grapes to the Prophet and placed the same before him and looked at his face somewhat intently.

In the meantime an interesting incident took place. The Christian slave observed that while eating the grapes the Prophet said: "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful". He was very much surprised to hear this and, breaking the seal of silence, said: "The people of the Peninsula are not acquainted with these words and I have not so far heard anyone of them uttering them. People of this area begin their work with the names of 'Lat' and 'Uzza'.

The Prophet enquired from him about his birth-place and his religion. He stated that he belonged to Naynavah and was a Christian. The Prophet then said: "Do you hail from the place to which the pious man Yunus (Jonah) son of Mata (Mathew) belonged?" He was all the more surprised to hear this and again enquired: "How do you know Yunus son of Mata?"

The Prophet replied: "My brother Yunus was Allah's Prophet like myself". The Prophet's words which showed signs of truthfulness made a strange impression on 'Adas and he was attracted towards him involuntarily. He prostrated himself, kissed the Prophet's hands and feet and expressed faith in his religion. Thereafter he took leave of him and returned to the owners of the garden.

The sons of Rabiyyah were very much surprised to observe the spiritual revolution which had taken place in the Christian slave. They enquired from him: "What conversation did you have with this stranger and why did you show so much humility before him?"

The slave replied: "This person who has now taken refuge in your garden is the chief of the entire humanity. He has told me things which only Prophets know and he is the very Promised Prophet". The sons of Rabiyyah were very much annoyed to hear the slave's words. Apparently, however, they said benevolently: "This man should not estrange you from your old faith. And the religion of 'Isa (Christ) which you follow at present is better than his".

The Prophet Returns To Makkah

The intensity with which the people pursued the Prophet ended with his taking refuge in the garden of the sons of Rabiyyah. However, he had to return to Makkah now, and even this return was not free from difficulties, because his only defender had since departed from the world and it was possible that at the time of his arrival in Makkah he might have been captured and killed.

The Prophet decided to spend a few days in Nakhlah (a place situated between Makkah and Ta'if). His idea was to send some one from there to one of the chiefs of Quraysh so that he might procure 'security' for him and then he might enter his birth-place under the protection of some such person.

However, he could not find at Nakhlah anyone who might go to Makkah on his behalf. Later he left Nakhlah for Mount Hira. There he met a Khaza'i Arab and asked him to go to Makkah and speak to Mut'am bin Adi, who was one of the towering personalities of Makkah, for his (i.e. the Prophet's) 'security'.

The man went to Makkah and conveyed the message of the Prophet to Mut'am. Although Mut'am was an idol-worshipper he accepted the request of the Prophet and said: "Muhammad should come straight to my house. My sons and I shall protect his life".

The Prophet entered Makkah at night and went direct to the house of Mut'am and spent the night there. Next morning Mut'am said to the Prophet: "Now that you are under my protection it will be in the fitness

of things if Quraysh should also know about it. Hence, to proclaim this it is necessary that you should accompany me to Masjidul Haram". The Prophet accepted the idea and got ready to go there. Mut'am ordered his sons to arm themselves and encircle the Prophet. Then they entered the mosque.

Their arrival in Masjidul Haram was very impressive. Abu Sufyan who had been lying in wait for the Prophet since long was very much annoyed to observe this scene and abandoned the idea of molesting him. Mut'am and his sons sat down and the Prophet started performing 'tawaf'. After performing 'tawaf' he left for his house.3

Soon afterwards the Prophet left Makkah for Madina and the beginning of the year of 'migration' Mut'am passed away in Makkah. The news of his death reached Madina and the Prophet remembered him for his goodness. The poet of Islam, Hassan bin Thabit, recited some verses in memory of his services. The great Prophet remembered him on various occasions.

So much so that when, after the Battle of Badr, Quraysh were returning to Makkah after having sustained great loss and leaving behind a number of persons, who were captured by the Muslims, the Prophet remembered Mut'am and said: "If Mut'am had been alive and had asked me to release all the captives or to gift them to him, I would not have rejected his request".

A Point Which Deserves Attention

The tedious journey to Tatif undertaken by the Prophet makes abundantly clear his steadfastness and forbearance and the fact that he never forgot the services rendered by Mut'am at a particular time tells us about his sublime habits and high morals.

However, over and above these two qualities of the Prophet, we can well imagine how appreciative he must have been for the valuable services rendered him by Abu Talib. Mut'am lent support to the Prophet for a few hours or for a few days, but his noble uncle defended him throughout his life. Mut'am did not suffer even one-thousandth part of the hardships and tribulations which Abu Talib suffered.

And when the Prophet was willing to release all the captives of Badr or to gift them away to Mut'am for the sake of services rendered by him for a few hours what would he do in lieu of the services rendered by his dear uncle?

It is necessary that the person, who supported the Prophet for full forty two years and risked his own life during the last ten years to protect him, should enjoy a very high position in the eyes of Muhammad, the leader of humanity. And then there is a clear difference between these two persons. Mut'am was a polytheist and an idol-worshipper, whereas Abu Talib was considered to be one of the great personalities of the world of Islam.

Speeches In The Famous Bazaars Of Arabia

During Haj season the Arabs assembled at various places like 'Ukaz', 'Majannah' and 'Zil-Majaz'. Great poets and speakers sat at elevated places and entertained the people with their verses and speeches which depicted bravery, self-praise and love The Prophet availed of this opportunity like the Prophets of the past. And on account of being secure from molestation by the idol-worshippers owing to fighting being unlawful during the prohibited months he mounted a high place, turned to the people and addressed them thus:

"Acknowledge the Oneness of Allah so that you may attain deliverance. With the strength of faith you can control the entire world, can make the people obey your orders and can find place in Paradise in the next world".

Invitation To The Heads Of The Tribes During Haj Season

During Haj season the Prophet contacted the chiefs of Arabia and saw all of them in their respective lodgings and presented the reality of his religion before them. At times, when the Prophet was busy conversing with them Abu Lahab appeared on the scene and said: "O people! Don't believe in what he says, because he is campaigning against the religion of your ancestors and his words are baseless".

The opposition of the Prophet's uncle reduced the effect of his sermons amongst the heads of the tribes and they said to themselves "If his religion were true and profitable members of his own family would not have opposed him".4

1. Ibn Said says that the death of Khadijah took place one month and five days after that of Abu Talib. (Tabaqat, vol. I, page 106). Others like Ibn Athir, however, believe that she died earlier than him. (Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 63).
2. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 25.
3. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, pp. 210-212 and al-Bidayah wan Nihayah vol. III, page 137.
4. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, page 216 and Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 422 -442.

During the past times 'Wadiul Qura' (the Valley of Qura) was the trade route from Yemen to Syria. After passing by the side of Makkah the trading caravans of Yemen entered this long valley and along with it there were some green and pleasant regions, one of them being the old city of Yathrib, which became known later as 'Madinatur Rasul' (the city of the Prophet).

Two famous tribes known as 'Aws' and 'Khazraj', who were Yemenite Arab migrants (Qehtani) had settled in this region since the well known tribes of the Jews (Bani Qurayzah, Bani Nuzayr and Bani Qaynqa'), who had migrated from the northern areas of the Peninsula, had also settled there. Every year a group of Yathrib Arabs went to Makkah to perform Haj ceremonies, and the Prophet contacted them. These contacts provided the preliminaries for 'migration', and centralized the scattered strength of Islam

at that point. Many of these contacts did not prove fruitful.

Notwithstanding this however, the pilgrims from Yathrib, on their return to their homeland, mentioned the appearance of the new Prophet as the most important news and attracted the attention of the people of that area to this great event.

We, therefore, mention here some of these meetings which took place during the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth years of the prophetic mission. From a deep study of these events the reasons for the migration of the Prophet from Makkah to Yathrib (Madina) and the centralization of the strength of the Muslims at that place become quite clear:

1. As and when the Prophet learned that an important person from amongst the Arabs had arrived in Makkah he contacted him immediately and presented his religion to him. One day he heard that Suwayd bin Samit had come to Makkah. He met him at once and explained the realities of his sacred religion to him. Suwayd thought that these realities were perhaps the wise sayings of Luqman which he had already with himself.

The Prophet, however, said: "The sayings of Luqman are good, but what Allah has revealed to me is better and sublimer, because it is the torch of guidance which sheds light everywhere. Thereafter the Prophet read out some verses to him, and he embraced Islam. Then he returned to Madina. He was killed by Khazrajites before the Battle of 'Bu'ath'. He breathed his last while reciting 'Shahadatain' (i.e. acknowledging that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His servant and Prophet).1

2. A group of persons belonging to the tribe of 'Bani 'Amir' met the Prophet and said: "We shall believe in your prophethood on the condition that you make us your successors (caliphs)". The Prophet replied: "This thing concerns Allah and I do not possess any authority in the matter. They then declined to embrace Islam and returned to their tribe saying that it meant that they should take up the cudgels for it and others should enjoy the profit. On reaching home they mentioned the matter to an old man of their tribe who had not been able to perform Haj on account of infirmity. The enlightened old man blamed them and said: "It is the very luminous star which has risen from the horizon of reality".2

3. Anas bin Rafe' came to Makkah along with a group of persons belonging to the tribe of Abdul Ashhal and Ayas bin Ma'az was also amongst them. Their object was to seek military assistance from Quraysh to fight against the Khazrajites.

The Prophet joined their meeting and explained his religion to them and also recited some verses of the Qur'an for them. Ayas, who was a courageous man, stood up and embraced Islam and said: "This religion is better than the assistance of Quraysh for which you have come here". (He meant that Islam is a surety for all-round prosperity, because it roots out homicide and all factors of destruction and deceit).

Acceptance of Islam by this man without the inclination of the head of the tribe made Anas very angry. To quench his uneasiness he took sand in both of his hands, threw it on the face of Ayas and said:

"Keep quiet. We have come here to seek assistance from Quraysh and not to embrace the religion of Islam". The Prophet then got up and later the said group returned to Madina. The Battle of Bu'ath took place between Aws and Khazraj. Ayas, who remained steadfast in his faith till the last moment of his life, was killed in this battle.3

The Battle Of Bu'ath

The Battle of Bu'ath is one of the historical battles which took place between the two tribes of Aws and Khazraj. Bani Aws were victorious in this battle and they burned the palm grove of the enemy. Thereafter war and peace took place alternately. Abdullah bin Ubay who was one of the chiefs of Bani Khazraj did not participate in this battle and had, therefore, held in respect by both the tribes.

It appeared that the two parties had got fully exhausted and, therefore, became very much inclined towards peace. Both the tribes insisted that Abdullah should become the ruler after compromise. They even prepared a crown for him so that he might wear at the appropriate time. However, this scheme failed on account of the inclination of a group of Khazrajites towards Islam. And in the meantime the Prophet met six Khazrajites at Makkah and they accepted his invitation.

The Details Of This Event

During Haj season the Prophet met six persons belonging to the tribe of Khazraj and asked them whether they had concluded a pact with the Jews. They replied in the affirmative. Thereupon he said to them: "Please sit down so that I may tell you something". They sat down and heard his words. The Prophet read out some verses of the Qur'an to them. This had a good effect on them and they embraced Islam immediately.

The thing which made them inclined to Islam was that they had heard from the Jews that a Prophet of Arabian descent, who would introduce the religion of the Oneness of Allah and would wipe out idol-worship, would be appointed by the Almighty soon and they, therefore, thought that before the Jews stole a march on them they themselves should assist him and thereby become victorious over their enemies.

The said group of persons turned to the Prophet and said:

"The fire of war constantly kindles between us. We hope that Almighty Allah will quench it by means of your sacred religion. We are now returning to Yathrib and shall present your religion to the people. If all of them accept it there will be no one else who should be more respectable for us than you".

These six persons made continuous efforts to propagate Islam in Yathrib. So much so that there was no house left there where the Prophet was not talked about.4

The First Agreement At 'Aqabah

The continuous propagation by those six persons proved fruitful and a group of the residents of Yathrib embraced Islam. In the twelfth year of the prophetic mission another group consisting of twelve persons came from Yathrib and met the Prophet at 'Aqabah and concluded the first Islamic agreement. The most famous out of these persons were As'ad bin Zurarah and 'Ubadah bin Samit.

The text of the agreement, concluded after their embracing Islam, was this: "We have concluded an agreement with the Prophet that we shall be duty-bound to act thus: "We shall not associate anyone with Allah We shall neither steal nor commit adultery. We shall not kill our children. We shall not slander one another and shall not fail to perform good deeds".

The Prophet promised that if they acted according to the agreement their place would be in Paradise, but if they were disobedient it was for Allah to forgive them or torture them. In the terminology of the historians this 'Bay'at' (Oath of allegiance) is called 'Bay'atun Nisa' (Bay'at of the women), because at the time of the conquest of Makkah the Prophet took a similar 'Bay'at' from women.

These twelve persons returned to Yathrib with their hearts abounding with faith and became very active in propagating Islam. They also wrote a letter to the Prophet requesting him to send a missionary for them so that he might teach them the Holy Qur'an. The Prophet sent Mus'ab bin Umayr for their guidance. Under the guidance of this able missionary the Muslims used to assemble round him in the absence of the Prophet and to perform congregational prayers.5

The Second Agreement At 'Aqabah

There was a great tumult amongst the Muslims of Yathrib. They were anxiously waiting for the arrival of Haj season so that, besides performing Haj ceremonies, they should see the Prophet from near and declare their readiness to render every service to Islam and to enlarge the range of the agreement from the point of view of quantity as well as quality.

A Haj caravan of Yathrib consisting of more than five hundred persons left for Makkah. It included seventy three Muslims, out of whom two were women, and the remaining persons were either indifferent or half inclined towards Islam. The said group met the Prophet in Makkah and requested that a time might be appointed for them for the performance of the ceremonies of 'Bay'at'. The Prophet said: "We shall meet at Mina in the night of the 13th of Zil-Haj, when the people are asleep in the Valley of 'Aqabah" (It is a defile near Mina).

The 13th night of Zil-Haj arrived. The Prophet was the first to reach 'Aqabah along with his uncle Abbas. A part of the night passed. The polytheists of Arabia went to sleep. The Muslims got up from their places one after the other and came to 'Aqabah secretly. Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, was the first to speak out thus: "O Khazarajites! You have expressed your support for the religion of Muhammad! You should be

aware that he is the most dignified person of his tribe.

All Bani Hashim, whether they believe in his religion or not, are responsible for his defence. However, Muhammad is now inclined towards you and desires to be amongst you. If you are confident that you will abide by your agreement and will protect him from every harm from his enemies, we are prepared to let him go with you. However, if you are not capable of defending him in difficult circumstances you are free to forsake him here and let him spend his life amongst his kinsmen with great dignity and respect ".

At this time Bura' bin Ma'rur stood up and said: "By Allah! Had there been anything in our hearts other than that which we have said with our tongues we would have expressed it. We have no other intention than sincere compliance with the agreement and sacrifice in the path of the Prophet". Then the Khazrajites turned towards the Prophet and requested him to say something. The Prophet recited some verses and stirred their inclination towards Islam.

Thereafter he said: "I take this oath from you that you will defend me in the same manner in which you defend your children and the members of your family". Upon this Bura' rose up again and said: "We are the children of campaign and combat and have been trained as warriors. We have inherited these qualities from our ancestors".

In the meantime, when the entire gathering had been filled with excitement, the voice of Khazrajites, which was a sign of their unusual fervour became louder. Abbas, while holding the hand of the Prophet, said: "Spies have been appointed upon us and it is, therefore, necessary that you should speak in a low voice". Bura' bin Ma'rur, Abul Haytham bin Tayhan and As'ad bin Zurarah then rose from their places and put their hands on the hand of the Prophet by way of 'Bay'at'. Thereafter all those present performed 'Bay'at, one after the other.

While taking the oath Abul Haytham said: "O Prophet of Allah! We have concluded pacts with the Jews and now there is no alternative but to ignore them. It would not, therefore, be appropriate that you should leave us one day and return to your own people". The Prophet replied: "If you have made an agreement of peace with someone, I consider it respectable".

Then he added "Select twelve persons from amongst you as your representatives in the same manner in which Prophet Musa bin Imran selected twelve leaders out of Bani Israel, so that, in difficult circumstances, you may reply to their views".

Thereafter twelve representatives of the Ansar (nine from Khazraj and three from Aws) were introduced to the Prophet. Their names and particulars are recorded in history. The performance of 'Bay'at' was finalized in this assembly and the Prophet promised that he would leave Makkah at an appropriate time and go to Yathrib. Then the gathering dispersed.6

Conditions Of Muslims After The Agreement Of 'Aqabah

Now the question arises as to why the people of Yathrib who were at a distance from the centre of the propagation of Islam, submitted to the authority of the Prophet more readily than the Makkans (with all their proximity to him) and why a few short meetings between him and the people of Yathrib had a greater impact than his thirteen years propagation in Makkah. It may be said that the following two things were the cause of the advancement of Islam in Yathrib:

1. People of Yathrib were the neighbours of the Jews since long and every now and then a mention was made in their meetings and assemblies about the appointment of an Arabian Prophet to the prophetic mission. So much so that the Jews used to tell the idol-worshippers of Yathrib that the expected Arabian Prophet would promote Judaism arid destroy idolworship.

These discourses created a strange readiness in the minds of the people of Yathrib for accepting the faith for which the Jews were waiting, so that when six Khazrajites met the Prophet for the first time they embraced Islam at once and said to one another: "It is the same Prophet whom the Jews are awaiting and it is, therefore, necessary that we should express belief in him earlier than them".

Hence, one of the objections raised by the Holy Qur'an against the Jews is this: "You used to threaten the idol-worshippers with the appointment to prophethood of the Arabian Prophet and gave good tidings of his arrival to the people and quoted his signs from the Taurat. Why do you turn away your face from him now?" It says:

Now that a Book confirming their own has come to them from Allah, they deny it, although they know it to be the truth and have long prayed for help against the unbelievers. May Allah's curse be upon the infidels! **(Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 89)**

2. Another factor which might have prompted the people of Yathrib to embrace Islam was their mental and physical exhaustion. The harassment caused by disputes spreading over a period of one hundred and twenty years had exhausted their patience. They were well-nigh fed up with their lives and found all doors of hope and salvation closed before them.

Only a study of the Battle of Bu'ath, which was one of the battles fought by the people of Yathrib against one another, provides a clear view of their condition. In this battle Bani Aws, who were defeated initially ran away to Najd. The victorious adversaries (Khazrajites) taunted them. The chief of Bani Aws (Huzayr) felt it very much. He thrust his spear in his thing, dismounted his horse, called out to his people in a loud voice and said: "I shall not rise from my place until I am killed".

The steadfastness of Huzayr stirred the spirit of dignity, valour and defence among the defeated warriors. They decided to return at any cost and defend their interests. Having lost all hope of life they began a desperate fight. When a self-sacrificing army fights with firm faith it is always victorious. Hence the defeated Bani Aws were again successful. They defeated Bani Khazraj and burned their palm-

groves.

Thereafter war and peace continued for long and they had to face hundreds of unpleasant, depressing and tiring events. Both the groups were unhappy about their condition and wanted to find a solution for it and wished for a gleam of hope. It was for this reason that when the six Khazrajites heard the words of the Prophet they felt that they had found what they had lost and said: "Maybe Allah may relieve us of this discord through you".

These were some of the reasons which induced the people of Yathrib to welcome the invitation of Islam with open arms.

The Reaction Of QuraysHTo The Agreement At 'Aqabah

Quraysh now assumed an attitude of apathy, and as Islam had not made any appreciable advancement in Makkah, they were under the impression that its decline had started and its edifice would soon crumble down.

Suddenly the news of the second agreement at 'Aqabah fell amongst them like a bomb-shell. The heads of the idolatrous administration came to know that in the darkness of the preceding night seventy three persons belonging to Yathrib had concluded an agreement with the Prophet that they would defend him in the same manner in which they defended their children.

This news created a strange fear in their hearts and they said to themselves: "Now the Muslims have acquired a base in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula and it is possible that they will collect their scattered forces and will begin preaching the religion of the Oneness of Allah and will by this means threaten the central government of idolatry in Makkah with war and danger".

To investigate the matter further the chiefs of Quraysh contacted the Khazrajites in the morning and said: "It has been reported to us that last night you concluded a defence pact with Muhammad and have promised him that you will fight against us". They, however, swore that they did not desire to wage war against them.

The caravan of the pilgrims from Yathrib consisted of about 500 persons. Out of them only seventy three had performed 'Bay'at' in 'Aqabah at midnight whereas others were asleep at that time and knew nothing of the matter.

Hence, those who were not Muslims swore that nothing of the sort had happened and the entire story (of the pact) was a mere fiction. The Khazrajite, Abdullah bin Obay, the preliminaries of whose chiefship of entire Yathrib had already been provided, said: "No such thing has been done and the people of Khazraj tribe don't do anything without consulting me".

Then the chiefs of Quraysh rose up so that they might make further investigations in the matter. The

Muslims, who were present in the meeting, realized that their secret had been divulged. They, therefore, decided to make the best use of the available time and said to themselves: "Before the persons concerned are identified it will be better if we return home and get out of Makkan influence".

The haste which was observed in some persons of Yathrib intensified the doubts of Quraysh about the agreement and they concluded that the report received by them was correct. They, therefore, pursued all those persons who belonged to Yathrib. Fortunately, however, they commenced their pursuit when it was too late and the Haj caravan had already crossed the reach of Makkans. They could lay their hands on only one Muslim and he was Sa'd bin 'Ubadah.

According to Ibn Hisham Quraysh captured two persons out of whom one was Sa'd and the other was Manzar bin 'Umar. The second one escaped from their hands. As regards Sa'd, however, they caught him by the hair of his head with great harshness and dragged him on the ground.

A man from amongst Quraysh was very much moved to see Sa'd in this pitiable condition and said to him: "Do you have a pact with someone in Makkah?" Said replied: "Yes. I do have a pact with Mut'am bin Adi, because I protected his trade from larceny and provided him asylum when he crossed through Yathrib".

The Qurayshite who wanted to rescue him from this impasse approached Mut'am and said to him: "A Khazrajite has been captured and is being subjected to severe torture by Quraysh. He now wants your support and is waiting for your help. Mut'am came and saw that it was Sa'd bin 'Ubadah–the same man under whose protection his trading caravan used to reach its destination safely every year. He secured his release and sent him to Yathrib.

The friends of Sa'd and the Muslims who came to know about his arrest decided to get him released. They were thinking on these lines when Sa'd suddenly appeared from a distance. After joining them he related his woeful story to them.7

Spiritual Influence Of Islam

The orientalists are keen to insist that the advancement of Islam took place through sword. In this regard they say things which will be replied to, one by one, when we describe the battles of Islam against the unbelievers. At present, however, we wish to invite the attention of the readers to an incident which took place at Yathrib before 'migration'. It proves clearly that in the beginning the penetration and advancement of Islam took place only by means of its sweetness and the clearness of its rules and regulations, which captivated the hearts of the people. Here are the details of the incident:

Mus'ab bin Umayr was a missionary and a great orator of Islam who had been sent by the Prophet to Yathrib on the request of As'ad bin Zurarah. These two persons decided to invite the chiefs of Yathrib to Islam by means of logical argument.

One day they entered a garden where some Muslims were present and Sa'd bin Ma'az and Usayd bin Huzayr, who were the chiefs of Bani Abdul Ashhal, could also be seen there. Sa'd turned towards Usayd and said: "Unsheathe your sword and go to these two men and tell them to desist from propagating the religion of Islam and not to deceive our simple-minded people with their speeches and narrations. As As'ad bin Zurarah is my cousin (maternal aunt's son) I feel shy of facing him with a naked weapon".

Usayd stood in the way of the two men with an angry face and a naked sword and uttered the above-mentioned words with a harsh voice. The great orator Mus'ab bin Umayr who had learnt the method of propagation from the Prophet addressed Usayd thus: "Is it possible that you should sit with us for a while so that we may have mutual conversation. If what we say is disagreeable to your mind, we shall return the way we have come". Usayd said: "You have said something reasonable".

He, therefore, sat down for a moment and sheathed his sword. Mus'ab recited a few verses of the Qur'an. The luminous realities of the Qur'an and their attraction and sweetness coupled with the forceful logic of Mus'ab overpowered him. He lost all control over himself and asked: "How can one become a Muslim?" They replied: "Confess the Oneness of Allah, wash your body and dress with water and offer prayers".

Usayd, who had come to shed the blood of these two persons, acknowledged with an open mind, the Oneness of Allah and the prophethood of the Prophet. He took bath, washed his dress and then returned to Sa'd, humming the 'Shahadatain' (Acknowledgement of the Oneness of Allah and Prophethood of Muhammad) Sa'd bin Ma'az was waiting for him very anxiously.

Suddenly Usayd appeared with a happy and glowing face. Sa'd bin Ma'az turned to those present and said: "By Allah! Usayd has changed his faith and has not achieved the object for which he went". Usayd came up and explained the matter. Sa'd bin Ma'az got up in extreme anger so as to check the two persons from propagating Islam and shed their blood.

However, the same thing, which had happened to Usayd, happened to him. He too had to surrender before the strong logic and the attractive and sweet words of Mus'ab. Signs of remorse appeared on his face for what he had decided upon, and now he declared his allegiance to Islam. He bathed then and there and purified his clothes.

Thereafter he turned to his people and said to them: "What position do I enjoy amongst you?" They replied: "You are the head and chief of our tribe". Then he said: "I shall not speak with any man or woman of my tribe unless they embrace Islam".

The words of the chief were passed on from mouth to mouth to all the members of the tribe and within a short time and before even seeing the Prophet the entire tribe of Bani Abdul Ashhal embraced Islam and became defenders of this sacred religion.8

We find many specimens of such incidents in the inner folds of history. They clearly prove the

baselessness of the remarks of the orientalists about the causes of the advancement of Islam, because in these incidents force or money were not at work and the persons concerned had neither seen the Prophet, nor had they any contact with him. There was no other factor at work in these cases except the rational conduct of a Muslim orator which brought about a wonderful spiritual revolution within the tribe.

Fear Overtakes Quraysh

Support rendered by the people of Yathrib to the Muslims awakened Quraysh once again from their carelessness. They renewed their persecution and torture and got ready once again to check the influence and advancement of Islam.

The companions of the Prophet complained about the pressure and torture by the unbelievers and sought permission to migrate to some other place. The Prophet asked them to give him some time (to take a decision). After a few days he said to them: "The best place for you is Yathrib. You can very easily migrate to that place one by one".

After orders had been given to the Muslims to migrate they left Makkah on one pretext or the other and proceeded to Yathrib. However, at the very early stage of 'migration' Quraysh came to know about the secret of these journeys. They, therefore, prevented all sorts of travelling and decided to bring back all those who were on their way (to Yathrib).

They also decided that in case a person migrated along with his wife and children and his wife was a Qurayshite, they would not permit him to take her with him. In spite of all this they refrained from shedding blood and continued persecuting and torturing the Muslims. Fortunately, however, their activities did not prove fruitful.9

However a large number of Muslims escaped from the grip of Quraysh and joined the people of Yathrib– so much so that except the Prophet and Ali, and the Muslims who had been detained or were sick, no other Muslim was left in Makkah. The coming together of Muslims in Yathrib alarmed Quraysh all the more.

In order, therefore, to destroy Islam all the heads of the tribe assembled in Darun Nadwah and deliberated over the situation. All their proposals were, however, frustrated by the special policies of the Prophet. Eventually he also migrated to Yathrib in the month of Rabiul Awwal in the fourteenth year of his appointment to the prophetic mission.

1. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 425.
2. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 426.
3. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 427.
4. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, page 86.
5. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 131.
6. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 438–444 and Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, pp. 221–223.
7. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 448–450.

8. A'lamul Wara', page 37 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, pp. 10–11.
9. Tabaqat–i Ibn Sa'd, vol. VII, page 210.

The government of the Makkans resembled a constitutional government. Their Darun Nadwah was like a national consultative assembly where the heads of the tribes met at the time of crisis and exchanged views on complicated matters and took collective decision.

In the thirteenth year of the Prophet's prophetic mission the people of Makkah were faced with a great danger from the Muslims. It threatened their very existence and freedom. The great base which the Muslims set up in Yathrib and the responsibility taken by the residents of Yathrib for the protection of the Prophet were clear signs of this threat.

In the month of Rabiul Awwal of the thirteenth year of the prophetic mission, when the Prophet's migration took place, none of the Muslims was left in Makkah except the Prophet, Ali, Abu Bakr and a few other Muslims who had been detained by Quraysh or those who were old or sick. There was however, every possibility of these persons also leaving Makkah for Yathrib. In the meantime Quraysh suddenly took a categorical and dangerous decision.

A consultative meeting of the chiefs took place in Darun Nadwah. A man from among them spoke at the outset about the centralization of the forces of Muhammad at Yathrib and the agreement made by Bani Aws and Bani Khazraj.

Thereafter he added: "We, the people of the Haram, were respected by all tribes. However, Muhammad sowed the seeds of discord and thus posed a great danger for us. Now we have lost all patience. The only path of safety for us is that a brave man should be selected from among us, and he should put an end to his life secretly. And in case Bani Hashim stand up to quarrel and dispute with us, we may pay the blood–money to them.

An unidentified old man who introduced himself as 'Najdi' rejected this idea and said: "This plan is not at all practicable, because Bani Hashim will not spare the life of the murderer of Muhammad and the payment of blood–money will not satisfy them. Hence, whoever volunteers to execute this plan should first part with his own life, and no such person is found amongst you".

One of the chiefs named Abul Bakhtari said: "The best thing would be to imprison Muhammad and to provide him food and water through a hole and thus prevent the spreading of his religion". The old Najdi spoke again: "This scheme is also not very much different from the first one, because in that event Bani Hashim will wage war against you to get him released. And even if they themselves are not successful in achieving this object they will seek help from other tribes at the time of Haj and will get him released with their assistance".

A third man put forward another suggestion and said: "It will be better if we make Muhammad mount a

refractory camel and tie both of his feet and make the camel run so that it may strike him on hills and stones and thus shatter his body. And if, by chance, his life is saved and he alights in the land of some other tribe and wants to propagate his religion amongst them they themselves, who are zealous idolaters, will settle their accounts with him and will save us and themselves from his mischief".

The old Najdi once again disapproved of this plan and said: "You are aware of Muhammad's attractive and fascinating way of speaking. By his sweet speeches and oratory he will make the other tribes his allies and will then swoop down on you".

Perfect calmness prevailed over the whole assembly. Suddenly Abu Jahl, and according to another version the old Najdi himself, expressed his view and said: "The only proper and easy way is that some persons should be selected from all the families and they should jointly attack his house at night and cut him into pieces, so that all the families might be held responsible for the murder. It is evident that in that case Bani Hashim will not be in a position to take revenge on all the families". This proposal was endorsed unanimously and the would-be assassins were selected. It was then decided that when night fell those persons should carry out their mission.1

Divine Assistance

These muddle-headed persons were under the impression that like other mundane affairs the institution of prophethood, too, could be destroyed with such schemes. They could not conceive that like other Prophets the Prophet of Islam was also blessed with Divine assistance and the hand that had protected this luminous torch from the hurricanes of accidents for thirteen years could also frustrate the present plan of his enemies.

According to the exegetes the Archangel Jibreel came and informed the Prophet of the nefarious designs of the polytheists. The Qur'an makes a reference to this incident in these words:

Remember how the unbelievers plotted against you. They sought to take you captive or kill you or banish you. They devised plans-but Allah too made a plan and Allah is the best planner. (**Surah al-Anfal, 8:30**).

The Prophet was ordered by Allah to proceed to Yathrib. However, it was not an easy task to get rid of the cruel hands of the idolaters, especially when they were on the look-out for him and the distance between Makkah and Yathrib was also long. In case he had not left Makkah after proper planning it was probable that the Makkans might have overtaken and arrested him and had shed his blood before he could join his friends.

The historians and biographers have given different versions about the migration of the Prophet and the differences between them about the particulars of the incident are unusual. The writer of Seerah-i Halabi has succeeded to some extent in making the different narratives compatible with one another, but has

failed to eliminate the contradictions in some cases.

The thing which deserves attention is that most of the Sunni and Shi'ah traditionalists have put the Prophet's migration in such a way that one concludes that it was a miraculous feat to get rid of the enemy, whereas a careful study of the incident reveals that the Prophet's escape was the result of his foresight, careful planning and the precautionary measures taken by him; and Allah had willed to provide him safety through natural channels and not by means of miraculous acts. The thing which bears testmony to this view is that the Prophet availed of natural causes and rational means (like making Ali sleep in his own bed and concealing himself in the cave etc. and thus ensured his safety.

The Archangel Jibreel Informs The Prophet

The Archangel Jibreel informed the Prophet about the wicked plan of the unbelievers and asked him to migrate. The Prophet ordered Ali to sleep in his bed, and pass through the terrible ordeal for the safety of Islam, so that the unbelievers might not think that the Prophet had left, but should remain under the impression that he was in the house. Thus Ali remained contented with remaining in the house, so that he himself could move freely through the streets of Makkah and in its precincts.

The advantage underlying this plan was that the enemies kept guarding the Prophet's house only, and he himself gained time to move to a place of safety.

Now we should see as to who offers to sleep in the Prophet's bed and to sacrifice his own life for him? You will naturally say: "He who believed in him first and whirled round him from the day of his appointment to the prophetic mission just as a moth whirls round a candle". It is he who should make sacrifice in this path and that self-sacrificing person is Ali.

The Prophet, therefore, turned to Ali and said: "Sleep in my bed tonight and cover yourself with the green sheet which I use during sleep, because the enemies have conspired to kill me and it is, therefore, necessary that I should migrate to Yathrib".

Ali occupied the bed of the Prophet early in the night. When three-fourth of the night had passed, forty persons encircled the house and peeped into it through a hole. They saw the condition of the house to be as usual and thought that the man who was sleeping in the bedroom was the Prophet himself.

The Prophet decided to leave the house when the enemies had surrounded it from all sides and were keeping perfect vigil. Almighty Allah willed to save the great leader of Islam from the clutches of these mean people. The Prophet recited those verses of Surah Yasin which suited his condition at that time and after having read up to the verse:

"so that they cannot see"

he came out of the house immediately and went to the appointed place. It is not clear as to how the

Prophet succeeded in crossing the blockade and why the besiegers could not see him. It is learnt from the tradition quoted by the renowned Shi'ah traditionalist, the late Ali bin Ibrahim, while commenting on the verse:

Remember how the unbelievers plotted against you……

They devised plans -but Allah too has made a plan. Allah is the best planner. (**Surah al-Anfal, 8:30**)

that, when the Prophet left the house, all of them had gone to sleep and wanted to attack the house in the morning and did not imagine that the Prophet was aware of their plot.

However, other historians clearly narrate2 that the enemies remained awake till the time they attacked the Prophet's house and he came out of the house miraculously and they could not see him.

There is no doubt about the fact that such a miracle is possible. But the question is: Was such a miracle necessary on this occasion? Complete scrutiny of the circumstances of migration proves positively that the Prophet was aware of the plot of the enemies before they besieged his house and the plan which he chalked out for his escape was perfectly natural and had nothing supernatural about it.

By making Ali sleep in his bed he wanted to free himself from the idol-worshippers by natural means and not through miracle. Hence, he could very well leave the house before it was besieged and did not need any miracle for the purpose.

It is, however, possible that the Prophet's stay in the house till the siege took place was due to reasons which are not known to us at present. Hence, the discussion about this matter (Prophet's leaving the house at night) is not final in the eyes of all historians, because according to some of them the Prophet left his house before it was besieged and before sunset.3

Enemies Attack The House Of The Prophet

The forces of infidelity surrounded the house of the Prophet and were awaiting orders to make a rush and to cut the Prophet into pieces in his bedroom. Some of them insisted that they should attack at midnight and implement their scheme.

However, Abu Lahab stood up and said: "Women and children of Bani Hashim are within the house and it is possible that they may be hurt during the course of attack". Some say that the reason for their delay was that they wanted to kill the Prophet in broad daylight before the very eyes of Bani Hashim, so that they (Bani Hashim) might see that his murderer was not a particular person. Evenutally they decided to execute their plan at dawn, when there was light.4

It was now dawn. A great zeal and enthusiasm was visible amongst the unbelievers. They were under

the impression that they would soon achieve their desired object. With their hands on the hilts of the swords they entered the bedroom of the Prophet making a great noise. Simultaneously Ali raised his head from the pillow, threw aside the green sheet and said very calmly: "What is the matter?" They replied "We want Muhammad. Where is he?" Ali said: "Did you hand him over to me so that I may deliver him back to you? Anyway, he is not in the house at present".

The faces of the agents flushed with anger and their throats were choked on this account. They regretted having waited till morning and blamed Abu Lahab who had restrained them from making an attack at night.

Quraysh became very much excited owing to the frustration of their plan and the defeat which they had to suffer. They began thinking that Muhammad could not manage to go out of the environments of Makkah within such a short time and concluded that he had either concealed himself within Makkah or was on his way to Yathrib. They, therefore, planned to capture him.

The Prophet In The Cave Of Thaur

It is an established fact that the Prophet spent the night of migration, along with Abu Bakr in the cave of Thaur, which is situated in the south of Makkah (a spot opposite Madina). It is not, however, clear as to how this companionship took place and this point is perfectly ambiguous in history.

Some believe that this companionship was a mere chance and the Prophet having seen Abu Bakr on the way took him along with himself Others say that the Prophet went to Abu Bakr's house that night and at midnight both of them left the house for the cave of Thaur. Still others say that Abu Bakr came in quest of the Prophet and Ali guided him to his hiding place.5

In any case many biographers of the Prophet consider this companionship to be a proof of the Abu Bakr's greatness and quote this incident prominently in connection with his virtues.

Quraysh Do Not Hesitate In Searching Out The Prophet

The defeat suffered by Quraysh made them change their strategy They, therefore, decided to block the roads, to post watchmen on all the paths leading to Yathrib and also to procure the services of those who could locate a person by his foot-prints, so that, by this means, they might trace him out at any cost. They also declared that whoever gave correct information about the hiding place of Muhammad would be rewarded with one hundred camels.

The Qurayshites became active and proceeded towards north of Makkah to the road which leads to Madina, whereas the Prophet in order to frustrate their plan, had hidden himself in the cave of Thaur. Abu Karz, a famous physiognomist of Makkah, was acquainted with the foot-prints of the Prophet. On this account he came near the cave and said: "It appears that the Prophet intended to come to this

place. It is possible that he is hidden in the cave".

He, therefore, deputed someone to enter the cave. When that man came near the cave he saw that a very thick web had been woven on the mouth of the cave and the wild pigeons had laid eggs there.6 He returned without entering the cave and said: "There are cobwebs on the mouth of the cave, which show that there is no one inside it". These activities continued for three days and three nights and then Quraysh lost all hope and abandoned the quest.

Self-Sacrifice In The Path Of Reality

The most important point in regard to this event is the self-sacrifice of Ali in the path of reality. Self-sacrifice in the path of reality is the quality of those who are wedded to it- persons who ignore their lives, property and position, and spend their entire spiritual and material capital for the revival of truth.

Such persons are decidedly the lovers of reality and the perfection and auspiciousness which they observe in their pursuit for it make them surrender their temporary life and to embrace the eternal one. Ali's sleeping in the Prophet's bed during that tumultuous night is an outstanding specimen of this love for reality. There was no other stimulant for this hazardous feat except love for the survival of Islam, which is a surety for the prosperity of the society.

This kind of sacrifice is so valuable that the Almighty Allah has called it sacrifice made to acquire the pleasure of Allah and, as quoted by many commentators, the following verse was revealed in this behalf:

Among men, there are those who sacrifice their lives to seek Allah's pleasure. Allah is Compassionate to His servants. **(Surah al-Baqarah, 2:207)**

The greatness and importance of this act has made the great sages of Islam consider it to be one of the greatest virtues of Ali, the Commander of the Faithful and they have introduced him as a brave and self-sacrificing person.

And wherever this event has been mentioned in exegetes and history it has been admitted that the said verse was revealed about him. This truth can never be forgotten. The face of reality always shines through the inner folds of superstition and the scattered patches of a cloud cannot diminish the light of the sun.

The enmity of Mu'awiyyah with the family of the Prophet and especially with the Commander of the Faithful needs no mention. He planned to bribe some of the companions of the Prophet so as to get falsehoods forged with a view to stain the luminous pages of history, but he could not succeed.

Samrah bin Jundab who lived during the time of the Prophet and later attached himself to the court of Mu'awiyah used to tamper with facts and was paid for doing so. One day, while he was present before Mu'awiyah, the latter asked him earnestly to mount the pulpit and refute that the said verse was revealed

about Ali. He also asked him to tell the people that this verse was in fact revealed for the assassin of Ali (i.e. Abdur Rahman, bin Muljam).

As a reward for this act, which would have ruined Samrah's faith, Mu'awiyah offered him one hundred thousand dirhams. Samrah did not agree. Thereupon Mu'awiyah raised the amount and the deal was finally settled for four hundred thousand dirhams. The greedy old man began falsifying the facts of history and worsened his guilt-stained reputation. He said before a gathering that the said verse had been revealed about Abdur Rahman bin Muljam and not about Ali.

The stupid and simple-minded people believed in what he said and it did not occur to them that at the time of the revelation of the said verse Abdur Rahman was not in Hijaz and was not perhaps born.

The face of reality did not, however, remain concealed with these fabrications. Mu'awiyah and his family fell victims to vicissitudes of time. The signs of those who fabricated lies during his time were obliterated. Once again truth prevailed. Great and renowned exegetes[7] and traditionalists of all times have admitted that the verse:

Among men, there are those who sacrifice their lives to seek Allah's pleasure **(Surah al-Baqarah, 2:207)**

was revealed during the 'night's stay' about the self-sacrifice of Ali.[8]

Statement Of Ibn Taymiyah

Ahmad bin Abdul Halim Harani Hanbali who died in the prison of Morocco in 728 A.H. was one of the Sunni scholars and most of the beliefs of Wahabis originate from him. He held special views about the Holy Prophet, Ali, the Commander of the Faithful and other members of the Prophet's family and has recorded most of his beliefs in his book entitled "Minhajus Sunnah".

Owing to his deviated beliefs most of his contemporary ulema accused him of heresy and showed disgust for him. However, discussion of these matters is beyond our aim. He has said something about this distinction[9] which may be placed before you with minor amendments.

It is seen at times that some incapable persons with scant or superficial knowledge are influenced by his words and they propagate his view among common people without any investigation and without consulting those learned in the field, and the irony is that people may consider them to be research scholars. They are, however, oblivious of the fact that these words are those of a heretic who has been refuted by his co-religionists and has been charged with heresy.

He says "Ali's sleeping in the Prophet's bed is not a matter of distinction for him, because Ali was aware for two reasons that he would not meet any harm that night. Firstly it was the remark of the Prophet which was absolutely true, for he said to him that night: "Sleep in my bed and you will not meet any

harm".

And secondly the Prophet handed over to him the things which the people had kept with him for safe custody, and naturally knew that his representative would not be killed, for, otherwise, he would have entrusted those things to some other person. And on account of this recommendation Ali himself also understood that he would not meet any harm and would be successful in discharging the responsibility which had been entrusted to him by the Prophet.

Reply To The False Interpretation

Before giving detailed replies to the abovementioned two points we may say briefly: "By denying one distinction Ibn Taymiyah has proved a still greater distinction for Ali, because his faith about the truthfulness of the Prophet was either an ordinary faith or it was a strong and extraordinary faith and all the words of the Prophet were clear before him.

According to the first assumption (i.e. in case his faith was ordinary) Ali did not at all possess any definite knowledge of his remaining immune from any harm. This is so because the words of the Prophet do not create a definite knowledge in the hearts of such people (and Ali was decidedly not one of them).

Even if they apparently accept his words to be true they entertain anguish in their hearts. And in case they sleep in his place at times of danger their disturbance of mind increases all the more and the monster of death appears before their eyes every moment. According to this assumption, therefore, Ali undertook this task with the possibility of being killed and not with the knowledge that he would remain safe.

According to the second assumption Ibn Taymiyah has proved a greater distinction for Ali, because if the faith of a man is so firm that the words of the Prophet are crystal clear to him and the excellence of such a faith surpasses everything else. The result of such a faith is that when the Prophet tells him: "Sleep in my bed and you will not meet any harm from the enemies".

He walks with perfect peace of mind and occupies his bed and does not feel the least fear in his heart. And if the view expressed by Ibn Taymiyah (that Ali had knowledge of his safety, because the truthful Prophet had told him so) be a proof of the highest degree of faith, he should know that he has unconsciously proved this greatest distinction for Ali.

Detailed Reply

As regards the first argument it may be said that the sentence, "Sleep in my bed and you will not suffer any harm", has not been quoted by any reliable historian.[10] No doubt Ibn Athir (d. 630 A.H.)[11] and Tabari (d. 310 A.H.)[12] have quoted this sentence but it appears that their source is Seerah-i Ibn Hisham[13] who has quoted the matter in this way-especially because the text of these historians in this regard is exactly the same as that of Ibn Hisham. Besides this, so far as we are aware, this matter is not

found in the writings of Shiiah scholars.

Shaykh Muhammad bin Hasan Tusi (d. 460 A.H.), has quoted the event of migration in his 'Amali' in great detail and has also mentioned the said sentence with a minor alteration. However, what he says is different from that quoted in the writings of Sunni scholars, for he clearly quotes that, when the night of migration had passed, Ali and Hind bin Abi Hala (son of Khadijah and step-son of the Prophet met him [the Prophet]) during the following nights. During one of those nights the Prophet said to Ali: "O Ali! Henceforth these people will never be able to overpower you".

As will be observed, this is almost the same sentence which has been quoted by Ibn Hisham, Tabari and Ibn Athir. However, according to the quotation of Shaykh Tusi, the Prophet gave this assurance to Ali in the second or third night and not in the first night.

Besides all this, the words of Ali himself are the best testimony on the subject. As is evident from his couplets (translated below) he himself has treated this act to be a sort of self-sacrifice in the path ot truth:

"I have protected with my life the best man, who has laid his feet on earth, and the noblest man, who has performed 'Tawaf' of the 'House of Allah' and 'Hajar-i Isma'il'. That dignified person is Muhammad bin Abdullah. And I acted in this way when the unbelievers were plotting against him. At that time the Great Allah protected him from their plot. I remained in his bed from night till morning and kept waiting for the enemy, and prepared myself for captivity and death". (Suyuti has quoted these lines from Ali in his exegesis entitled 'Durre Manthur').

In the presence of these expressive sentences and clear explanations there remains no justification to rely upon the words of lbn Hisham, because there are more chances of his committing mistake. And there is a great probability that, as Ibn Hisham desired to narrate things in a compressed manner, he contented himself with quoting only the actual sentence.

And as it was immaterial for him as to when this sentence was uttered (which was actually uttered during the second night) he ignored to quote the time and narrated things in a way as if all these incidents occurred during the very night of migration.

Another evidence which confirms this statement is the well-known tradition which has been quoted by many Sunni and Shi'ah scholars. According to this report Allah addressed the Archangels Jibreel and Mika'il that night and said: "If I decide to grant one of you life and the other death which of you would be ready to accept death and leave life for the other?"

Neither of them agreed to this proposal. The Almighty then said: "Now Ali has preferred death for himself and sacrificed his life for the Prophet". Then He ordered them to descend to earth and undertake the safety and protection of Ali.

The second argument advanced by Ibn Taymiyah about Ali's being aware of his eventual safety is the order given to him by the Prophet to return to their owners the things which they had entrusted to him for safe custody.

According to him this would go to show that the Prophet knew that Ali would not suffer any harm and, therefore, asked him to return those things. However, we think that if the trail of events is studied properly this difficulty may also be solved. And here is the trail of the events of migration

Trail Of Events Of The Migration Of The Prophet

The initial stages of the escape of the Prophet assumed a practical shape with the help of proper planning. The Prophet took refuge at night in the Cave of Thaur and foiled the plan of the conspirators. He did not feel any disturbance of mind. So much so that at critical moments he consoled his companion with the words: "Don't worry. Allah is with us".

For three days and three nights they enjoyed the blessing of Allah. According to Shaykh Tusi (in 'Amali'), Ali and Hind bin Abi Hala (the son of Khadijah) and according to many historians, Abdullah bin Abu Bakr and 'Amr bin Fuhayrah (the shepherd of Abu Bakr) used to go and meet the Prophet.

Ibn Athir writes:14 "During nights Abu Bakr's son informed his father and the Prophet about the decisions taken by Quraysh and his shepherd made the sheep pass by the cave on their way to Makkah so that the Prophet and his companion might use their milk. At the time of his return Abdullah walked before the sheep so that his footprints might be obliterated.

Shaykh says in 'Amali: "During one of the nights (after the night of migration) when Ali and Hind had the honour to reach in the presence of the Prophet he ordered Ali to arrange two camels for them (i.e. for the Prophet and his companion). At that time Abu Bakr said: "I have already arranged two camels for you and myself". The Prophet replied: "I am preapred to accept this offer on payment". He then ordered Ali to pay the price of the camel.

Among the directions given by the Prophet that night in the Cave of Thaur some were that Ali should declare on the following day in broad daylight with a loud voice that in case someone had kept something with Muhammad for safe custody or if he (Muhammad) was indebted to any person, the persons concerned should receive their property back.

Then he gave directions about the departure of 'Fawatim' (which means his own dear daughter Fatimah and Fatimah daughter of Asad and Fatimah daughter of Zubayr) and ordered Ali to make arrangements for their journey as well as for such other members of the family of Hashim as were inclined to migrate. And he pronounced on this occasion the sentence which has been relied upon by Ibn Taymiyah for his first argument. He said: "Henceforth these people will never be able to overpower you".

As you can observe the Prophet ordered Ali to return the things entrusted to him by the people when the

'night of stay' had already passed. These orders were given by him to Ali when he himself was getting ready to leave the cave.

Halabi writes: "When one night Ali presented himself before the Prophet in the Cave of Thaur the latter told him *inter alia* to return to the people the things which they had entrusted to him (the Prophet) and also pay off his debts". Then he turns to the statement that Ali did not meet the Prophet after the 'night of stay', but does not accept it himself and quotes from the author of the book 'ad-Durr' that Ali did meet the Prophet again after the night of 'migration'.[15]

In short Shaykh Tusi quotes reliable authorities saying that orders regarding the return of things entrusted to the Prophet by their owners were given by him after the 'night of stay' we need not refute this authentic version and get busy in amusing the people.

And as regards the Sunni historians having quoted the matter in a manner which apparently gives the impression that all directions were given by the Prophet during one and the same night viz. the night of migration, it needs explanation and it is not improbable that their object was to quote the original facts and they did not attach any importance to the determination of time at which these recommendations were made and directions given to Ali.

Coming Out Of The Cave

As directed by the Prophet, Ali sent three camels to the cave during the fourth night along with a reliable guide named 'Urayqit'. The Prophet heard the bellowing of the camels and

came out of the cave along with his companion. They mounted the camels and proceeded to Yathrib (Madina) from the lower side of Makkah, along the coastal route. The details of this journey are recorded in books.[16]

The First Page Of History

The darkness of night commenced. The Qurayshites, who had been roaming about in the city of Makkah and its environments to find out the Prophet, returned to their homes extremely tired and had lost all hope of the big reward (100 camels) which had been fixed for capturing the Prophet. The roads leading to Yathrib, which had been blocked by the watchmen posted by Quraysh, were also reopened.[17]

At this moment the low voice of the guide, who had three camels and some food with him, reached the ears of the Prophet and his companion. He was saying with a calm voice: "It is necessary to take advantage of the darkness of night and get beyond the reach of the Makkans as early as possible and to select an unfrequented path".

The history of the Muslim era commenced from that very night. Hence, they determine the dates of all events according to the Hegira calendar and record them in history accordingly.

Why The Year Of Migration Became The Era Of Islamic History?

Islam is the most perfect heavenly religion and adapts the religions of Musa and 'Isa in a more perfect form suited to all the conditions and situations. It has brought blessing for mankind. Although Jesus and his birth are respectable in the eyes of the Muslims, they did not adopt his birth as the origin of their era, because they are an independent and distinguished nation and it is not appropriate that they should follow others in adopting their era.

For quite some time the 'Year of the Elephant' (the year in which Abraha came to Makkah with an army of elephants and wished to demolish the Ka'bah) was treated by the Arabs to be the origin of history and the birth of the Prophet also took place in the same year. However, the Muslims did not treat it to be the first page of the history of Islam.

The year of Be'that (appointment to the prophetic mission) was also not treated to be the starting point of the history of the Muslims, because at that time there was no trace of Islam and the Islamic faith, and the number of the Muslims in those days did not exceed three.

However, in the first year of migration, Islam and the Muslims were blessed with a great success. An independent government came into existence in Madina. The Muslims got rid of homelessness and freely gathered at a central place. On account of this very success and victory, therefore, they decided to treat that year to be the starting point of their history[18] and till today they reckon the date of everything; good and evil in accordance with it.

Schedule Of The Journey

The journey which the Prophet had to perform consisted of a distance of about 400 kilometers, and covering this distance in the scorching heat of summer necessitated correct planning. Furthermore, they (i.e the Prophet and his companions) were also afraid of the Arabs, who met them on the way, for they might report their whereabouts to Quraysh. They, therefore, performed the journey at night and rested during day-time.

It seems that a camel-rider, having seen the Prophet and his companions from a distance, went to Quraysh at once and informed them of the itinerary of the Prophet. In order to earn the prize alone, Saraqah bin Malik bin Ja'sham Madlaji dissuaded others from pursuing the matter and told them that they (i.e. the persons seen by the said camel-driver) were some other persons. Then he came to his house, armed himself, rode a swift horse and reached, as quickly as possible, the spot where the Prophet and his companions were resting.

Ibn Athir writes:[19] "This state of affairs made the Prophet's companion very sad and the Prophet had to console him once again with the words: 'Don't worry. Allah is with us'. Saraqah was very proud of his physical strength and sharp weapons and was quite ready to shed the blood of the Prophet to earn the

biggest prize offered by the Arabs.

In the meantime the Prophet prayed for himself and his companions with a heart overflowing with faith and confidence and said "O Allah! Save us from the mischief of this man". Suddenly Saraqah's horse got startled and threw him violently on the ground. Saraqah realized that a Divine hand was at work and these developments were due to the bad intention which he had against Muhammad.[20]

He, therefore, turned to the Prophet in a beseeching manner and said: "I surrender my slave and camel to you and am prepared to do whatever you like". The Prophet then replied: "I want nothing from you".

However, the late Allamah Majlisi says that the Prophet said to him: "Return and dissuade others from pursuing us". Hence Saraqah told whomsoever he met: "There is no trace of Muhammad on this route".[21]

The Sunni and Shi'ah writers have quoted miracles which were performed by the Prophet during his journey from Makkah to Madina. For brevity's sake, however, we refrain from narrating them.

Arrival In The Village Of Quba

Quba, which is situated at a distance of two leagues from Madina, was the seat of the tribe of 'Bani 'Amr bin 'Auf'. The Prophet and his companions reached there on Monday the 12th of Rabiul Awwal and stayed at the house of Kulsum ibnul Hadam, the chief of the tribe. A number of 'Muhajirs' (migrants) and 'Ansar' (helpers) were then awaiting the arrival of the Prophet.

The Prophet stayed there till the end of the week and during this time he laid the foundation of a mosque for the tribe of Bani 'Awf. Some persons insisted upon his proceeding to Madina as early as possible. He was, however, waiting tor the arrival of his cousin, Ali.

After the migration of the Prophet, Ali stood up at a place in Makkah and said: "Whoever has entrusted anything to Muhammad should come and take it back from me". Those concerned came and took back their things after mentioning the marks of identification.

Thereafter, according to the directions given by the Prophet, Ali had to take to Madina, along with himself, the Hashmite women including Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet and his own mother Fatimah binte Asad, and also those Muslims who had not till then been able to migrate. Ali adopted the route of 'Zi Tuwa' and proceeded to Madina at night.

Shaykh Tusi writes:[22] "The spies of Quraysh came to know about the migration of Ali and his party. They, therefore, pursued him and came face to face with him in the area of 'Zajnan'. Hot words were exchanged between them. During that time the cries of women were reaching the sky. Ali realized that he had no alternative left but to defend the honour of Islam and the Muslims.

He, therefore, turned to the opponents and said: "Whoever wishes that his body should be cut into pieces and his blood should be shed should come forward". Signs of wrath were visible on his face. The agents of Quraysh felt that the matter had become serious. They, therefore, adopted a conciliatory attitude and took to the way they had come".

Ibn Athir writes: "When Ali reached Quba, his feet were bleeding. The Prophet was informed that Ali had arrived, but was not in a position to come up before him. The Prophet immediately went to the place where Ali was, and took him in his lap, and when he saw the swollen feet of Ali tears began to flow from his eyes".23

The Prophet arrived at Quba on the twelfth of Rabiul Awwal and Ali joined him there in the middle of the same month.24 This view is supported by Tabari: "Ali stayed in Makkah for three days after the migration of the Prophet and during this period he returned to their owners the things which they had entrusted (to the Prophet)".25

Tumult And Glamour Of Joy In Madina

There was a great excitement and jubilation among the people who had expressed faith in the Prophet three years ago and sent their representatives to him every year and used his sacred name every day in their prayers, when they learned that their great leader had arrived at a distance of only two leagues and was likely to enter their city soon. What their feelings and emotions were cannot be described in words.

The Ansar had thirst for Islam and its sublime and invigorative programme, and in order to purify Madina of all traces of polytheism and idol-worship they had burnt the idols and had removed all signs of idolatry from the homes, the streets and the bazaars of the city. It will be appropriate if we quote here an example of the interest taken by the Ansar in Islam.

'Arnr bin Jumuh, who was one of the chiefs of Banu Salmah tribe, had placed an idol in his house. In order to make him realize that the wooden idol was a useless thing, the men of his tribe took it away and threw it upside down in a pit which was used in those days for easing nature.

He got up in the morning and, after making a good deal of search, found the idol in that pit. He picked it up, washed it and restored it to its place. This drama was repeated many times. Eventually 'Amr tied a sword round the neck of the idol and said: "If you are the origin of any strength in this world defend yourself".

One day, however, he found the idol in a well, tied to the dead body of a dog, and without the sword. Observing these events he realized that the status of man was much higher than that he should bow his head before every stone, wood or mud.

Then he recited some verses whose purport is this: "By Allah! If you had been a true god you would not have been lying in a well tied to a dead dog. Praise be to Allah Who owns all blessings. It is He Who is

Merciful and Who nourishes and gives reward. It is He Who grants us salvation before we are consigned to the grave".26

The Prophet proceeded to Madina. When his mount descended at Thaniyatul Wida' and set its foot on the land of Yathrib the people warmly welcomed and greeted him and began singing mirthful songs to this effect:

"The moon rose from Thaniyatul Wida'. It is our duty to be thankful for this blessing till the day when even one person on the face of the earth prays to Allah and worships Him".

"O you, who hate been sent by Allah for our guidance! It is necessary for all of us to obey your orders".

The tribe of Bani 'Amr bin 'Awf insisted that the Prophet might stay on in Quba and said: "We are assiduous, steadfast and brave people". The Prophet did not, however, agree to this. When the people of the tribes of Aws and Khazraj came to know about the migration of the Prophet, they armed themselves and hurried to welcome him.

While he was proceeding on his way the people encircled his camel and the chiefs of the tribes held its bridle. Every one of them insisted that the Prophet might stay in his area, but he replied to all of them: "Don't obstruct the camel. I shall dismount wherever it kneels down". The camel stopped and bent its knees in a spacious piece of land which belonged to two orphan boys named Sahl and Suhayl who lived under the protection and guardianship of As'ad bin Zurarah.27

This land was used for drying palm-dates and for agriculture. The house of Abu Ayub was situated nearby. His mother, therefore, availed of the opportunity and took the belongings of the Prophet to her own house. Hence competition and solicitations began for taking the Prophet.

He, however, cut the argument short and said, "Where are my belongings?" He was told that Abu Ayub's mother had taken them to her house. Thereupon he said: "Let somebody go to the place where my belongings are". And As'ad bin Zurarah took the camel of the Prophet to his own house.

Seeds Of Dissension

Abdullah bin Ubay is considered the chief of the hierarchy of hypocrites. Before the people of Madina concluded an agreement with the Prophet they had decided to select Ubay as their absolute ruler.

However, on account of the relationship which Aws and Khazraj developed with the Prophet this decision was automatically dropped, and from this very moment he nursed a grudge against the great leader of Islam and did not believe in him till the last moment of his life.

On observing the welcome accorded by the people of Aws and Khazraj to the Prophet he was very much disturbed and could not help uttering a sentence, which fully indicates his envy and enmity against

him. He turned his face to the Prophet and said: "Go to the people who have deceived you and don't deceive us here".28

Said bin Ubadah, fearing that the Prophet might treat his words to be true (i.e. indicative of the sentiments of the Ansar or take them to heart, apologized for his remark and said to the Prophet: "He has said these words on account of grudge and enmity, because it had been decided that he should be the absolute ruler of Aws and Khazraj and now, by your arrival, his rulership has become out of question.

The historians generally say that the Prophet arrived in Madina on Friday and offered Friday prayers along with his companions at a spot which was situated in the area of Bani Salim tribe. Here he delivered an eloquent sermon which made deep impression on the hearts of the people who had never heard such words before.

The text of this sermon has been quoted by Ibn Hisham,29 Miqrizi in Amta'ul Asma' and by Allamah Majlisi.30 However, the wording and contents of the sermon as quoted by the first two are different from those quoted by Allamah Majlisi.

1. Tabaqatul Kubra, vol. I, pp. 227–228 and Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 480–482.
2. Tabaqat–i Kubra, page 228 and Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, page 100.
3. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. II, page 32.
4. A'lamul Wara', page 39 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, page 50.
5. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, page 100.
6. Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. I, page 229 etc. Most of the biographers have quoted this miracle. In view of what we have said regarding miracles in connection with the narrative about Abraha it does not appear appropriate that we should unnecessarily explain away or amend this series of miracles.
7. In Sharh–i Nahjul Balaghah of Ibn Abil Hadid this distinction of Ali has been mentioned in suitable words (vide vol. XIII, page 262).
8. Samrah bin Jundab was one of the criminal elements of the Umayyad period. He did not only tamper with facts to the extent mentioned above, but as quoted by Ibn Abil Hadid he also added something to it and said that what was actually revealed about Ali was this verse: And among men is he whose speech about the life of this world causes you to wonder, and be calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries. (Surah al–Baqarah, 2:204) During the period of the governor–generalship of Ziyad bin Abih in Iraq, Samrah was the Governor of Basrah. One of the crimes of this man was that he killed eight thousand Muslims and devotees of the family of the Prophet. When Ziyad called for his explanation and said: "How did you pick up courage to kill all these people? Did it not cross your mind that possibly there might be some innocent persons amongst them?" He replied: "I won't mind killing even more than these". His shameful acts are too many to be inserted in these pages. This obstinate man was the very person who rejected the recommendation of the Prophet about respecting rights of a neighbour, and the Prophet said to him: "You are a harmful person and Islam does not allow that one should do harm to others or tolerate harm from them".
9. Before him Jahiz partly mentioned this objection in his book entitled 'al–Usmaniyah'. Please refer in this connection to Sharh–i Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XIII, page 262.
10. For example this sentence has not been mentioned in Tabaqat–i Kubra, pp. 227 – 228. Its author was born in 168 A.H. and passed away in 238.A.H. Maqrizi too has not mentioned it in al–Imta'a.
11. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 72
12. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, page 99.
13. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 483.

14. Tarikh-i Kamil, Ibn Athir, vol. II, page 73.
15. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. II, page 37.
16. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 491; Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 75 and in the footnote of the Tarikh-i Ibn Athir.
17. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 104.
18. Ibn Wazeh Akhbari writes in his history entiitled 'Tarikh-i Ya'qubi' that in the 16th year of 'migration' the second caliph determined to fix a starting point of the history of the Muslims. He wished that it should be the date of the birth of the Prophet or the date of his appointment to the prophetic mission, but Ali did not endorse his views and said that 'migration' should be the origin of Islamic history. (Tarikh-i Ya'qubi, vol. II, page 135).
19. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 74.
20. Most of the biographers of the Prophet, like Ibn Athir (Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 74) and Majlisi (Bihar, vol. IX, page 88) have quoted this incident, as narrated above, from the sixth Imam with reliable sources. However, the author of 'Hayat-i Muhammad' says: "Saraqah considered these occurrences to be a bad omen and thought that the gods wished to prevent him from this task".
21. Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, page 75.
22. 'Amali, page 300.
23. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 75.
24. Imta'ul Asma, page 48.
25. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. I, page 106.
26. Usudul Ghabah, vol. IV, page 99.
27. Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, page 108; but according to some books including Tarikh-i Kamil they were under the guardianship of Mu'az bin 'Afra'.
28. Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, page 108.,
29. Seerah, vol. I, pp. 500 – 501.
30. Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, page 126.

The glowing and fervent faces of the Ansar and the hearty welcome which the people of Aws and Khazraj had accorded to the Prophet prompted him to construct, before doing anything else, a public centre for the Muslims with the name of 'masjid', so that matters relating to instruction, development, politics and justice might be accomplished there.

And as invitation to the worship of the One Lord and Nourisher was the first item in his programme, he considered it necessary, first of all, to build a place of worship where the Muslims should engage themselves in remembering Allah and glorify His name at the time of offering prayers.

It was also necessary that he should create a centre where the common members of the Islamic party (the party of Allah) should assemble every week on a fixed day and conduct discussions and consultations regarding the interests of Islam and of the Muslims, and should, besides meeting every day, offer Eid prayers there twice a year.

The mosque was not only a central place for worship. It was a place, where all types of Islamic instructions and orders were given and every sort of religious and scientific education was imparted including reading and writing. Till the commencement of the fourth Islamic century the mosques served as schools which functioned at all times, except those fixed for offering prayers. Thereafter the educational centres assumed a special shape. Most of the great scholars graduated from the

educational circles which had been set up in the mosques.

At times the Mosque of Madina assumed the shape of a literary centre also. Great poets of Arabia, whose compositions conformed with the moral and educational spirit of Islam recited their verses before the Prophet. Ka'b bin Zuhayr read out his famous laudatory poem in praise of the Prophet before him in the mosque and received a large prize and robe of honour from him. Hassan bin Thabit, who defended the honour of Islam by means of his verses, used to read out his poems in the Mosque of the Prophet.

Educational meetings in the Mosque of Madina, during the time of the Prophet, were so impressive that the representatives of the tribe of 'Saqif' were very much impressed by the scene; they wondered at the interest taken by the Muslims in acquiring knowledge. Judicial matters and law-suits were settled, and punishments were awarded to the offenders in the mosque, and it was, for all intents and purposes, a court of law where the complaints of the people were settled.

Furthermore, the Prophet used to deliver his stirring speeches there to make the people perform jihad and campaign against infidelity. Possibly one of the secrets of combination of religious and educational matters in the mosque was that the great leader of Islam desired to show it practically that knowledge and faith are complementary to each other, and if a place is a centre of faith, it must also be a centre of knowledge and wisdom.

And if the judicial and other affairs including matters relating to jihad were decided in the mosque it was for the reason that he wanted to make it clear that his religion is not only spiritual which should have nothing to do with material matters, it is a religion which, while inviting people to piety and faith, does not also ignore the worldly matters and social welfare.

This harmony (between knowledge and faith) is the motto of the Muslims even today. When educational centres with a special shape were set up later, the schools and universities were always established by the side of Jami' Masjids (central mosques) so as to prove to the world that these two factors of prosperity are not separate from each other.

The Story Of 'Ammar

The place where the Prophet's camel bent its knees was purchased for ten diners for the construction of the mosque. All the Muslims participated in its construction and in providing materials for it, and even the Prophet collected stones along with others. Usayd bin Huzayr went forward and said: "O Prophet of Allah! Permit me to carry it (the stone)".

The Prophet said: "Go and bring another". In this manner he showed a glimpse of his sublime character. He said: "I am a practical man. I am a man of action and not of words only". On that occasion Muslim read out a couplet meaning: "If we sit and the Prophet works, it will be a source of deviation and adversity for us".

While engaged in work the Prophet and the Muslims uttered these sentences: "Real life is the life of the Hereafter. O Allah! Be kind to the Ansar and the Muhajirs".

Uthman bin Maz'un was very particular about the neatness of his dress and wished to keep it clean. He did not therefore, participate in the construction of the mosque, lest his dress should become soiled. Ali criticized him in these words: "A person who constructs a mosque, whether sitting or standing, constantly endeavours for its progress is not like him, who keeps away from dust and is not prepared to stain his clothes for constructing the mosque".1

'Ammar Yasir, who was a strong man, collected some stones and carried them for the construction of the mosque. Some persons took undue advantage of his simplicity and loaded on him stones, which were too heavy for him.

He was heard saying: "I am carrying one stone on my own behalf and the other on behalf of the Prophet". One day the Prophet saw him bearing a heavy burden, when three stones had been loaded on him. 'Ammar complained: "Your companions nurse ill-will against me and want to kill me. They themselves bring one stone each but load as many as three on me".

The Prophet held him by the hand, cleansed the dust on his back, and uttered this historical sentence: "They are not your murderers. You will be killed by a group of oppressors while you will be inviting them to truth and reality".2

This prediction is one of the proofs of the prophethood and truthfulness of the Prophet. Eventually the same thing, which he had predicted happened, because 'Ammar, who was with Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful in the Battle of Siffin and was 90 at that time was killed at the hands of the supporters of Mu'awiyah.

This occult news continued to have a wonderful effect on 'Ammar throughout his lifetime. After this event Muslims considered him to be the pivot of truth and every rightfulness was measured by its association with him.

When 'Ammar was killed in the battle, a strange tumult appeared in the ranks of the Syrians. People who entertained doubts about the rightfulness of Ali on account of the venomous propaganda of Mu'awiyah and 'Amr 'As became enlightened. Huzaymah bin Thabit Ansari had gone to the battlefield with Imam Ali, but was double-minded about taking part in the battle. However, when he heard that 'Ammar had been killed he drew his sword and attacked the Syrians.

Zul Kala' Himyari accompanied by twenty thousand men of his tribe came to fight against Ali. This was the man on whose support Mu'awiyah mainly relied and did not decide to wage war until he was sure of his co-operation. When this misguided chief came to know that 'Ammar Yasir was with Ali he was very much upset. The agents of Mu'awiyah endeavoured to make matters doubtful for him and said: "There is no question of 'Ammar being in Siffin. The Iraqis do not mind coining such lies".

Zul Kala' was not however, convinced. He turned to 'Amr As and said: "Has the Prophet said such and such words about 'Ammar? Ibn As said: "Yes, he has said so, but 'Ammar is definitely not in Ali's army". He said: "I shall investigate the matter personally".

Then he deputed some persons to verify the position. Mu'awiyah and 'Amr As realized at this critical moment that if Zul Kala' became aware of 'Ammar's presence in Ali's army or about his martyrdom in the service of Ali a split might take place in the Syrian army. On this account, therefore, this famous Syrian chief was killed mysteriously.3

This tradition is so well known amongst the common as well as the distinguished traditionalists that it does not require the production of a documentary evidence. Ahmad bin Hanbal quotes thus: "When 'Ammar was killed in the Battle of Siffin 'Amr bin Hazm came to 'Amr As and said: "Ammar has been killed and the Prophet has said about him that a group of oppressors will kill him".

'Amr As cried and recited the verse: "We are from Allah and we have to return to Him", and conveyed the news to Mu'awiyah. Mu'awiyah said: "We are not the murderers of 'Ammar. He has been killed by Ali and his friends, who brought him with them and exposed him to our swords".4

However, it is evident that this false interpretation which was put forward by Mu'awiyah, the son of Abu Sufyan to stupefy the senses of the Syrian soldiers cannot at all be acceptable in the court of the Almighty Allah and every intelligent person can well understand that his argument is baseless.

Nurse Kinder To The Child Than Its Mother

We have not been able to find a better sentence than this to indicate the character of the historian5 of the 8th A.H. has chosen to support Mu'awiyah and writes: "It is not necessary that because the Prophet had declared the murderers of 'Ammar to be oppressors that they should in fact be infidels, because though they chose the wrong path and rose against Ali, yet as they took this step on account of their faith in the correctness of their action (ijtihad), it is not possible to refute them or to call them infidels".

He adds: "What is meant by the Prophet's sentence 'Ammar invites them to Paradise, but the murderers of 'Ammar invite him to Hell, is that 'Ammar invites them to acknowledge the Oneness of Allah and to unite (and this is the very Paradise), but the murderers of 'Ammar endeavour to give Mu'awiyah priority over Ali, who is most suited for the office of caliph and thus they create a ruler in each one of the Islamic regions and consequently a deep fissure comes into existence amongst the Muslims, although they themselves might not have taken notice of such a result (and that is the very Hell)".

Howmuchsoever we ponder as to what name to give to this interpretation we cannot think of any appropriate name for it except that of falsification of facts. Inspite of all the skill which this rebellious group of persons possessed in the matter of falsification and alteration of facts they could not deny the prediction which had been made about them by the Prophet and a historian like Ibn Kathir has played

the part of a nurse kinder to the child than the mother, and has resorted to an alteration of fact of which they themselves were not aware.

Ahmad bin Hanbal says: "Two men came to Mu'awiyah and each one of them claimed that he had killed 'Ammar. The son of 'Amr As (Abdullah) said: "One of you should spare the other, for I have heard the Prophet saying that Ammar would be killed by a group of oppressors".

Mu'awiyah said to Abdullah: "If we are a group of oppressors why have you joined our circle?" He replied: "One day my father 'Amr complained against me to the Prophet and the Prophet ordered me to obey my father. I am, therefore, with you but do not fight".6

The apology of Abdullah is like the interpretation of Ibn Kathir who says that Mu'awiyah fought this battle on the basis of ijtihad and faith, notwithstanding the fact that he erred in his ijtihad, because obedience to one's father is necessary only when it does not result in disobedience to a religious law. The Qur'an says:

If they (***your parents***) ***bid you to associate*** (***others***) ***with Me of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them".*** (**Surah al-Ankabut, 29:8**)

Similarly ijtihad (expression of one's view) is correct only when a clear version of the Prophet is not found, otherwise ijtihad of people like Mu'awiyah and 'Amr As, opposed to the clear tradition of the Prophet, is wrong and void. And if the door of ijtihad is opened in such a manner, it will be necessary for us to excuse all the polytheists and hypocrites for having campaigned against the Prophet and Islam, and we shall also have to say that persons like Yazid and Hajjaj were justified in shedding the blood of the pious and innocent people of the nation and were also entitled to a good recompense for their action.

The construction of the mosque was completed and its area was expanded every year. A terrace was also erected by the side of the mosque for the helpless and the indigent Muhajirs, so that they might stay there, and 'Ubadah bin Samit was directed to teach them reading and writing of the Qur'an.

Brotherhood–The Greatest Gleam Of Faith

The centralization of Muslims in Madina opened a new chapter is the life of the Prophet. Before his arrival there he had been engaged in attracting the hearts and in propagating his religion, but from that day onwards it was necessary that he should protect his own existence as well as that of his followers like an experienced statesman and should not permit the internal and external enemies to penetrate into the Muslim society. At this juncture he was faced with three main difficulties:

1. Danger from Quraysh and other idol–worshippers of the Arabian Peninsula.

2. The Jews of Yathrib who lived within and outside the city and possessed enormous wealth and resources.

3. The differences which existed between his own supporters. As the Muhajirs and the Ansar had been brought up in two different environments there was a vast difference between their ways of thinking and culture. And then there were the two components of Ansar (viz. Bani Aws and Bani Khazraj) who had been fighting for one hundred and twenty years and were the sworn enemies of each other.

With all these dangers and differences there was no possibility of their continuing to lead a peaceful religious and political life. However, the Prophet overcame these difficulties in a perfectly wise manner. As regards the first two problems he took measures the details of which will be recorded later, and as regards the differences between his followers he removed them with perfect wisdom and ingenuity.

He was ordered by Allah to establish brotherhood between the Muhajirs and the Ansar. One day he turned to his followers in a general meeting and said: "Now you should become brothers in faith in pairs". The particulars of persons who became brothers of each other have been recorded by the Muslim historians including Ibn Hisham.7

Hence, by this method the Prophet ensured the political and spiritual unity of the Muslims and this unity enabled him to think about ways and means of solving the other two difficulties as well.

Two Great Distinctions Of Ali

Most of the Shi'ah and Sunni historians and traditionalists have mentioned two great distinctions of Ali which we record here briefly: The Prophet established brotherhood between a pair of two among three hundred persons out of the Muhajirs and Ansar and told every one of them that he was the brother of such and such person.

When the establishment of brotherhood was completed Ali, with tears in his eyes, said to the Prophet: "You have established brotherhood amongst your companions but have not made me the brother of anyone". Thereupon the Prophet turned to Ali and said: "You are my brother in this world as well as in the Hereafter".

Qandozi has quoted this incident in a more comprehensive manner and says that the Prophet replied to Ali: "By the Almighty (who has appointed me to guide the people) I postponed the question of your brotherhood for the reason that I desired to become your brother when brotherhood among all others had been completed. Your position vis-a-vis myself is similar to that of Harun and Musa, except that there will be no Prophet after me. You are my brother and my successor".8

Ibn Kathir has, however, doubted the authenticity of this incident.9 But as his doubts are the product of his special mentality and are nothing short of the apology which he has tendered on behalf of Mu'awiyah and his supporters, we refrain from quoting his remarks and refuting them.

Another Distinction Of Ali

The construction of the mosque was completed. Around the mosque there were the houses of the Prophet and his companions. There were also the houses whose doors opened into the mosque, and whose inmates entered the mosque through those doors.

Suddenly an order was received from Allah that all the doors which opened into the mosque, except the door of the house of Ali, should be closed. Thereupon some persons became fussy about the matter and thought that this exception had been made on sentimental grounds.

In order to enlighten the people on the subject the Prophet delivered a sermon and said *inter alia:* "I have not given orders about the closing or otherwise of the doors on my own account. In fact it was an order from Allah and I had no alternative but to implement it".

In short, by establishing Islamic brotherhood, the Prophet removed the differences between his followers which had existed for some years and consequently one of the difficulties was solved.

The second problem was that of the Jews of Madina. They lived within and outside Madina and had assumed control of the economy and trade of the city.

The Prophet was fully aware that until the internal affairs were settled and he had obtained the co-operation of the Jews and consequently created a political unity in the seat of his government, the sapling of Islam would not grow up and he would not be able to think about any measures with regard to the idol-worshippers of the Peninsula, especially Quraysh (i.e. the first difficulty). He also knew that until peace and tranquillity prevailed within the seat of government it would not be possible to defend it from external enemies.

In the early days of the arrival of the Prophet in Madina an understanding existed between the Muslims and the Jews in some respects, because both the communities worshipped Allah and were opposed to idolatry and the Jews thought that if Islam gained strength they themselves might become immune from the attacks of the Byzantine Christians. Furthermore, old relations and pacts existed between them on the one hand and between Bani Aws and Bani Khazraj on the other.

On these accounts the Prophet wrote an agreement for the establishment of unity between the Muhajirs and the Ansar, and the Jews of Madina (of the tribes of Aws and Khazraj) also signed it and the Prophet agreed to respect their religion and property on mutually settled conditions. The biographers of the Prophet have recorded complete text of this agreement.[10]

Since this agreement is a living historical document and clearly shows how the Prophet respected the principles of freedom, order, and justice in life, and created by means of this agreement a united front against external attacks, we mention here some of its essential points as an evidence of the political victory in that age of the newly-formed Government of Islam.

The Greatest Documentary Agreement Of History

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

This is the agreement which has been concluded by Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah between the Muslims of Quraysh and of Yathrib and those persons who have followed them and risen up along with them for jihad.

Part One

1. The signatories to the agreement form one nation. In the matter of blood–money the Qurayshite Muhajirs are allowed to follow their old custom which prevailed before Islam. If one of them kills someone else or becomes a captive, they should pay the blood–money by mutual help and purchase the captive.

2. Bani 'Awf (a tribe of Ansar) can also safeguard their ways of life like the Qurayshite Muhajirs and can pay collectively the ransom for the release of their men who have been captured. Thereafter other tribes of Ansar namely Bani Sa'idah, Bani Harth, Bani Jasham, Bani Najjar, Bani 'Amr bin 'Awf, Bani Nabit and Bani Aws, have been reminded and made incumbent on everyone of them that they should collectively pay the blood–money and get their captives released on payment of ransom.

3. Muslims should support indigent persons and should help a believer in the matter of heavy expenses to be incurred by him on account of payment of blood–money or for the release of a captive.

4. Pious Muslims should unite against a person who rebels or commits cruelty and injustice, even though the offender is the son of one of them.

5. No one is authorized to conclude an agreement with a Muslim slave or a Muslim child without the permission of his master and father respectively.

6. A believer does not have a right to kill another believer, who has killed an unbeliever. He is also not at all entitled to

assist an unbeliever against a Muslim.

7. Allah's agreement and promise with all the Muslims is one. As such even the lowest of them is entitled to take responsibility for an agreement with the unbelievers.

8. The Muslims are the friends and supporters of one another.

9. Everyone from amongst the Jews who follows us and embraces Islam shall be entitled to our help and assistance and there will be no difference between him and other Muslims and none shall be entitled to oppress him or to instigate anyone else to oppress him, or to help his enemy.

10. The Muslims should be united in concluding a peace agreement and no Muslim can conclude peace without consulting another Muslim except on the basis of justice and equality.

11. Groups of the Muslims should go for jihad alternately so that their blood which is shed in the path of Allah is divided equally.

12. The Muslims possess the best religion and the most firm law.

13. None of the polytheists (of Madina) has a right to protect the lives and property of the polytheists of Quraysh or to conclude an agreement with them or to prevent a Muslim from overpowering them.

14. If a Muslim kills another Muslim without a just cause and his crime is proved legally, he shall be executed, unless the heirs of the murdered person forgive him, and in either case it is the duty of the Muslims to be united against the murderer.

15. Whoever acknowledges the contents of this agreement and believes in Allah and in His Prophet is not entitled to assist a heretic or a criminal or to give him asylum, and whoever assists him or provides him asylum shall become subjected to the wrath of Allah, and compensation and damages shall not be acceptable from him.

16. The authority for resolving the differences shall always rest with Allah and Muhammad.

Part Two

17. When the Muslims fight for the defence of Madina the Jews must pay the former's share of the expenses of war.

18. The Jews of Bani 'Awf (a tribe of Ansar) are allies of the Muslims and they are tantamount to one nation. The Muslims and the Jews are free in the matter of their law and religion. Their slaves are not exempt from this clause i.e. they too are free in the matter of their law, except the sinners and the oppressors who only ruin themselves and the members of their family (because usually the members of the family of a tyrant follow him). (The intention of this exemption is that relations and unity exist between those Jews and Muslims who are not tyrants and oppressors).

19. The Jews of Bani Najjar, Bani Harith, Bani Sa'adah, Bani Jasham, Bani Aws, Bani Tha'labah and Bani Shatibah are like the Jews of Bani 'Awf and there is no distinction between them in the matter of rights and privileges. The tribe of Jafnah is a branch of the tribe of Tha'labah and the orders applicable to the Jews of Bani 'Awf are also applicable to the branch of Bani Shatibah.

20. The signatories to this agreements should make their virtues triumph over their sins.

21. Those who have made agreements with Bani Tha'labah are at par with them.

22. Those who are on friendly terms with, and confidants of, the Jews are at par with them.

23. No one enjoys the right to abandon this agreement without the permission of Muhammad.

24. From amongst these persons the blood of everyone who is wounded (not to speak of one who is killed) is respectable. Whoever kills anyone is liable to pay blood–money and eventually ruins himself and the members of his family, except when the murderer happens to be an oppressed person.

25. The respective expenses of wars which are fought by the Jews and the Muslims jointly are the responsibility of each one of them and when anyone else fights against the parties to this agreement, it is their duty to fight with him jointly.

26. The relations of the parties of the agreement are based on goodness and it is necessary that they should refrain from evil.

27. None should oppress anyone who has made the agreement with him, otherwise the oppressed one should be helped.

28. The interior of Madina is declared to be 'haram' for the signatories of the agreement.

29. Lives of neighbours and of those who have been granted asylum are like our own lives and should not be molested.

30. No woman can be granted asylum without the permission of her people.

31. Muhammad is the arbiter to decide the differences between the signatories of the agreement – whether they be Muslims or non–Muslims. Allah is with him who accords more respect to this agreement.

32. Asylum shall not be granted to Quraysh and to those with whom they have concluded pacts.

Part Three

33. The signatories to this agreement take joint responsibility for the defence of Yathrib.

34. When the Muslims invite the Jews to conclude peace with the enemy they should accept the proposal and the Muslims should also accept any such proposal made by the Jews except the fact that the enemy is opposed to the religion of Islam and its propagation.

35. The Jews of Aws, whether slaves or masters, are also covered by this agreement.

Part Four

36. This agreement does not support a tyrant or a criminal.

37. Whoever remains in Madina is protected and whoever leaves it is protected provided that he is not an oppressor and a criminal.

This agreement was concluded with the following sentence:

"Allah is the Protector of the good and the pious and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah".11

This political agreement and the basic law of Islam of that time, briefly mentioned, is a perfect specimen of the spirit of freedom of faith, social welfare and necessity of co-operation in collective matters in Islam, and has, above all things, clarified the limits and the authority of the leader and the responsibilities of all its signatories.

The Jews of the tribes of Bani Qurayzah, Bani Nuzayr and Bani Qaynqa' did not participate in the conclusion of this agreement, and only the Jews of Aws and Khazraj tribes became parties to it. However, these people concluded agreements with the Prophet later and the following sentences have been taken from the contents of those agreements:

"The Prophet makes this agreement with the three groups to the effect that they will not harm him and his friends with their tongues and hands, and will not supply arms and mounts to his enemies. In case they act against the contents of this agreement the Prophet would be at liberty to shed their blood, confiscate their properties and make their women and children captives. Then Hay bin Akhtab signed on behalf of Bani Nuzayr, Ka'b bin Asad on behalf of Bani Qurayzah and Mukhayriq on behalf of Bani Qaynqa'.12

By this means Yathrib and the dependencies lying near it were declared to be an area of peace and security and a 'sanctuary'. Now the time had arrived that the Prophet should consider ways and means of tackling the first problem viz. that of Quraysh, because, so long as this enemy stood in his way, he could not succeed in spreading Islam and enforcing its laws.

Obstructions Of The Jews

The sublime teachings of Islam and the high morals and manners of the Prophet became the cause of daily increase in the number of the Muslims. Their military, economic and political conditions also improved considerably.

This continuous advancement of Islam created a strange agitation and unrest in the religious circles of the Jews, because they had been thinking that with their strength they would be able to attract the Prophet of Islam to themselves and had never imagined that one day his own strength would surpass even that of the Jews and the Christians.

In the circumstances they began to indulge in disruptive activities. By asking knotty religious questions they endeavoured to shake the faith of the Muslims in the Prophet, but these blunt weapons did not have

any effect on the compressed ranks of the Muslims. A large part of these debates has been narrated by the Holy Qur'an in Surah al-Baqarah and Surah al-Nisa.

By studying the said two surahs the dear readers can very well understand the enmity and the obstinacy of the Jews. They received a clear reply to every question asked by them but in order to avoid shouldering the burden of Islam they replied very obstinately to the Prophet's invitation to Islam: "Our hearts are sealed and we do not consider what you say to be correct".

ABDULLAH BIN SALAM EMBRACES ISLAM

These debates increased the enmity and the grudge of the Jews, but at times they became the cause of some persons embracing Islam. Abdullah bin Salam was one of the priests and scholars of the Jews. He embraced Islam after having detailed discussions with the Prophet of Islam.[13] Soon afterwards another scholar of theirs named Mukhayriq also joined him.

Abdullah thought that if his kinsmen came to know about his embracing Islam they would abuse and slander him. He, therefore, requested the Prophet that until an acknowledgement of his learning and piety had been obtained from his tribe he might not make public the fact of his embracing Islam. The Prophet, therefore, asked the Jews: "What is your opinion about Abdullah?" All of them replied "He is our religious leader and the son of our religious leader and an eminent scholar".

Then Abdullah proceeded to his own area and informed the people of his tribe about his embracing Islam. As soon as the news of his becoming a Muslim spread amongst the Jews they got excited with anger. Though they had collectively acknowledged his learning and piety only a few hours ago, yet, now all of them began calling him a characterless and ignorant person.[14]

Another Plan To Overthrow The Government Of Islam

Debates and knotty questions of the Jews not only strengthened the faith of the Muslims in the Prophet but also became the cause of his sublime personality and Divine knowledge becoming clearly known to everyone. As a result of these very discussions different groups of the idolaters and the Jews inclined to him.

To achieve their ends, therefore, the Jews formed another plan and, resorting to their method of 'divide and rule', thought of reviving the 120-year-old feud of Bani Aws and Bani Khazraj, which had petered out under the auspices of faith, Islam, brotherhood and equality. They wished that fighting and bloodshed might start within the ranks of the Muslims and they might be consumed by the flames of internal strife.

One day some men of Bani Aws and Bani Khazraj were sitting together. The unity and brotherhood of the members of this group, who had been till a few days back the bloodthirsty enemies of one another,

was very much disliked by a mischievous Jew who had joined them with a view to starting the evil plot of creating dissension and discord among the Muslims.

He reminded the men of Bani Aws and Bani Khazraj of the bitter memories of the past wars between the two tribes and narrated in detail the events of the Battle of Bu'ath, in which Bani Aws had eventually emerged victorious.

He dilated upon these old and long-forgotten events so much that strife and self glorification started between the two groups of Muslims (Aws and Khazraj). It was quite possible that a regular battle might have commenced but in the meantime the news reached the Prophet and he became aware of the nefarious plot of the Jews.

He, therefore, reached the spot with some of his companions and reminding the two groups of the aim of Islam and his own sublime programme said: "Islam has made you brothers of each other and has made all the enmities and the grudges a forgotten thing of the past". He counselled them for some time and reminded them of the result of their discord. Suddenly all of them began to cry and weep and embraced one another to strengthen their brotherhood and prayed to Allah for forgiveness.

The schemes of the Jews did not end here, but they extended the scope of their treachery, crime and breach of promise and established special contacts with the unbelievers of Aws and Khazraj and also with those persons who were doubleminded in the matter of their Islam and faith. They openly intervened in the battles fought by the Muslims against Quraysh and were very active in promoting the interests of the idol-worshippers.

The open and secret collaboration of the Jews with the polytheists of Quraysh resulted in bloody wars between the Muslims and the Jews which eventually ended with the extirpation of the Jews from Madina. The details of these occurrences will be given later with the events of the third and fourth years of migration and it will become clear as to how the Jews rewarded the Prophet for his good treatment (which is evident from the two agreements concluded with them) by the breach of promises, open activities against Islam and the Muslims, conspiracies against the Prophet, and lending support to his enemies, and thus compelled the Prophet, by their actions, to ignore the above-mentioned agreements.

1. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. II, pp. 76-77.
2. Ibid.
3. Mustadrak-i Hakim, vol. III, page 385.
4. Musnad Ibn Hanbal, vol. II, page 199.
5. al-Bidayah wan Nihayah, vol. III, page 218.
6. Musnad Ibn Hanbal, vol. II, page 162.
7. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 123 - 126.
8. Yanabi'ul Muwwadah, vol. I, page 55.
9. al-Bidayah wan Nihayah, vol. II, page 226.
10. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 501.
11. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 503-504 and al-Amwal, pp. 125 & 202.

12. Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, pp. 110 – 111.
13. For the text of his discussions with the Prophet vide Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, page 131.
14. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 516.

It is proposed to explain here the secrets of a chain of warlike demonstrations which continued from the eighth month of the first year of migration till the month of Ramadan of the second year and were in fact the first military demonstrations and war manoeuvres by the Muslims.

The correct interpretation and narration of the secrets of these events is possible for us only when we obtain the text of the events from history books1 without any addition or subtraction and place the decisive view of research scholars of history before the readers. Here is a gist of these events:

1. Not more than eight months had yet passed since the arrival of the Prophet in Madina when he gave the first standard to his brave commander named Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib and sent, under his command, thirty mounted soldiers from amongst the Muhajirs up to the coast of Red Sea, which was the route adopted by the caravans of Quraysh.

At a place named 'Ais he came across a caravan of Quraysh which was being managed by three hundred men under the leadership of Abu Jahl. However, through the mediation of Majdi bin 'Arnr, who had good relations with both the parties, they kept away from each other and the Muslim soldiers returned to Madina.

2. Simultaneously with the despatch of this body of men 'Ubaydah bin Harith bin Abdul Muttalib was sent towards the caravan of Quraysh along with sixty or eighty mounted soldiers from amongst the Muhajirs. He went up to the waters lying below Thaniyatul Murrah and met the caravan of Quraysh which consisted of two hundred men led by Abu Sufyan.

However, the two parties kept away from each other without anyone of them striking the other. Only Sa'd Abi Waqqas shot an arrow. Moreover, two Muslims who were in the caravan of Abu Sufyan joined the party sent on the mission.

3. Once again Sa'd Abi Waqqas was sent to the Hijaz with eight other men. He also returned without confronting anyone.

In the terminology of the historians the campaigns in which the Prophet did not participate are called *Sariyyah* and those in which he participated personally are called 'Ghazwah'.

4. In the tenth month of 'Migration' the Prophet entrusted the religious affairs of Madina to Sa'd bin Ma'az, and himself went up to Abwa' with a group of Muhajirs and Ansar to pursue the caravan of Quraysh and also to conclude a treaty with the tribe of Bani Hamzah. He did not meet the caravan of Quraysh but concluded a treaty with the said tribe.

5. In the first month of the second year he nominated Sa'ib bin Uthman or Sa'd bin Ma'az to be his representative in Madina and himself went up to Bawat along with two hundred men to pursue the caravan of Quraysh. He did not, however, find the caravan, manned by one hundred persons, and led by Umayyah bin Khalaf, and returned to Madina.

6. In the middle of Jamadiul Awwal a report was received that a caravan of Quraysh was proceeding from Makkah to Syria under the supervision of Abu Sufyan The Prophet appointed Aba Salmah to be his representative and himself went up to 'Zatul 'Ashirah' along with a group of persons.

He waited there for the caravan till the beginning of Jamadiul Akhir but could not lay hands on it. During his stay there he concluded a treaty with the tribe of Bani Madlaj. A description of this treaty is recorded in history books.

Ibn Athir says: "At this place, where the Prophet and his companions were then staying, the Prophet came one day to the bed-side of Ali and 'Ammar and found them asleep. Later he woke both of them up. At that moment he observed that particles of fine dust were resting on the head and face of Ali.

He turned to him and said: "O Abu Turab! What is the matter with you?" From that day onwards Ali became known amongst the Muslims as 'Abu Turab' (father of earth). Then be turned to both of them and said: "Would you like me to tell you as to who are the most vicious persons on earth?"

They replied: "O Prophet of Allah! Yes". He said: "The most vicious persons on the face of earth are two. One was he who cut off the feet of the she-camel of Saleh. And the other is he who will strike a sword on your skull (pointing to Ali) and will colour your beard with the blood of your head".2

7. After having lost hope of the caravan the Prophet returned to Madina. However, ten days had not yet passed since his arrival there when it was reported that Karz bin Jabir had raided and taken away camels and sheep of Madina.

In order to pursue this plunderer the Prophet, accompanied by a group of persons, went up to the area of 'Badr', but had to return without achieving any success. Thereafter he stayed on in Madina till the end of Sha'ban.

8. During the month of Rajab of the second year of migration the Prophet despatched eighty men out of the Muhajirs under the command of Abdullah bin Jahash. At the time of their departure he gave a letter to the commander and said: "Open this letter after you have performed your journey for two days and act according to its contents3 and don't compel anyone of your companions to do a job".

After journeying for two days he opened the letter and found that the Prophet had given these orders: "When you look at my letter proceed on your way and camp in the land of 'Nakhlah' which is situated between Makkah and Ta'if and wait there for Quraysh and inform me about their activities".

He acted according to the contents of the letter and all his companions followed him and alighted at that

place. In the meantime there came up suddenly a caravan of Quraysh which was going from Ta'if to Makkah under the supervision of 'Amr Khazrami.

The Muslims had also camped near them. To ensure that the enemy might not become aware of their secret they cut the hair of their heads, to give the impression that they were proceeding to Makkah to perform the pilgrimage of the House of Allah. Their appearance satisfied Quraysh and they said to one another: "These Muslims are going to perform 'Umra' and have nothing to do with us".

At this moment the Muslims assembled for war consultations and began exchanging views. Eventually they realized that in case they waited on that day, which was the last day of Rajab, the sacred month would no doubt come to an end but if in the meantime Quraysh moved away from that spot they would enter the area of 'haram' and fighting in that area was also prohibited.

They therefore, concluded that it was preferable to fight in the sacred month than to do so in the area of 'haram'. Thus, taking the enemy by surprise, they killed Amr Khazrami, 4the head of the caravan, with an arrow. As regards his subordinates all of them fled except Uthman bin Abdullah and Hakam bin Kaysan, who were captured by the Muslims. Abdullah bin Jahash brought the merchandise and the two captives to Madina.

The Prophet was annoyed to find that the commander of the group had transgressed his orders and had fought in the sacred month instead of performing his duty. He said: "I had not at all ordered you to fight in the sacred month".

Quraysh used this incident as a propaganda weapon and spread the news that Muhammad had violated the respect of the sacred month. The Jews took this incident to be a bad omen and wanted to create trouble. The Muslims rebuked Abdullah and his companions. The Prophet did not take possession of the booty of war and was awaiting Divine revelation. All of a sudden the Archangel Jibreel brought this verse:

(**O *Prophet!***) ***They ask you about fighting in the sacred month. Tell them it is a great sin and amounts to obstruction of the path of Allah. However, it is a greater sin before Allah to turn out the residents of Masjidul Haram and disbelief in Allah is worse than committing murder.*** (**Surah al-Baqarah, 2:219**).

By means of this verse Quraysh have been told that if Muslims have waged war in the sacred month and have thus done something unlawful, but they (Quraysh) have committed a greater crime, because they turned out the residents of Masjidul Haram (the Muslims) from their homes and created mischief by persecuting and torturing them. In view of these big crimes of theirs they have no right to object to the steps taken by the Muslims.

The revelation of this verse infused a fresh spirit into the body of the Muslims. The Prophet distributed the war booty. Quraysh desired to purchase the two persons captured by the Muslims. In reply to their

request the Prophet said: "You should return two Muslim soldiers who were captured by you as a consequence of their being at a distance from others so that I may also release your captives. And if you kill them we shall also kill your men".

They were obliged to return the Muslim captives and with their return, orders were also given for the return of the Quraysh captives. However, one of them embraced Islam and the other returned to Makkah.

What Was The Object Of War Manoeuvres?

The real object of dispatching these groups and concluding military pacts with the tribes who lived near the trade route of Makkan's was to inform Quraysh of the military strength and power of the Muslims– especially when the Prophet himself participated in these maneuvers and stayed on the trade route of Quraysh accompanied by large groups of men. The illustrious leader of Islam wished to make the Makkan Government realize that all their trade routes had come under the control of the Muslims and they could stop their trade as and when they liked.

Trade was something very vital for the people of Makkah, and the merchandise, which was transported from there to Ta'if and Syria, constituted the very basis of their economic life. And if these routes were threatened by the forces of a vigorous enemy and his allies like Bani Zumrah and Bani Madlaj the very foundation of their life would topple down.

The object of dispatching these military missions and groups towards the routes of the enemy was that Quraysh might know that their trade routes had fallen in the hands of the Muslims and if they persisted in their obstinacy and prevented the propagation of Islam and presecuted the Muslims residing in Makkah their vital arteries would be cut off with the strength of Islam.

In short the object was that Quraysh should ponder over the matter and by taking all these facts into account they should allow the Muslims to preach Islam freely and should open the path for them to perform pilgrimage of the House of Allah and to propagate the Divine religion, so that Islam might influence the hearts by means of its rational and sublime teachings and the light of this religion might spread throughout the Peninsula and the centre of Arabia under the auspices of freedom.

A speaker may be very eloquent and forceful, and a tutor may be very sincere and persevering, but unless they find free environments and unless the principles of freedom and democracy are established they cannot achieve proper success in guiding others and in propagating their points of view.

The greatest impediment in the path of advancement of Islam was the lack of absolute freedom and the distressed conditions of environments which had been created by Quraysh. Hence, the only way to remove this impediment was to threaten the routes of their economy which were the very arteries of their life and this plan was given a practical shape by means of war maneuvers and military pacts.

Viewpoint Of Orientalists About These Events

The orientalists have been gravely mistaken in the analysis of these events and have said things which are completely opposed to the principles of Islam and the aims and objects of this sublime religion. They say that the aim of the Prophet was to increase his own strength by plundering and confiscating the properties of Quraysh.

This view does not, however, conform to the spirit of the people of Yathrib, because plundering and robbery are the activities of nomadic tribes who dwell in deserts, far away from civilization, and the Muslims of Yathrib were usually agriculturists who had never attacked any caravan throughout their lives and had never plundered the properties of tribes residing beyond their own environments. The fighting between Aws and Khazraj was a local affair and its fire had been kindled by the Jews to promote their own interests and to weaken the strength of the Arabs.

Now as regards the Muhajir Muslims who were associated with the Prophet, although their properties had been confiscated by the Makkans, they were not planning to recover their loss. This is proved by the fact that they did not attack any caravan of Quraysh after the Battle of Badr.

Moreover, most of the groups had been despatched to collect information and to furnish necessary reports. Groups of eighty or sixty eight persons were evidently not strong enough to plunder when the number of those who guarded the caravans was much larger than this.

Sometimes they say: "The object was to take revenge on Quraysh, because when the Prophet and his companions thought of the persecution and torture to which they had been subjected, their sense of revenge and tribal honour was stirred and they determined to draw their swords, take revenge and shed blood".

This view is also as feeble and baseless as the first one, because a good deal of evidence is available in the texts of history which contradicts it and shows that the real aim of dispatching these groups was certainly not to engage in battles or to shed blood or take revenge. Here are some points which refute this view of the orientalists:

1. If the Prophet's aim in dispatching these groups had been war and acquisition of booty it was necessary that he should have increased their number and sent a well-equipped army to the coastal areas.

The fact, however, is that he sent only thirty pesons with Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib, sixty persons with 'Ubaydah bin Harith and a negligible number with Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas and the number of persons who had been appointed to guard the caravans was many times larger than these.

Hamzah and 'Ubaydah were confronted with three hundred and two hundred men of Quraysh respectively. And especially when Quraysh came to know that the Muslims had concluded treaties with

various tribes they increased the number of the guards of their caravans.

If, therefore, the Muslim Commanders had been dispatched to wage war, why did it so happen that in most of these expeditions not a drop of blood was shed and at one time both the parties did not want to confront each other on account of intervention by Majdi bin 'Amr?

2. The letter which the Prophet gave to Abdullah bin Jahash clearly shows that warfare was not the aim at all, because in that letter he gave him the following instructions:

"Camp in the land of Nakhlah which is situated between Makkah and Ta'if and wait there for Quraysh and inform me about their intentions".

This letter clearly shows that Abdullah was not at all dispatched to be engaged in fighting, for his only assignment was to collect information and the fight in Nakhlah, as a consequence of which 'Amr Khazrami was killed, was the result of his consultations with his companions about war. Hence, when the Prophet became aware of bloodshed, which had taken place, he sternly rebuked and reproached Abdullah and his companions and said: "I did not order you to wage war".

It is evident that the aim of all or most of these expeditions was simply to seek information, and it cannot at all be said that Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib was dispatched along with thirty persons to wage war.

As regards Abdullah bin Jahash he was sent with eighty persons to collect information and the position is that the party which was sent to collect information was about three times as big as that which, according to the orientalists, was dispatched to wage war. And the reason for usually selecting Muhajirs to form these parties was that at 'Aqabah the Ansar had concluded only a defence pact with the Prophet and had promised to safeguard his life in the event of an attack by the enemy.

He did not, therefore, like to make them responsible for such expeditions at the very outset and to stay on in Madina himself. Later, however, when he went out of Madina himself he also took some Ansar with him to strengthen the ties between them and the Muhajirs. It was for this reason that the Muhajirs and the Ansar had the honour of accompanying him jointly during his journeys to Bawat and Zatul Ashirah.

In view of these arguments the baselessness of the view of the orientalists about the dispatch of these parties becomes crystal clear, and by honestly studying what has been said above, their view about the expeditions in which the Prophet participated personally is also falsified, because those who accompanied him to Bawat and Zatul Ashirah were not Muhajirs only but a group of Ansar also went with him. And when the Ansar had not concluded a military pact with him, how could he invite them to war and bloodshed?

The Battle of Badr, a description of which will be given later, bears testimony to our statement. The Prophet did not decide to fight this battle until Ansar consented to participate in it. And the reason why the Muslim historians have given these expeditions the name of 'Ghazwa' is that they wanted to collect

all these incidents under one heading–otherwise, the real aim of these manoeuvres was neither plundering nor war booty.

1. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 222 onwards; Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, pp. 186–190; Imta'ul Asma'; page 51;Tarikh–i Kamil, vol.II, pp.77–78 and Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, pp. 9–19.
2. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. III, page 78.
3. It is said that till the Second World War the soldiers who completed their military service were given, along with a certificate, a sealed letter by way of a military trust, and were instructed to open it only at the time of general mobilization and to act according to its contents.
4. Some historians have mentioned his name as Waqid bin Abdullah and others 'Amr bin Abdullah.

Sexual inclinations appear in every individual at a particular stage of life and at times it so happens that due to lack of proper training and because of the availability of means to satisfy sexual appetite a young person finds himself at the edge of a precipice. At this stage there happen such things as ought not to happen.

Marriage is the best means for the protection of our chastity. In conformity with the law of nature Islam has also made men and women responsible to marry in specified conditions and has given various directions in this behalf.

The Holy Qur'an says:

Women and men should marry, and the fear of poverty and indigence should not stop them from performing this ceremony: Allah will make them rich. **(Surah al–Nur, 24:23)**

The Prophet says: "He who wishes to appear before Allah with a pure soul should marry".1

He has also said: "I shall pride myself on the Day of Judgement over other communities on account of the excessive number of my followers".

Difficulties Of Marriage During The Present Age

Difficulties of marriage during our age are not a few. Men and women of modern times are not prepared to marry on account of unfavourable circumstances and adverse conditions. The national publications point out a number of problems in the frame–work of the family, but most of the difficulties revolve on this point that the men and women of our society do not intend to set up a family which should ensure their real prosperity.

Some persons wish to acquire high public offices and wealth by means of marriage. The thing to which least attention is paid in these days is chastity and modesty, and though it may at times be taken into consideration, usually no importance is given to it.

The proof of this is that men are very fond of those girls, who belong to high families, although they may not at all be praiseworthy from the moral point of view, and many virtuous and pious girls live in extreme poverty in some corners of the society and no one cares for them.

Above all, there are the ceremonies of marriage which are a great source of harassment for the bridegroom and also for the parents of the bride. Another great difficulty is the question of dowry. Owing to these problems there are many persons who avoid marriage and satisfy their sexual appetite by unlawful means.

The Propllet Campaigned Practically Against These Difficulties

These are some of the social problems which exist to a considerable extent in every society and the period of the Prophet was also not free from them. The nobles of Arabia gave their daughters in marriage to those persons who were their equals in regard to pedigree, strength and wealth, and they rejected other suitors.

On account of this old custom the members of noble families were desirous of marrying Fatimah, the dear daughter of the Prophet. They were under the impression that the Prophet would not be severe in the matter of the marriage of his daughter, because, according to their own thinking, they possessed everything which could attract a bride and her father, and then the Prophet had not been severe with regard to the marriages of his other daughers (Ruqayyah, Zaynab etc.).

They were, however, oblivious of the fact that this daughter of the Prophet was different from others. She was the daughter who enjoyed a high position in the light of the verse (of Surah Ale Imran, 3:61) pertaining to 'Mubahilah' (contest with the Christians).

The suitors were mistaken in their thoughts, because they did not understand that only that person who was like her in the matter of piety and faith could be her equal and a march for her. As according to the verse of 'Tathir' (purification) Fatimah had been declared to be free from all sins, hence, her husband must also be masum (free from sins).

Wealth and material manifestations are not the standard of equality. Although Islam recommends that daughters should be given in marriage to their equals, but it also explains that their equality, should be in the matter of faith and Islam.

The Prophet had been directed by Allah to tell the suitors that the marriage of Fatimah would take place according to Divine orders and in offering this apology he removed, to some extent, their misunderstandings. The companions of the Prophet realized that the marriage of Fatimah was not a simple matter and none could marry her on account of his affluence.

They also became aware that her husband could be only that person who was next to the Prophet in the matter of truthfulness, faith, spiritual merit and moral excellence and such a person could be none but

Ali. To put the matter to a test they encouraged Ali to ask for the hand of the Prophet's daughter. Ali also desired this and was only waiting to fulfil the necessary conditions before he made such a request.

The Commander of the Faithful went before the Prophet personally. Modesty and shyness had overpowered him. He had cast his head down and it seemed that he wanted to say something but was feeling shy. The Prophet encouraged him to speak and he made his purpose known in a few sentences. This type of suit is a sign of sincerity. However, our training institutions have not yet been able to teach the prospective suitors such freedom coupled with piety, faith and sincerity.

The Prophet agreed to meet the request of Ali and said: "You should wait a little so that I may mention the matter to my daughter". When he spoke about it to Fatimah she remained absolutely quiet. The Prophet then said: "Allah is Great! Silence means consent". In those days, however, Ali owned nothing except a sword and a coat-of-mail. He was advised by the Prophet to sell the coat-of-mail to meet the expenses of marriage. He gladly sold his coat-of-mail and brought the proceeds of sale to the Prophet.

The Prophet gave a handful of the money to Bilal, without counting it, to purchase some scent for Zahrah. He entrusted the remaining amount to Abu Bakr and Ammar to procure, from the bazaar of Madina, the necessities of life for the couple. They got up as ordered by the Prophet and purchased the following things (which were in fact the dowry of Zahrah) and brought them to the Prophet.

The Dowry Of The Prophet's Daughter

A shirt which was purchased for seven dirhams; a head-dress costing one dirham; a black bath-robe which did not suffice the entire body; a bed which was made of wood and date-palm fibre; two mattresses of Egyptian linen, one of which was woolen and the other was made of date-palm fibre; four pillows out of which two were made of wool and the other two of date-palm fibre; a curtain; a hajri mat; a pair of millstones; a water-skin; a wooden bowl for milk; a skin container for water; a green pitcher, some jars; two silver armlets; and one copper vessel.

When the eyes of the Prophet fell on these articles, he said: "O Lord! Bless the lives of those whose untensils are mostly earthen".2

The dowry of the Prophet's daughter deserves consideration. Her dowry did not exceed 'Mehrus Sunnah' which is five hundred dirhams.3 In fact it was an example for others i.e. for the girls and boys, who cry under the heavy burden of dowry and at times shun the obligation of marriage on this account.

The matrimonial life should basically become agreeable and pleasant by means of sincerity and love, for, otherwise, heavy dowry do not provide any brightness to life.

Nowadays the guardians of the bride subject the son-in-law to a heavy burden of dowry to strengthen the position of the girl so that he may not on one day resort to divorce on account of his greed.

This action does not, however, provide total guarantee for the achievement of the said purpose and the real and true treatment of this malady is the reformation of the moral conditions of men. Our cultural and social environments should be such that thoughts of this kind do not take root in the brains of men. Otherwise, it so happens at times that the girl agrees to forego her dowry to get rid of her husband.

The Ceremonies Of The Marriage

A number of persons were invited from the sides of the bridegroom and the bride and Ali arranged a feast (walimah) in honour of his dear spouse. After the feast was over the Prophet called for Fatimah. She came before the Prophet feeling very shy. When her eyes fell on the Prophet her foot slipped and she was about to fall on the ground. The Prophet held his dear daughter by the hand and prayed for her saying: "May Allah protect you from all slips".

That night the Prophet displayed such devotion and sincerity, as is not displayed in the present societies in spite of their growth and evolution. Holding the hand of his daughter he gave it in the hand of Ali and informed her of the virtues of her husband.

He also made a mention of the sublime personality of his daughter and said that if Ali had not been born there was none else to match her. Then he divided the domestic affairs and the duties of life between them. He entrusted the household affairs to Fatimah and made Ali responsible for outdoor duties. The marriage took place after the Battle of Badr.4

According to some narratives the Prophet then asked the Muhajir and the Ansar women to encircle the she-camel of his daughter and take her to her husband's house and with this the marriage ceremonies of the greatest woman of the world came to an end.

We reproduce below a tradition which gives an idea of the high position enjoyed by the daughter of the Prophet.

Ans bin Malik says: "For a period of six months the Prophet used to come out from his house at the time of Fajar (dawn) and proceeded to the mosque and regularly stopped at that time in front of the house of Fatimah and said: "O people of my household! Attend to prayers. Allah desires to keep every sort of uncleanliness away from you Ahlal Bayt (People of the Household)".5

1. Man la Yahduruhul Faqih, page 410.
2. Biharul Anwar, vol. XLIII, page 94, and Kashful Ghumah, vol. I, p. 359.
3. Wasa'ilush Shi'ah, vol. XV, page 8.
4. Biharul Anwar, vol. XLIII, pp. 79 and III.
5. Musnad Ahmad, vol. II, page 259.

Not a few months had yet passed since the migration of the Prophet to Madina when the Jews rose to

oppose him. Exactly in the seventeenth month of migration a mandatory Divine command came that from then onwards the 'qiblah' of the Muslims would be the Ka'bah and while offering their prayers they should turn their faces to Masjidul Haram.

Details of the above event: During the thirteen years of his prophetic mission in Makkah the Prophet used to offer his prayers with his face towards 'Baytul Maqdis'(Jerusalem) and even after his migration to Madina the Divine order was that 'Baytul Maqdis' would continue to be the 'qiblah' and while offering their prayers the Muslims should also turn their faces to the same 'qiblah' to which the Jews turned theirs.

This was in itself a sort of collaboration and a means of bringing the two religions –one old and the other new–nearer to each other. But the Jews became panicky on account of the advancement of the Muslims, because their ever–increasing successes went to show that very soon the religion of Islam would spread to the entire Peninsula and the strength and influence of the Jews would come to an end.

They, therefore, began indulging in obstructionist activities and hurt the Muslims and their dignified leader in many ways. Amongst other things they put forward the question of offering prayers facing 'Baytul Maqdis' and said: "Muhammad claims that his is an independent religion and his law supersedes all previous laws, but he does not yet have an independent 'qiblah' and offers his prayers facing the 'qiblah' of the Jews".

This news hurt the Prophet. He came out of his house at midnight and looked at the sky. He was awaiting revelation.

In the meantime an order was revealed to him as contained in the following verse:

Many a time We have seen you turn your face towards heaven. We will make you turn towards a 'qiblah' that will please you. (**Surah al–Baqarah, 2:144**)

It appears from the verses of the Qur'an that change of qiblah was not due only to the objection of the Jews, but there was also another reason for it. It was that the matter possessed an aspect of test.

The intention was that the true believers and those who were not sincere in their faith should be identified and the Prophet should fully recognize such persons, because the second order, in obedience to which he turned his face towards Masjidul Haram, while performing prayers, was the sign of faith in the new religion and disobedience and delay is a sign of double–mindedness and hypocrisy. The Qur'an itself mentions this fact clearly in the following verse:

We decreed your former qiblah only in order that We might know the Prophet's true adherents and those who were to disown him. It was indeed a hard test, but not for those whom Allah guided. (**Surah al–Baqarah, 2:143**)

No doubt, there are other reasons also for this change which we find from the history of Islam and from a study of the conditions then prevailing in the Peninsula, for example:

1 The Ka'bah, which had been constructed by Prophet Ibrahim, was respected by the entire Arab society. To declare such a place the 'qiblah' ensured satisfaction of the Arabs in general and attracted them towards Islam. And there could be no target sublimer than that the obstinate polytheists who were far behind the caravan of civilization should embrace the true faith, and Islam should spread through them in all parts of the world.

2. There was no hope that the Jews of those days would embrace Islam and it, therefore, appeared necessary that the Muslims should remain at a distance from them, because they indulged in obstructionist activities and wasted the time of the Prophet by putting forward knotty questions, whereby, according to their own thinking, they displayed their knowledge and wisdom. Change of qiblah was one of the manifestations of seeking distance from the Jews, just as fasting on the day of 'Ashurah' (10th of Muharram) was abolished for that very purpose.

Before the advent of Islam the Jews used to fast on the day of 'Ashurah' and the Prophet and the Muslims had also been ordered to fast on that day. Later, however, orders regarding fasting on 'Ashurah' day were withdrawn and instead fasting during the month of Ramadan was made obligatory.

After all, Islam, which is superior to other religions in all respects, should manifest itself in such a way that the points of its perfection and superiority should become absolutely clear.

On account of these reasons the Archangel Jibreel came when the Prophet had already performed two rak'ats of noon prayers and communicated to him the Divine command that he should thence forward turn to Masjidul Haram. In some of the narratives it has been said that the Archangel held the hand of the Prophet and turned him to Masjidul Haram. Men and women who were present in the mosque followed suit and from that day onwards the Ka'bah became the permanent qiblah of the Muslims.

Miraculous Knowledge Of The Prophet

According to the computation of the former astronomers Madina lies at a latitude of 25 degrees and at a longitude of 75 degrees and 20 points. According to this computation the direction of qiblah as determined for Madina was not in confirmity with the Prophet's 'mehrab' (place of offering prayers) which is still in its original position. This difference was surprising for some experts and at times they offered explanation to remove the difference.

However, recently Sardar Kabuli, the famous scientist has proved, according to modern computations, that Madina is at a latitude of 24 degrees and 75 points and at a longitude of 39 degrees and 59 points.1

The result of this computation turned out to be this: The qiblah of Madina inclines 45 degrees from the southern point and this extraction tallies exactly with the position of the Prophet's pulpit. This in itself is a scientific miracle because in those times, no scientific instruments were available, and there was nothing like computation.

The Prophet while offering prayers, turned from Baytul Maqdis to the Ka'bah in such a way that there was not the least deviation from the direction of Ka'bah2 and as has been stated above the Archangel Jibreel held his hand and turned him to the Ka'bah.3

1. Tuhfatul Ajillah fi Ma'refatil qiblah, page 71.
2. Man la Yahdaruhul Faqih, vol. I, page 88.
3. The incident of the Prophet turning from Baytul Maqdis to the Ka'bah, while ofering prayers, has been quoted by Hur Amili in Wasa'il. (chapters on Qiblah, vol. III, page 218)

The Battle of Badr is one of the greatest and most famous battles of Islam and those who participated in it enjoyed a special distinction amongst the Muslims. Whenever one or more mujahids of Badr participated in or gave evidence about any matter the people used to say: "So many Badris agree with us".

The word 'Badri' is used in the biographies of the companions of the Prophet for those persons who participated in the Battle of Badr and the reason for their importance will be known from the details ot this event.

It has already been mentioned before that in the middle of Jamadiul Awwal of the second year of migration a report was received in Madina that a caravan was going from Makkah to Syria under the leadership of Abu Sufyan, and the Prophet went up to Zatul Ashirah to pursue the caravan and stayed there till the beginning of the following month, but could not lay hands on it. The time of the return of the caravans was almost certain, because in early autumn the caravans of Quraysh used to return from Syria to Makkah.

In all campaigns procurement of information is the first step towards victory. Unless the commander of an army is aware of the strength of the enemies, the point of their centralization and the morale of their soldiers, it is very likely that he may be defeated in the very first encounter.

One of the praiseworthy policies adopted by the Prophet in all the battles (the details of which will be given later) was that he used to collect information about the strength of the enemy and his location. And even till today the question of procurement of information enjoys great importance in global as well as local wars. According to Allamah Majlisi1 the Prophet sent Adi (and according to the writer of 'Hayat–i Muhammad, as quoted by him from history books, he sent Talha bin 'Ubaydullah and Sa'id bin Zayd) for collecting information about the route and itinerary of the caravan, the number of its guards, and the nature of their merchandise. The information received was as under:

1. It is a big caravan and all Makkans have shares in its merchandise.

2. The leader of the caravan is Abu Sufyan and there are about forty persons who guard it.

3. The merchandise is loaded on one thousand camels and its value is about fifty thousand dinars.

As Quraysh had confiscated the property of Muslim Muhajirs residing in Madina, it was only appropriate that the Muslims should also confiscate their merchandise and if they persisted in withholding the property of the Muhajir Muslims on account of their enmity and obstinacy, the Muslims should, as a retaliatory measure, divide their merchandise amongst themselves as war booty.

Hence, the Prophet turned to his companions and said: "O people! It is the caravan of Quraysh. You can go out of Madina to take possession of the property of Quraysh. It is possible that your condition may improve".2

In the circumstances the Prophet left Madina with 313 men in the month of Ramadan of the second year of migration to confiscate the property of Quraysh encamped by the side of the well of Badr.

While going to Syria Abu Sufyan had realized that the Prophet was pursuing his caravan. He was, therefore, careful at the time of his return and enquired from other caravans whether Muhammad had occupied the trade routes. It was reported to him that the Prophet had left Madina along with his companions and might be pursuing the caravan of Quraysh.

Abu Sufyan refrained from proceeding further. He did not see any alternative except to inform Quraysh about the impending danger to the caravan. He, therefore, hired a swift camel-driver named Zamzam bin 'Amr Ghafari and gave him the following instructions:

"Go to Makkah and inform the valiant men of Quraysh and the owners of the merchandise to come out of Makkah to guard the caravan against the attack of the Muslims".

Zamzam hastened to Makkah. As ordered by Abu Sufyan he cut off the ears of his camel, pierced its nose and turned its saddle upside down and tore his shirt from the front as well as from the back side. He then stood up on his camel and cried: "O people! The camels which are carrying musk are in danger. Muhammad and his friends intend confiscating the merchandise. I am doubtful whether it will reach your hands. Help! Help!"3

The pitiable condition of the camel from whose ears and nose blood was trickling and the impression which Zamzam created by his continuous wailings and cries for help roused the Makkans and all their brave men and warriors got ready to go, with the exception of Abu Lahab, who did not participate in this battle, and hired As bin Hisham for four thousand dirhams to go and fight on his behalf.

Umayyah bin Khalaf, who was one of the chiefs of Quraysh, did not wish, for some reasons, to participate in this battle and had been told that Muhammad had said: "Umayyah shall be killed at the hands of Muslims". The leaders of the community felt that the absence of such an important person would certainly be harmful for their cause.

While Umayyah was sitting in Masjidul Haram with some other persons, two men, who had volunteered to fight against Muhammad, came and placed a tray and a collyruim-box before him and said: "O

Umayyah! Now that you have declined to defend your land, wealth and trade, and have chosen to lead a secluded life like women instead of fighting on the war front, it is only proper that you should apply collyrium to your eyes like women and your name should be struck off the list of brave men".

This taunt had such a great effect on Umayyah that he immediately collected the provisions for his journey and proceeded along with Quraysh to safeguard the caravan.4

The Difficulty Faced By Quraysh

The time for departure was announced by special means. However, the chiefs of Quraysh were reminded of the fact that they had also a mortal enemy like the tribe of Bani Bakr, and it was quite possible that they might attack them from behind. The enmity of Bani Bakr with Quraysh was due to the bloodshed, the details of which have been given by Ibn Hisham.5

In the meantime Saraqah bin Malik, who was one of the elders of Bani Kananah (a sect of Bani Bakr) assured Quraysh that nothing of the sort would happen and they could leave Makkah without the least worry.

The Forces Of Truth And Falsehood Face Each Other

The forces of truth and falsehood faced each other for the first time in the Valley of Badr. The number of the army of truth did not exceed 313 whereas the army of falsehood was three times as big as that. The Muslims were not properly equipped.

Their means of transport consisted of about seventy camels and a few horses, while the enemy had come with full strength to knock down Islam. In spite of all this, however, truth was victorious and the enemy returned to Makkah after having sustained heavy losses.

The Prophet encamped in the northern passage of Badr at the foot of the mountain called,'al–'Udwatud Dunya' and was waiting for the caravan to pass when a fresh report was received. It changed the thinking of the commanders of the Islamic army and opened a new chapter in their lives. It was reported to the Prophet that the people of Makkah, who had come out to protect the caravan, were centralized in the same environs and various tribes had participated in forming this army.

The grand leader of Muslims saw himself on the crossroads. He and his companions had come out of Madina to confiscate the merchandise and were not in a position, whether from the point of view of numbers or that of military equipments, to confront a big Makkan army, and now if they had returned from the way they had come, they would have lost the glory which they had earned by means of manoeuvers and military demonstrations.

As it was very much likely that the enemy might continue his advance and attack the centre of Islam (Madina), the Prophet considered it expedient not to retreat but to put up a good fight with the available

strength up to the last moment.

The point worth consideration was that the majority of the soldiers consisted of the Ansar and there were only seventy four Muhajirs amongst them and the agreement which the Ansar had made with the Prophet at 'Aqabah was a defence pact and not a war pact.

In other words, they had agreed to defend his person in Madina like their own kith and kin but had not undertaken to go with him out of Madina and wage war against the enemy. Now the question was as to what the commander of the entire force should do. He, therefore, saw no alternative but to consult his companions about engaging in the battle and to solve the problem in the light of their views.

War Consultations

The Prophet stood up and said: "What is your view in the matter? "

Abu Bakr stood up first and said: "The chiefs and warlike men of Quraysh have joined this army. Quraysh have not at all expressed faith in a religion and have not fallen from the zenith of glory to the abyss of degradation. Furthermore, we have not come out of Madina fully prepared".6 (He meant to say that it was not appropriate to fight, and they should return to Madina).

The Prophet said: "Sit down".

Then Umar rose and repeated what Abu Bakr had said. The Prophet asked him also to sit down.

Thereafter Miqdad stood up and said: "O Prophet of Allah! Our hearts are with you and you should act according to the orders given to you by Allah. By Allah! We shall not tell you what Bani Israel told Musa.

When Musa asked them to perform jihad they said to him: 'O Musa! You and your Lord should go and perform jihad and we shall sit here'. We, however, tell you quite the reverse of it and say: Perform jihad under the auspices of the blessings of Allah and we are also with you and shall fight".

The Prophet was very much pleased to hear Miqdad's words and prayed for him.

Concealment Of Facts

Although bias and concealment of facts and fanaticism are improper for all writers, they are all the more unbecoming to a historian. History is a mirror in which the faces of the people can be seen clearly. For the benefit of future generations, therefore, a historian should steer clear of all fanaticism.7

Ibn Hisham,8 Miqrizi9 and Tabari10 have mentioned the war consultations of the Prophet and have also reproduced the texts of the replies of Sa'd Ma'az and Miqdad in their history books, but have avoided quoting the detailed replies of Abu Bakr and Umar. They have said briefly that these two persons stood up and expressed their views and said good things. Now, one can very well ask these champions of

history that if the views expressed by 'Shaykhayn' (Abu Bakr and Umar) were good why they have refrained from quoting their text.

However, their replies were the same as mentioned above, and if the aforesaid historians have concealed facts, others have reproduced their text.11 And as you can very well observe they did not say good things. Their words indicate that fear had over-taken them and they considered Quraysh to be so much honoured and powerful that they (Abu Bakr and Umar) could not even think that they (Quraysh) could be defeated.

The adverse effect of their speeches on the feelings of the Prophet can very well be realized from the fragments of history, which Tabari has reproduced on the same page, because as you can observe 'Shaykhayn' were the first persons who opened their lips and Miqdad and S'ad Ma'az expressed their views afterwards.

Tabari quotes Abdullah bin Mas'ud as having said: "On the day of Badr I wished that I had been in the position of Miqdad, because he started speaking and said: "We are not at all like Bani Israel (children of Israel) so that we may say that you and your Allah may go and fight and we shall sit here..... at a time when the face of the Prophet was flushed with anger.

Then he said these words (and provided means for the pleasure and happiness of the Prophet), and I wished that I had enjoyed that position". Now, was the anger of the Prophet due to anything other than the words of despair uttered by Abu Bakr and Umar and their insistence on returning to Madina?12

No doubt it was a consultative meeting and everyone had a right to express his views before the supreme commander. However, it was proved that the views expressed by Miqdad were nearer to reality than those expressed by 'Shaykhayn'.

The views which were expressed had an individual aspect. However, the main object of holding consultations was to find out the viewpoint of the Ansar. Until and unless they co-operated, it was not possible to take a final decision. Hence, the Prophet repeated his words to find out the views of the Ansar and said: "Make your views known to me".

Sa'd bin Ma'az Ansari stood up and said: "Do you mean us?" The Prophet replied in the affirmative. Thereupon Sa'd said: "O Prophet of Allah! We have faith in you and testified that your religion is a true one, and we have promised and agreed that we will obey you and stick to all the decisions taken by you.

We swear by the Almighty Allah Who has appointed you to the prophetic mission that if you go into the sea (i.e. the Red Sea) we shall follow suit and none of us shall lag behind in following you. We are not at all afraid to face the enemy. It is possible that we may render services and make sacrifices in this regard which may brighten your eyes. In obedience to the command of Allah you may send us to any place you consider fit".

The words of Sa'd made the Prophet extremely happy and the inauspicious shadow of despair disappeared in the face of invigorative rays of hope, steadfastness, patience and forbearance in the path of the target.

The words of Sa'd were so exciting that the Prophet gave immediate orders to move and said: "Move and I give you good tidings that you will either come across the caravan and confiscate the goods or you will fight against the forces which have come to help the caravan. I can now see the defeat of Quraysh and find that they have suffered heavy losses".

The Muslim army proceeded under the command of the Prophet and encamped near the wells of Badr.[13]

Procurement Of Information About The Enemy

The modern military principles and war tactics have undergone great changes as compared with the past. The importance of acquiring information about the conditions of the enemy and knowledge of his military secrets, and war strategy and the force which he brings in the field is still there. Even now this matter has much to do with the winning and losing of battles.

No doubt this subject has now assumed an educational aspect and classes and schools have been set up for teaching the principles of espionage. The heads of eastern and western blocs now consider a major part of their success to lie in the expansion of their spying organizations so that they may become aware of the war plans of the enemy before the commencement of hostilities and may frustrate them.

The forces of Islam took their position at a place which accorded with the principles of camouflage, and every such movement as could result in the divulgence of secrets was stopped. Different parties started collecting information about Quraysh as well as about their caravan. Ihe information was collected from different sources in the following ways:

1. First of all the Prophet himself set out, accompanied by a brave soldier, and met the head of a tribe and said to him: "What information do you have about Muhammad and his friends?" He said in reply: "It has been reported to me that Muhammad and his companions left Madina on such and such day.

If the reporter be a truthful person he (i.e. the Prophet and his companions) should now be at such and such place (he mentioned the place where the Muslim troops had encamped). I have also been informed that Quraysh moved out of Makkah on such and such day. If this report be true they must be at such and such place by now (he mentioned exactly the same place where Quraysh were centralized).

2. A patrol party which included Zubayr, Awam and Sa'd Abi Waqqas went to the well of Badr under the command of Ali to obtain more information. This was a rendezvous where news were exchanged. Near the well the said party met two slaves of Quraysh along with a camel which carried water.

They intercepted both of them and brought them before the Prophet. After interrogating them it was known that one of the slaves belonged to 'Bani Hajjaj' and the other to 'Bani As' and they had been commissioned to supply water to Quraysh.

The Prophet said to them: "Where are Quraysh?" They replied that they were on the other side of the mountain which was situated in the desert. Then he asked them about their numbers, and they replied that they did not know it for certain.

He asked: "How many camels do they slaughter every day?" They replied that they slaughtered ten camels on one day and nine on the other. The Prophet then remarked that their number was between nine and ten hundred. Thereafter he enquired from them about the chiefs of Quraysh.

They replied that 'Utbah bin Rabiyyah, Shaybah bin Rabiyyah, Abul Bakhtari bin Hisham, Abu Jahl bin Hisham, Hakim bin Hizam, Umayyah bin Khalaf etc. were amongst them. The Prophet turned to his companions and said:

"The city of Makkah has thrown out the pieces of its heart (i.e. its dearest children)".14

Thereafter he ordered that the two persons should be held captives so that investigations might continue.

3. Two persons were deputed to the village of Badr to collect information about the caravan. They dismounted by the side of a mound which was situated near the well and pretended that they were thirsty and had come to drink water. By chance they saw two women by the side of the well conversing with each other.

One of them said to the other: "Why don't you pay my debt? Don't you know that I too am in need". The other said in reply: "The caravan will be arriving tomorrow or day after tomorrow. I shall work for the caravan and then repay your debt". Majdi bin 'Amr who happened to be there confirmed what the debtor had said and then set them apart.

The two riders were very happy to hear this news. Observing the rules of camouflage they came to the Supreme Commander of the forces of Islam and informed him of what they had heard.

Now that the Prophet had received complete information about the arrival of the caravan and the position of Quraysh, it became necessary for him to turn to the preliminaries of his job.

The Caravan Of Abu Sufyan Flees

Abu Sufyan, the leader of the caravan, who had been attacked by a party of the Muslims at the time of his outward journey, knew well that at the time of return he would certainly be attacked by them again. Hence, when he reached the zone of influence of Islam he stopped the caravan at a certain point and

went to the village of Badr to collect information.

There he met Majdi bin 'Amr and asked him whether he had seen in that area any persons about whom he might have been suspicious. He replied: "I have not seen anything which might have aroused my suspicion. I saw only two camel-riders. They made their camels sit on the mound, came down, drank water and then went away".

Abu Sufyan ascended the mound, broke some pieces of the dung of the camels and finding date-stones in them realized that the persons concerned belonged to Madina. He, therefore, changed the course of the caravan and, covering two stages of the journey at a time, took it out of the zone of influence of Islam.

He also appointed a man to go and inform Quraysh that the caravan had been saved from attack by the Muslims and they should, therefore, return to Makkah and leave it to the Arabs to settle the affairs with Muhammad.

Muslims Become Aware Of The Escape Of The Caravan

The news of the escape of the caravan circulated amongst the Muslims. Those who had greedily kept an eye on the merchandise were very much disturbed by this development. Allah revealed the following verse to strengthen their hearts:

Allah has promised to grant your victory over one of the two bands, but you wished to fight the one that was unarmed. He sought to fulfil His promise and to annihilate the unbelievers, so that truth should triumph and falsehood be uprooted, though the wrongdoers wished otherwise. (**Surah al-Anfal 8:7**)

Difference Of Opinion Amongst Quraysh

When Abu Sufyan succeeded in taking away his caravan safely by adopting a route other than that of Badr, he immediately sent a messenger to the people who had come to the rescue of the caravan to inform them about the safety of the caravan and to tell them to return the way they had come, because the real object of mobilization was to protect the caravan and it had been achieved.

When the representative of Abu Sufyan conveyed his message to the chiefs of Quraysh a strange split appeared amongst them.

The people belonging to the tribes of Bani Zohrah and Akhnas Shariq with their allies returned the way they had come. They said: "Our object was to protect the large merchandise of Bani Zohrah and that object has been achieved". Talib bin Abu Talib who had been compelled by Quraysh to leave Makkah also returned after a verbal dispute during which it was said to him:

"The hearts of you Hashimites are with Muhammad".

As opposed to the suggestion of Abu Sufyan, Abu Jahl insisted that they should go to the region of Badr, stay there for three days, kill camels, drink wine and hear the minstrel girls sing so that their valour might reach the ears of the Arabs and they should have a high regard for them for ever.

The fascinating words of Abu Jahl made Quraysh wait at that place and halt at an elevated point in the desert behind a mound. Heavy rain made movement difficult for them and kept them from proceeding further.

However, rain did not have any bad effect on the slope of the desert (al–'Udwatud Dunya) where the Prophet had encamped. The Muslims, therefore, moved, as ordered by the Prophet, and occupied a place by the wells of Badr.

Badr is a vast region. Its southern side is high (al–'Udwatul Qaswa and the northern area is low and sloping (al–'Udwatud Dunya). Water was available in this desert in large quantities from the wells which had been dug and it had always been the halting place for the caravans.

Hubab bin Manzar, who was one of the experienced soldiers said to the Prophet: "Have you alighted here in accordance with the command of Allah, or because you have considered this place to be fit for fighting a battle?"

The Prophet said: "No specific order has been revealed in this regard and if you have a more appropriate place in view you may mention it so that I may change the place if the exigencies of war make it necessary. Hubab said: It is expendient that we should occupy the place by the side of the water which is nearest to the enemy. We should build a tank there so that water may be available regularly for men and animals".

The Prophet appreciated the viewpoint of Hubab and ordered the army to move. This incident shows clearly that the Prophet attached extraordinary importance to consultations and respected the views of the people in public matters.15

"Arish" Or Tower Of Command

Sa'd M'az said to the Prophet: "We propose to set up for you a shelter on a high mound from where the entire battlefield will come into view. It will be looked after by the guards, and the orders of the Supreme Commander will be communicated from there to the subordinate commanders.

Over and above all these things if the Muslim army is successful in this battle, well and good, and in case their men are defeated and killed, you may reach Madina by means of swift camels accompanied by the guards of the Tower of Command after employing some delaying tactics, which may stop the enemy from making an advance.

There are many Muslims there who are not aware of our present condition and if they come to know about the situation they will give you full support and will act till the last moments of their lives according to the agreement which they have made with you".

The Prophet prayed for Sa'd Ma'az and ordered the construction of a shelter on the mound, which should overlook the field, and the seat of command should be transferred there.

Examining The Question Of Setting Up A Shelter

The construction of the shelter for the Prophet and its guarding by Sa'd Ma'az and a group of the Ansar is an event which has been quoted by Tabari from Ibn Ishaq, and others have followed him.16 For certain reasons, however, the story is somewhat doubtful.

Firstly such an action has a bad effect on the morale of the soldiers. A commander who makes plans for his own safety and is not anxious about the safety of his soldiers cannot command and control their minds.

Secondly such a thing does not conform to the good tidings which the Prophet had given to his companions on the basis of Divine revelation. Before coming face to face with Quraysh he had spoken to the Muslims in these terms:

Allah has promised to grant you victory over one of the two bands (***the caravan and those who had come to defend it***)***, but you wished to fight the one that was unarmed. He sought to fulfil His promise and to annihilate the believers, so that truth should triumph and falsehood be uprooted, though the wrongdoers wished otherwise.*** (**Surah al-Anfal, 8:7**)

When, according to Tabari, a shelter was being set up for the Prophet the caravan had escaped and there were left only those people, who had come from Makkah to defend it. And, according to the above-mentioned positive promise, they (the Muslims) were sure that the victory was theirs.

In the circumstances any talk about the defeat of the Muslims and setting up of a shelter for the Prophet and stationing swift camels near the shelter would have been out of place. Ibn Sa'd quotes thus from Umar bin Khattab.17 When the verse:

Their army would be routed and put to flight, (**Surah al-Qamar, 54:45**)

was revealed, I said to myself: "Which is the army whose decisive defeat has been predicted in this verse?" Then I saw on the day of Badr that the Prophet had put on the coat-of-mail and was reciting this verse with great vehemence. At that moment I understood that this army was going to be defeated and annihilated".

Keeping this fact in view can it be imagined that the Prophet and his companions could think of their own

defeat and flight?

Thirdly, the character of the Prophet, whose posture in the battlefield was described by Ali, the Commander of the Faithtul, does not at all conform to this technique. He says about the Prophet: "Every time when fighting became intense we took refuge with the Prophet. None of us was nearer to the enemy than he".[18]

Can it be imagined that a person, whose first disciple describes him in these terms, should adopt the path of personal security and flight in the very first battle fought by the Muslims?

We think that the setting up of the shade was only to provide the Prophet with a place higher than the battlefield so that he might have a full view of the battle, and from there he could give accurate instructions to his army.

Movement Of Quraysh

On the 17th of Ramadan of the second year of migration Quraysh descended, early in the morning, from behind the sandy mound into the desert of Badr. When the Holy Prophet saw them he raised his face to the sky and said: "O Allah! Quraysh are up, with pride and arrogance, to fight against You and to deny Your Prophet! Send the aid which You have promised me and destroy them today! "

Consultations By Quraysh

The forces of Quraysh were centralized at a certain point in Badr, but they were not aware of the strength of the Muslims. They dispatched 'Umayr bin Wahab, who was a brave man and an expert in assessing the strength of the armies to find out the number of Muhammad's companions.

Riding his horse he went round the encampment of the army of Islam and reported on his return that they were about three hundred. He said, however, that he would take another round and see whether there were any others lying in ambush and also whether or not there was any reinforcement.

He roamed about the desert in all directions and then brought very alarming news. He said: "Muslims don't have any ambush or shelter. However, I have seen some camels which are bringing the news of death for you from Madina".

Then he added: "I have seen a group of men who have no other asylum than their own swords. Until each one of them has killed one man of yours they will not be killed. And in case they kill from amongst you as many as they are themselves what will be the use of life? Take your final decision".[19]

Waqidi and Allamah Majlisi have quoted another sentence as well i.e. "Don't you see that they are silent and don't speak even a word and their faces tell what their intentions are and they are moving their tongues in their mouths like deadly serpents?"[20]

Difference Of Opinion Amongst Quraysh

The words of the brave soldier created an uproar amongst Quraysh. The entire army of the enemy became panicky. Hakim bin Huzam went to 'Utbah and said: "O 'Utbah! You are the chief of Quraysh. Quraysh had come out of Makkah to safeguard their merchandise. This object has been achieved and there is no other matter left except the blood-money of Hazrami and the price of the property which was plundered by the Muslims some time ago. You should pay his blood-money yourself and refrain from fighting with Muhammad".

The words of Hakim had a strong effect on 'Utbah. He got up and made a very impressive speech before the people and said: "O people! You should leave it to the Arabs to settle the affairs with Muhammad. If Arabs succeed in overthrowing his religion and pulling down the foundation of his strength we too shall be happy on that account. And if Muhammad succeeds we shall not meet any harm from him, because we shall be keeping away from fighting with him in spite of our being at the zenith of our strength. It would, therefore, be better if we return the way we have come".

Hakim communicated the views of 'Utbah to Abu Jahl and saw that he was busy wearing his coat-of-mail, Abu Jahl was very much annoyed to learn about the speech of 'Utbah and sent a man to 'Amir Hazrami, the brother of 'Amr Hazrami, with this message: "Your ally (i.e. 'Utbah) is stopping people from realizing the blood-money of your brother. You can see the blood of your brother with your own eyes. Get up and remind Quraysh of the pact which they made with your brother and sing mournful verses for him.

Abu 'Amir got up, stripped off his head-covering and said imploringly: "Alas! O 'Amr!"

The wailings and lamentations of Abu 'Amar roused the sense of honour of Quraysh and made them decide to fight. They thus ignored the views of 'Utbah regarding withdrawal from the scene. However, the same 'Utbah, who had recommended withdrawal, was influenced by the transient sentiments of his companions. He rose at once, put on his military uniform and got ready for the battle.

Some times man loses his wisdom on account of the influence of sentiments and baseless passions, and fails to brighten his life. The man who was of peaceful disposition and had invited others to live and let live became so sentimental that he was the first to lay himself out to fight.

The Reason Which Made The Battle Unavoidable

Aswad Makhzumi was a hot-tempered person. When he saw the tank of water which had been constructed by the Muslims he swore that he would do one of these three things: either he would drink water from the tank, or demolish it or be killed. He came out of the ranks of unbelievers and met the brave commander of Islam, Hamzah, near the tank. Fighting ensued between them.

Hamzah gave a blow on his foot and it was severed from his leg. He, therefore, fell down by the side of the tank, with his leg bleeding. In order to act according to his oath he reached the bank of the tank to drink water. Hamzah gave him another blow and he was killed.

This incident made fighting unavoidable, because nothing is more instrumental in rousing the sentiments of a crowd than bloodshed. Some persons whose hearts were burning with grudge and rancour revere keen to find an excuse to fight and now that this was the best excuse for them, they considered themselves under the obligation to fight.

Single Combats

It was an old custom of the Arabs that in the beginning of a battle single combats were resorted to, and later general fighting began.

After Aswad Makhzumi had been killed, three famous warriors of Quraysh came out of their ranks and challenged for a fight. They were two brothers 'Utbah and Shaybah, sons of Rabiyyah, and Walid bin 'Utbah and all of them were fully armed. They roared and ran their horses in the field and called their opponents to fight.

Three brave men from amongst the Ansars named 'Awf, Ma'uz and Abdullah Rawahah came out of the ranks of the Muslims. 'Utbah, however, realized that they were from Madina and said to them: "We have nothing to do with you".

Then a man (from amongst Quraysh) shouted: "O Muhammad! Send our equals to fight with us!" The Prophet turned his face to 'Ubaydah, Hamzah and Ali and said: "Get up". The three brave men covered their heads and faces and of they went to the battlefield. All the three persons introduced themselves. 'Utbah accepted all of them for a combat and said: "Yes, you are our equals".

Some say that in this combat each warrior fought with his rival of the same age. Ali, who was the youngest of them met Walid (maternal uncle of Mu'awiyah), the middle-aged amongst the Muslims (Hamzah) faced 'Utbah (maternal grandfather of Mu'awiyah) and Ubaydah, who was the oldest amongst the Muslim combatants fought with Shaybah, who was oldest from the other side.

Ibn Hisham, however, says that the opponent of Hamzah was Shaybah and that of Ubaydah was Utbah. Now let us see which of the two views is correct. By assessing these views, the real position becomes clear:

1. Historians write that Ali and Hamzah killed their opponents in the very first moment and then hurried to help 'Ubaydah and killed his adversary as well.21

2. In a letter written by Ali, the Commander of the Faithful to Mu'awiyah he reminds him in these words: "The sword with which I finished off your maternal grandfather ('Utbah, father of Mu'awiyah's mother,

Hind) and your maternal uncle (Walid bin 'Utbah) and your brother (Hanzala) is still with me (i.e I still possess the same strength)'.22

This letter clearly shows that Ali had a hand in the killing of the maternal grandfather of Mu'awiyah, and then we also know that Hamzah and Ali killed their opponents instantly.

If the opponent of Hamzah had been 'Utbah (grandfather of Mu'awiyah) Ali could not say: "O Mu'awiyah! Your grandfather ('Utbah) lost his life on account of the blows of my sword". Hence it cannot be gain said that the adversary of Hamzah was Shaybah and that of 'Ubaydah was 'Utbah and after killing their own opponents Hamzah and Ali went towards 'Utbah and killed him with the blows of their swords.

General Attack Begins

As a consequence of the warriors of Quraysh being killed general attack started, and Quraysh began attacking in groups. The Prophet ordered that the Muslims should refrain from attacking and should prevent the advance of the enemy by means of archery.

Then he came down from the Tower of Command and arranged the lines of his soldiers with a stick. At that moment Sawad bin Ghazbah was standing somewhat forward as compared with the line. The Prophet hit the stick on his belly and said: "Don't stand ahead of other soldiers".23 Sawad then said: "This blow given to me was unjustified and I want to take revenge".

The Prophet pulled up his shirt immediately and said: "Avenge yourself on me". And then all the soldiers saw that Sawad kissed the chest of the Prophet and put his arm round his neck and said: "I wished to kiss your chest during the last moments of my life."

Then the Prophet returned to the seat of command and with his heart overflowing with faith, turned his face to the Aimighty and said: "O Lord! If this group is annihilated today, none else will worship you on the face of the earth."24

The particulars of the general attack have been recorded to some extent in the history of Islam. It is, however, certain that as and when the Prophet came down from the seat of command he encouraged the Muslims to fight in the path of Allah and to attack the enemy.

Once he came suddenly and said to the Muslims with a loud voice: "I swear by Allah who controls Muhammad's soul that whoever fights steadfastly today and his fighting is for Allah's sake and is killed shall be sent by Allah to Paradise".

The words of the Supreme Commander were so effective that some Muslims removed their coats-of-mail from their bodies and began fighting so that they might achieve martyrdom as early as possible. 'Umayr Hamam asked the Prophet: 'How much distance is there between me and Paradise?" The Prophet replied: "Fighting with the chiefs of blasphemy". He threw away a few palm-dates which he had

in his hand and began fighting.

Then the Prophet picked up some dust and, throwing it towards Quraysh, said: "May your faces be metamorphosed!"[25] Thereafter he gave orders for general attack.

The signs of victory of the Muslims began to appear soon. The enemies were stricken with terror and began to flee. The Muslims, who were fighting with the help of their faith, and knew that both killing and being killed were blessings of Allah, were perfectly undaunted and nothing stopped their advance.

Regard For Rights

Regard for the rights of two groups of persons was necessary. Some of them were those who had meted out good treatment to the Musims in Makkah and had supported them, for example Abil Bakhtari, who had rendered great services to the Muslims by bringing to an end their economic blockade.

The others were those persons who had come out of Makkah under compulsion and were actually the supporters of Islam and of the Prophet, for example, most of Bani Hisham, like Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet etc.

As the Prophet of Islam was the Messenger of blessings and peace, he gave strict orders that the blood of these two groups should not be shed.

Umayyah Bin Khalaf Is Killed

Umayyah bin Khalaf and his son were captured through Abdur Rahman bin 'Awf. As mutual friendship existed between Umayyah and Abdur Rahman, the latter wished to take him and his son out of the battlefield alive so that they might be taken prisoners.

Bilal, the Ethiopian, was a slave of Ummayyah in the past. As Bilal had embraced Islam while he was a slave, Umayah used to torture him severely. In order to make him abjure Islam he used to make him lie on hot sand during the summer season and placed a big stone on his chest. Even in that condition Bilal used to say: *'Ahad! Ahad!'* (Allah is One. Allah is One). The Ethiopian slave suffered a good deal until a Muslim purchased him and set him free.

In the Battle of Badr Bilal's eyes fell on Umayah and he realized that Abdur Rahman wanted to favour him. He, therefore, cried aloud: "O friends of Allah! Ummayyah is one of the chiefs of unbelievers. He should not be allowed to live". The Muslims encircled Ummayyah from all sides and put him and his son to death.

The Prophet had ordered that Abil Bakhtari, who had helped Bani Hashim in the days of economic blockade, should not be killed.[26] It so happened that a man named 'Majzar' captured him and was trying to bring him before the Prophet alive, but he, too, was killed.

Amount Of Casualties And Losses

In this battle fourteen men from amongst the Muslims were killed. As regards Quraysh seventy of them were killed and seventy others were captured. Those captured included their chiefs named Nazar Harith, 'Uqbah Mu'it, Abu Ghurrah, Suhayl 'Amr, Abbas and Abul As.27

The martyrs of Badr were buried in a corner of the battlefield. Their graves still exist and devoted Muslims visit them to offer their respects.

Later the Prophet ordered that the dead bodies of Quraysh might be collected and thrown in a well. When the body of 'Utbah was being brought to the well the eyes of his son (Abu Huzayfah) fell on it and he turned pale.

The Prophet observed this and said: "Has any doubt crossed your mind?" He replied: "No, but I imagined that my father possessed wisdom, learning and patience and thought that these qualities might guide him to Islam. However, I have now realized that whatever I had been thinking was wrong".

Then the Prophet went by the side of the well. He uttered the names of everyone of the chiefs of unbelievers and said: "O 'Utbah! O Shaybah! O Umayah! O Abu Jahl! Did you find what your god had promised you to be correct? I have found that which my Allah had promised to be correct and firm".

The companions of the Prophet said: "Are you speaking to the dead bodies?" He replied: "They are hearing my words but are not able to give any reply".28

After The Battle Of Badr

Many Muslim historians believe that in the Battle of Badr single combats and collective attacks continued till midday and the battle came to an end after noontide, when Quraysh fled and some of them were captured. After burying the martyrs the Prophet performed afternoon prayers at that place and came out of the desert of Badr before sunset.

Now the Prophet was faced for the first time with differences between his companions over the division of war booty, and every group claimed that it enjoyed precedence over others.

Those who guarded the Tower of Command of the Supreme Commander claimed that they had protected the life of the Prophet and nothing could be more important than this. Those who had collected war booty claimed precedence over others. And those who had pursued the enemy till the last moment and had made the collection of war booty possible considered themselves to be more deserving than others.

There is nothing more harmful for an army than that the disputes should arise amongst the individuals. In order to curb material desires and suppress all hue and cry, the Prophet entrusted the entire booty to

Abdullah Ka'b and appointed some persons to help him in its transport and safe custody until a solution of the problem was found.

The rules of equity and justice demanded that the entire army should have shared the booty, because all had worked and shouldered responsibility and none of the individuals could achieve anything unless others were also active. While he was on the way, the Prophet divided the booty equally. As regards the Muslims who had been martyred he separated their shares and delivered them to their successors.

The action of the Prophet (dividing the war booty equally) annoyed Sa'd Waqqas, who said to the Prophet: "Do you consider me, who am one of the noble men of Bani Zohrah, at par with these water-carriers and gardeners of Yathrib?"

The Prophet was very much grieved to hear these words and said: "My object in this battle has been to support the weak against the strong and I have been appointed to the prophetic mission to uproot all imaginary discriminations and privileges and to replace them by equality in the rights of men".

As explained in the Qur'anic verses relating to khums:

One fifth of war booty belongs to Allah, His Prophet, the hindered, the orphans, the needy and those who need money while on a journey. **(Surah al-Anfal, 8:41).**

However, on this occasion, the Prophet distributed khums also amongst the army. It is possible that the verse relating to khums had not been revealed yet or the Prophet, exercising the authority vested in him, refrained from taking khums to increase the shares of the mujahids.

Two Captives Were Killed Enroute

At one of the halting places the captives were made to appear before the Prophet. Out of them Nazar bin Harith, who was one of the sworn enemies of the Muslims, was executed in the strait of 'Safra' and 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'it was killed under the Prophet's orders in 'Irquz Zabiyyah.29

Now the question arises as to why, in spite of the fact that the orders of Islam about the prisoners of war are that they are the slaves of the Muslims and the mujahids, and may be sold in the bazaar at reasonable prices, the Prophet agreed to the execution of these two persons, and how he took such a decision, when he had already said to the Muslims about the captives of Badr: "Be good to the captives".30

Abu Aziz, the standard-bearer of Quraysh in the Battle of Badr, says: 'From the day the Prophet made recommendation for us we became so honourable before the Muslims that they did not touch food until we had been fed first'.

In the circumstances the execution of these two captives was ordered for the sake of general welfare of

the Muslims and not as an act of vengeance, because these two persons were the chiefs of unbelievers and were the plotters against Islam and the instigators of the tribes. Possibly the Prophet was sure that if they were set at large they would once again indulge in such dangerous activities.

Men Dispatched By The Prophet To Madina

Abdullah Rawahah and Zayd Harithah were deputed by the Prophet to reach Madina as soon as possible and to convey good news to the Muslims that Islam had been victorious and the leaders of the unbelievers like 'Utbah, Shaybah, Abu Jahl, Zam'ah, Abul Bakhtari, Umayyah, Nabiyya, Manbah etc. had been killed.

They arrived at the time when the Muslims were returning after burying the daughter of the Prophet, who was the wife of Uthman, and the joy of victory in the war was thus mingled with grief on account of her death.

At the same time the polytheists and the Jews were very much perturbed and unnerved, because they never expected that the Muslims would be blessed with such a victory. They, therefore, endeavoured to make the people believe that the news was false. However, the fact was proved beyond any doubt by the arrival of the army of Islam along with the captives of Quraysh.

Makkans Come To Know About Their Chiefs Being Killed

Haysaman Khaza'i was the first to reach Makkah to inform the people of the bloody events at Badr as well as of their chiefs being killed in the battle. Abu Rafe', who was the slave of Abbas in those days and later became a companion of the Prophet as well as of the Commander of the Faithful, says:

"In those days Islam had illuminated the house of Abbas. He, his wife Ummul Fazal, and myself had embraced Islam, but had kept our faith concealed for fear of the people. When the news of the death of the enemies of Islam at Badr spread we were extremely happy.

However, Quraysh and their supporters were very much grieved and disturbed. Abu Lahab who had not participated in this battle and had sent someone else in his own place was sitting by the well of Zamzam. Suddenly people brought the news that Abu Sufyan Harth had arrived. Abu Lahab said: "Tell him to see me as early as possible".

He came, sat by the side of Abu Lahab, and gave a detailed account of the happenings at Badr. Agitation and fear struck Abu Lahab's heart like lightening. After burning in high fever for seven days he died of some mysterious disease.

The story of the participation in the Battle of Badr of the Prophet's uncle Abbas (who was one of the persons who were captured by the Muslims) is one of the problems of history. How can it be that he insisted upon the people of Madina, at the time of the agreement of 'Aqabah, to support the Prophet and

he is reported to have participated in this battle.

The solution of this problem lies in what his slave Rafe' says. He says that he was one of the persons who, like his brother Abu Talib, believed in the Oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of his nephew, but concealed his faith, keeping in view the exigencies of the time, so that he might assist his nephew and keep him informed of the nefarious plots of Quraysh, just as he had done at the time of the Battle of Uhud.

The spreading of the news of the death of seventy persons from amongst the dear ones of Quraysh caused harassment in many families and made them sad and gloomy.31

Wailings And Elegizing Prohibited

In order to keep Quraysh in a state of anger and indignation and to ensure that the people should be always ready to avenge the blood of their warriors Abu Sufyan gave orders that nobody had a right to weep or wail nor should a poet recite mournful verses because these things diminish the sense of revenge and occasion taunts by the enemies.

To incite resentment among the people he also declared that he would not lie with any woman until and unless he had taken revenge upon the Muslims for the blood of those who were killed in Badr.

Aswad Muttalib felt strong indignation on account of losing three of his sons. Suddenly he heard the wailings of a woman. He was pleased and thought that crying for those killed had been allowed. He sent some one to verify his suspicion.

However, the result of investigation was not the same as he had wished, because the woman was crying as she had lost her camel and weeping for a lost camel was not prohibited according to the orders of Abu Sufyan. Aswad felt this very much and composed verses. The translation of two of them is given below:

"Is she crying for her lost camel and does she keep awake during nights for having lost it? No. It is not proper at this moment that she should cry for her camel. Rather it is necessary that she should weep for those who have been killed and with whose death joy, honour and glory have also been lost".32

Final Decision About The Captives

According to the Islamic law the prisoners of war become slaves of the Muslims and everyone of them is required to work according to his capacity. Educated persons are employed on educating others and industrialists impart instruction in the field of industry. These slaves cannot become free in any case unless they are first purchased by someone, and this had been the practice of the Prophet and of the Muslims during the battles fought and the conquests made by them.

As regards this battle (i.e. Badr), however, it was declared that educated persons could become free if they taught ten boys how to read and write. Others could also purchase their freedom by paying an amount ranging from one thousand dirhams to four thousand dirhams. As regards the poor persons they could be set free without payment of any ransom.

This news caused a thrill in Makkah amongst the relatives of the captives and they sent ransom money to Madina to get them released. When Suhayl 'Amr was set free on payment of ransom, one of the companions of the Prophet requested for permission to pull out his front teeth, so that he could not be able thereafter to speak against Islam. The Prophet did not grant permission to do that and said that it amounted to 'mutilation' which is not permissible in Islam.

Abil As, the son-in-law of the Prophet and husband of his daughter Zaynab, was a respectable tradesman of Makkah. He had married Zaynab during the Age of Ignorance and did not embrace Islam after the appointment of the Prophet to the prophetic mission. He also participated in the Battle of Badr and was taken prisoner. At that time his wife, Zaynab, was in Makkah.

To get her husband released she sent to Madina a necklace which was given to her by her mother Khadijah at the time of her marriage. The Prophet chanced to see the necklace sent by his daughter. He wept and was reminded of the great sacrifices made by Khadijah for the cause of Islam and the enormous wealth spent by her for the advancement of the Divine religion.

To ensure respect for public property he turned to his companions and said: "This necklace is your property and you have full right over it. If you are agreeable it may be returned and Abil As may be set free without realizing any ransom". His companions accepted his suggestion.

Statement Of Ibn Abil Hadid

He says: "I mentioned the incident of Zaynab's necklace before my teacher Abu Ja'far Basri 'Alavi and he confirmed it, but added: "Was it not appropriate that the caliphs should have consoled Fatimah by returning Fadak to her, even if it be supposed that it belonged to the Muslims?" I said: "According to a tradition the Prophets don't leave behind any inheritance and as such Fadak belonged to the Muslims.

In the circumstances how could the property of the Muslims be given to the daughter of the Prophet?" The teacher said: "Did not the necklace, which Zaynab sent for the release of Abil As, belong to the Muslims?"

Abil Hadid says: "I said that the Prophet was the lawgiver and possessed authority in all matters, whereas the caliphs possessed no such authority". The teacher said: "I don't say that the caliphs should have taken Fadak forcibly from the Muslims and given it to Fatimah. What I say is that the ruler of the time didn't consult the Muslims regarding the return of Fadak.

Why did he not stand up like the Prophet and say: 'O people! Fatimah is the daughter of your Prophet.

She desires that the garden of Fadak should be under her control as it used to be during the lifetime of the Prophet. Do you agree that Fadak be returned to her?'

Ibn Abil Hadid writes in the end: "I could say nothing in reply to the eloquent remarks of the teacher and only said this much in his support: 'Abul Hasan Abdul Jabbar has also criticized the caliphs in this behalf and says that though their action was according to law, no regard was shown to the respect and position, to which Zahrah was entitled".33

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, page 217.
2. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, page 20.
3. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 81.
4. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, page 138 and Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 82.
5. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II. pp. 248 – 249.
6. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, page 48.
7. Tarikhi Kamil, vol. II, page 82.
8. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham vol. I, page 615.
9. al–Imta'ul Asma', page 74.
10. Tarikh–i Tabari. vol. II, page 140.
11. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, page 248; Seerah–i Halabi, vol. II, page 160 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, page 217.
12. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, page 140.
13. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, page 48; Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 615.
14. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 617.
15. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, p. 620 and Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, p. 144.
16. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, p. 145 and Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, p. 620.
17. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 25.
18. Nahjul Balaghah, Kalimat–i Qisar, page 214.
19. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 622.
20. Mughazi, vol. I, page 62 and Biharul Anwar, vol. II, page 234.
21. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, p. 148 and Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, p. 625.
22. Nahjul Balaghah, letters, 28 and 46.
23. Tarikh–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 626.
24. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, page 149.
25. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 628.
26. Tabaqat–i Ibn Sa'd, vol. II. page 23.
27. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, pp. 206–207; Mughazi, vol. I, pp. 137–138.
28. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, page 117.
29. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 645.
30. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 645.
31. Fahrist–i Najashi, page 5.
32. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 648.
33. Sharh–i Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XIV, page 191.

The Battle of Badr was a dreadful storm which blew in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula. This was a storm which pulled out many old roots of polytheism and idol–worship. Some of the heroes and champions of Quraysh were killed or were made captives and the others fled away very ignominously.

The news of Quraysh having been routed spread through Arabia. However, after this storm, there was a sort of lull coupled with fear and disturbance of mind – a lull which was occasioned by reflection about the future general conditions of the Peninsula.

The idolatrous tribes, the rich Jews of Madina and the Jews of Khaybar and Wadiul Qura were very afraid of the ever increasing advancement of the new government and saw their very existence in danger, because they had never believed that the Prophet of Islam would become so strong that he would annihilate the century old strength of Quraysh.

The Jews of Bani Qaynqa' tribe, who lived in Madina and controlled the economy of the city, were more afraid than others, because their life was completely intermingled with that of the Muslims and there was a difference between them and the Jews of Khaybar and Wadiul Qura', who lived outside Madina and away from the zone of authority of the Muslims.

On this account, therefore, the tribe of Qaynqa' became more active than others and started the cold war of propaganda by spreading biting slogans and slanderous verses. Thus they ignored practically the general agreement which was made in the first year of migration.

However, this cold war did not justify that the forces of Islam should give a reply with sharp weapons, because, if a knot can be opened with fingers it should not be necessary to use teeth for the purpose. Furthermore, the Prophet attached much importance to the maintenance of political unity and general law and order.

As a last warning to the Jews the Prophet delivered a fiery speech in the bazaar of Bani Qaynqa'. In this speech he said to the Jews *inter alia:* The fate of Quraysh serves them right. It is a lesson to you as well. I am afraid that the same misfortune may overtake you.

There are many learned men and religious scholars amongst you. You should verify from them so that they may tell you clearly that I am the Prophet of Allah and that this fact is recorded in your Scripture (the Taurat)".

The obstinate and proud Jews not only did not keep silent after hearing the Prophet's words but replied to him in a very offensive tone and said: "Do you think that we are weak and unaware of the war strategy like Quraysh? You confronted a group who did not know the principles and tactics of fighting. However, the strength of the children of Qaynqa' will become known to you when you meet them in the battlefield".1

The biting and disrespectful words of Bani Qaynqa' and the singing of slogans and epic poems by the champions of the Jews did not have even the slightest adverse effect on the morale of the Muslims.

However, an ultimatum was served on them in accordance with the principles of Islamic politics and it became clear that this time the knot would have to be opened by other means or else their courage,

transgression and oppression would increase day by day. The Prophet, therefore, waited for an opportunity to administer them a severe castigation.

The Fire Of War Kindles With A Spark

At times it so happens that small phenomena lead to great revolutions and social upheavals i.e. an insignificant event leads to great occurrences and the parties resort to the settlement of many other accounts as well (besides that event).

The reason for the commencement of the First World War, which is one of the greatest events of human history, was a small happening, which provided an excuse to the big powers to wage war. The event which served as a cause for the commencement of the said war was the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the crown prince of Austria.

This happened on the 28th of June 1914 and after one month and a few days the First World War started with Germany's attack on Belgium. As a result of this ten million persons were killed and another twenty million were wounded.

The Muslims were extremely annoyed at the obstinacy and arrogance of the Jews and were awaiting an offensive act of theirs so that they might rise against them. One day it so happened that an Arab woman came in the Bazaar of Bani Qaynqa' to sell something near the shop of a Jewish goldsmith. She had taken care that nobody should see her face.

The Jews of Bani Qaynqa', however, insisted that she should unveil her face. As she declined to do so the shopkeeper came out of his shop and sewed the lap of her dress on her back. Consequently when the woman rose after a few moments a part of her body became visible. Thereupon the men (of Bani Qaynqa') ridiculed her.

The question of reputation and honour, which is something vital for every society, enjoyed extraordinary importance amongst the Arabs and especially amongst the nomadic tribes who resorted to bloodshed on account of the slightest aspersion on their honour.

The pitiable condition of the stranger women, therefore, aroused the sense of honour of a Muslim and he killed the Jewish goldsmith. Naturally this act, committed in the area of the Jews themselves, could not pass without a reaction on their part. They therefore, attacked that Muslim en masse and put him to death.

We are not concerned about the fact whether or not the killing of the Jew for his having insulted the woman conformed to principles and reason. However, a Muslim's having been attacked by hundreds of Jews collectively was decidedly very shocking. Hence, the news of the tragic and pitiable murder of a Muslim stirred the moral sense of the Muslims, who determined to set the matters right and to destroy the centre of mischief.

The reciters of epic verses of Bani Qaynqa' realized that the matter had become serious and it was no longer advisable for them to continue their business in the bazaars and streets of Madina. They, therefore, considered it expedient to take refuge, as early as possible, in their houses, which were situated in high and strong forts, and to retreat there in spite of all their recitations of epic poems with great valour!

They also committed a mistake in acting on this scheme. If they had regretted what they had done and had asked for forgiveness they would certainly have been able to reconcile with the Muslims on account of the forgiving nature of the Prophet.

However, to shut themselves in the forts was a sign of continuance of hostilities and enmity. The Prophet ordered the fort of the enemy to be besieged. The Muslim forces encircled the entire fort from one end to the other. The siege continued for fifteen days and entry of provisions into the fort was stopped. Any contact with those people was also prohibited.

The Jews knelt down as a consequence of the economic blockade. They opened the gate of the fort after making requisite signs, surrendered to the Muslim army. They also declared that the decision of the Prophet, whatever it was, should be adhered to.

The Prophet intended to award severe punishment to the obstructionists and the opponents of political unity in Madina. However, he refrained from taking such action on account of the insistence of Abdullah Ubay who was one of the hypocrites of Madina and had ostensibly embraced Islam.

It was, therefore, decided that the Jews should surrender their weapons and wealth and quit Madina as early as possible and this task should be accomplished under the supervision of an officer named 'Ubadah bin Samit. The Jews saw no alternative but to leave Madina for Wadiul Qura' and then to proceed to Azra'at in the region of Syria.

The political unity of Madina was restored once again with the expulsion of the Jews of Qaynqa'. This time the political unity was combined with religious unity also, because, besides the Muslims, no other considerable majority was now visible in Madina and the number of idolatrous Arabs and hypocrites was insignificant as compared with that of the believers.2

Fresh Reports Reach Madina

In small surroundings news usually circulates like lightning from person to person. For this reason news regarding most of the conspiracies and gatherings against the Muslims in every region reached the centre of Islam immediately through impartial travellers or vigilant friends. Furthermore, the Prophet himself was extraordinarily perceptive and nipped most of the conspiracies in the bud.

As soon as a report was received that a tribe was planning to collect arms and men he immediately dispatched a force to curb the spirit of the enemy, or went personally at top speed, with an appropriate

force, and besieged the area of the enemy and frustrated his plans. Here is a brief account of some of the 'ghazwahs' (battles in which the Prophet participated) which took place in the second year of migration.

1. Ghazwatul Kadar

The central region of Bani Salim tribe was called Kadar. A report was received in Madina that the people of that tribe were planning to collect arms to attack the centre of Islam. As and when the Prophet of Islam went out of Madina he appointed another person as his representative and entrusted the governmental matters to him. This time he appointed Ibn Umme Maktum to deputize for him in Madina, and himself went, with a force, to the central region of Kadar.

However, the enemies had scattered before the arrival of the Muslims. The Prophet however, returned to Madina without any fighting but for his own satisfaction he again sent an army to the same spot under the command of an officer named Ghalib Abdullah. The army in question returned victorious after a small skirmish in which three of their men were killed.3

2. Ghazwatus Saweeq

The Arabs of the Age of Ignorance made strange vows. For example, Abu Sufyan had vowed after the Battle of Badr that until he had taken revenge for the murder of the Quraysh upon the Muslims, he would not go near his wife. To fulfil his vow he was obliged to conduct an attack. He marched with two hundred men and, at the insistence of Salam bin Mushkam, the chief of the Jewish tribe of Bani al-Nuzayr, who lived out of Madina, he killed a Muslim and set fire to a palm-grove in the region of 'Ariz'.

A man immediately reported the incident to Madina. The Prophet came out of Madina and pursued the enemy up to a certain distance. However, Abu Sufyan and his warriors fled away. On the way the enemies left behind some bags of 'saweeq' (a food prepared with flour and palm-dates). The Muslims took possession of these bags and gave this ghazwah the name of 'Ghazwatus Saweeq'.4

Ghazwah Zil Amr

A report was received in Madina that the people of the tribe named 'Ghatfan' had gathered together and intended conquering Madina. The Prophet with 450 men rose to face the enemies. The enemies became panicky and took refuge in the mountains. In the meantime there was a heavy downpour and the clothes of the Prophet became wet.

He therefore, went at a distance from the army. There he took off his clothes and spread them on a tree, and sat down under the shade. The enemies were observing the movements of the Prophet. A warrior from amongst them took advantage of the situation. He came down from the mountain with a naked sword and standing by the side of the Prophet said with a harsh voice: "Who can save you today from my sharp sword?" The Prophet replied loudly: "Allah".

This word had such an effect on that man that he began to tremble with fear, and the sword fell down involuntarily from his hand. The Prophet stood up immediately, picked up the sword, attacked him and said: "Who can save you from me now?" As the man was an idolater and knew that his wooden gods were incapable of defending him at that crucial moment he replied: "None".

Historians say that the man embraced Islam there and then, but this action of his was not on account of fear, because he remained steadfast in his faith. The reason for his adopting Islam was the waking up within him of his pure nature, because his unexpected and miraculous defeat turned his mind to the other world and he realized that the Prophet had connections with that world.

The Prophet took him at his word (regarding his embracing Islam) and returned his sword to him. After going a bit forward he returned and surrendered his sword to the Prophet, and said: "As you are the leader of this reformatory army, you are much more entitled to own this weapon".5

Quraysh Change Their Trade Route

The coast of the Red Sea had become dangerous (for Quraysh) on account of the Islamic army and the people who had concluded pacts with the Muslims. Once again, therefore, Quraysh held consultations and studied the situation.

They said among themselves: "If our trade is suspended we will gradually lose our capital and will consequently have to surrender to the Muslims. And in case we remain engaged in trade we have no hope of success, because the Muslims usually confiscate our merchandise en route".

One of them suggested that they should go to Syria via Iraq and his suggestion was accepted unanimously. Arrangements were, therefore, made to send a caravan along with the merchandise. Abu Sufyan and Safwan Umayyah personally supervised the caravan and a man named 'Furat Hayyan', who belonged to the tribe of Bani Bakr, acted as their guide.

Maqrizi writes: "A man belonging to Madina observed the proceedings. On his return to Madina he mentioned the fact to a friend of his. The Prophet became aware of the fact soon and dispatched an army towards the route of the caravan under the command of an officer named Zayd Harith. By capturing two men and confiscating the merchandise they prevented the enemies from pursuing their journey."6

1. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, page 176.
2. Mughazi, vol. I, pp. 177–179 and Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. II, pp. 27–38.
3. Mughazi, vol. I, page 182 and Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. II, page 30.
4. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, page 181.
5. Manaqib, vol. I, page 164 and Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, pp. 194–196.
6. al Imta', page 112.

The third year of migration began with minor encounters and some scattered battles which had a defensive aspect and were fought with a view to nip the conspiracies of the idolatrous tribes in the bud. However, the Battle of Uhud deserves attention amongst the events of the third year. This battle is a glaring example of the defence of the sacred religion of Islam, belief in the 'Oneness of Allah' and the freedom of faith.

It is not at all appropriate to give the name of 'battle' or 'Ghazwah' to the sacrifices made by Muslims, because they had not planned to fight a battle, but had resorted to arms only to defend Islam and to ensure freedom of faith.

They repulsed, after sustaining heavy losses, those people, who had come from Makkah and the adjoining areas, and had attacked Madina to destroy the worshippers of Allah and the seekers of freedom, and the Muslims had no alternative left but to reply to the cruel tyrants and oppressors with force and with fiery arms.

Reasons For The Battle Of Uhud

The collective attack by the idolaters was the result of a chain of internal and external factors which brought a strong army to Madina to take revenge.

A dangerous element by the name of Ka'b bin Ashraf kindled this fire. He was a Jew from his mother's side, but himself professed to be an idolater. He enjoyed the protection of the Islamic State and did not meet any harm in the Battle of Badr, but on account of the enmity which he had against the Prophet of Islam he went to Makkah and shed crocodile tears in the assemblies of Quraysh and reminded them how their chiefs had been killed and captured. He displayed so much dexterity in this task that the old and young of Quraysh became ready to fight with the Prophet and to topple down the Islamic State.

In order to rouse the passions of the Makkans Ka'b praised the beauty of Muslim women in such a way that all the Makkans expressed a wish to fight against the Muslims so that they might defeat them and capture their women to satisfy their base desires. He also sang some verses in this behalf and inserted in them, with utter shamelessness, the names and particulars of Muslim women and gave indecent descriptions about them. After having carried out his plan he returned to Madina and took refuge in his fortress.

What was the duty of the Prophet and the Muslims with regard to this man, who provoked these passions? He kindled a fire, whose flames reduced to ashes seventy brave soldiers of Islam including Hamzah, and caused the blood of the righteous persons to flow in the land of Uhud.

Men of Aws tribe decided to relieve the Muslims of the mischief of Ka'b. Two persons named Muhammad bin Maslamah and Abu Na'ilah arrived in his fortress in the guise of friends and blamed the Prophet and his religion. They added that since the arrival of the Prophet in Yathrib all of them had been

encircled by calamities and their persons and belongings had been destroyed.

They enlarged on this topic so much that Ka'b felt that their views on the subject were identical with his. Then they said: "We have come now to purchase some grains from you and are obliged to pawn something, because we do not possess any cash at present".

Ka'b agreed to sell grains, but as regards the things to be given as security he uttered words which clearly displayed his base and impure spirit, for he said with utter shamelessness: "Your women and children should remain under my control by way of pledge". His remark disturbed the two persons so much that they said in reply: "Is it possible?"

These two persons did not actually want to purchase grains. They came back to chalk out a plan to murder him. They, therefore, made an offer at once to leave their weapons with him as security. Their object in making this offer was that when the armed persons approached his fortress he should imagine that they had come to leave their weapons with him as security and not that they had conspired against him.

At night an armed group of the men of Aws gathered round his fortress, ostensibly with the purpose of purchasing grains. Muhammad bin Maslamah, who was Ka'b's foster-brother, called him. Ka'b's wife objected to his going out in the darkness of night, but in view of the conversation which Ka'b had already had with them he came out of the fortress with perfect confidence and did not entertain any doubt on account of their being armed.

Having encircled him they proceeded to a valley as if to show the commodity or to take possession of it. They had not yet gone far from the fortress when the men of Aws suddenly fell upon him and cut him to pieces. In this way a dangerous enemy, a mischievous spy and a dreadful element, whose most ardent desire had always been to inflict a blow upon the Muslims, was removed from their path.

Soon after the murder of Ka'b a Jew named Abu Rafe', who followed in Ka'b's footsteps and was one with him in the matter of spying and instigating, was also killed. Ibn Athir has recorded the details of this event in his history.1

Quraysh Decide To Meet The Expenses Of War

Seeds of subversion and disturbance had already been sown in Makkah for quite some time. Prohibition of mourning had strengthened the sense of revenge. Closure of the trade route of the people of Makkah via Madina and Iraq had made them extremely uneasy. Ka'b bin Ashraf added fuel to this fire and set it ablaze.

For these reasons Safwan bin Umayyah and 'Ikramah bin Abi Jahl suggested to Abu Sufyan that as the chiefs and soldiers of Quraysh had been killed for the sake of the protection of the trade caravan of Makkah, it was expedient that everyone of those who owned a part of the merchandise which was

carried by their caravan should contribute his share to meet the expenses of war. This proposal met Abu Sufyan's approval and was put in action immediately.

The chiefs of Quraysh who were aware of the strength of the Muslims and had observed their bravery and self-sacrifice from a very near quarters in the Battle of Badr, considered it expedient to face Muhammad with an organized army consisting of brave and experienced men of various tribes.

Amr bin As and some others were deputed to contact the tribes of Kananah and Saqif and to seek their help. They were instructed to invite their brave men to fight with Muhammad, fully equipped, and to promise them that the expenses of war and all necessities of the journey would be provided by Quraysh.

They succeeded, after a good deal of activity, in procuring the services of a number of brave men belonging to the tribes of Kananah and Tahamah and in preparing an army consisting of three to four thousand men to participate in the battle.2

What has been stated above is the number of men only, who participated in the battle, and if the number of the women, who were present on the scene, is added, the figure will go up. It was not the custom amongst the Arabs to take women to the battlefield, but this time women also participated in the battle along with men. And their plan was that they should walk between the formations of the troops, beating drums, and instigate them to take revenge, by reciting verses and making moving speeches.

They had brought the women along with them so that the path for soldiers fleeing the battlefield might be closed, because fleeing meant leaving the girls and women to be captured by the enemy, and the element of bravery in the Arabs could not yield to such a disgrace.

A large number of slaves joined the army of Quraysh on account of tempting promises made to them. Wahshi bin Harb was an Ethiopian slave of Mut'am. He possessed extraordinary skill in the use of javelin and had been promised freedom if he killed anyone of the three towering personalities of Islam (namely Muhammad, Ali, or Hamzah). In short, after taking great pains, they organized an army which consisted of seven hundred armour-clad men, three thousand camel-soldiers, a cavalry of two hundred men, and a group of foot-soldiers.

The Intelligence Organization Of The Holy Prophet Furnishes A Report

Abbas, uncle of the Prophet, who was in fact a Muslim but had not yet declared his faith openly, informed him about the war plans of Quraysh. He wrote a letter under his signature and seal, handed it over to a messenger belonging to the tribe of Bani Ghifar taking promise from him that he would deliver it to the Prophet within three days.

The messenger brought the sealed letter to the Prophet when he was in a garden outside the city and

handed it over to him after paying his respects to him. The Prophet read the letter but did not mention its contents to his companions.3

Allamah Majlisi quotes from Imam Sadiq4 that the Prophet did not write but could read a letter. Evidently it was necessary for the Prophet to inform his companions about the plan of the enemy as early as possible. Hence, on his return to the town, the letter was read over for their information.

The Army Of Quraysh Moves

The army of Quraysh decided to move and after covering some distance reached Abwa where the mother of the Prophet lies buried. Some frivolous men from Quraysh insisted that her body might be exhumed. However, the far-sighted amongst them severely condemned this suggestion and added: "It is possible that this may become a custom in future and our enemies belonging to the tribes of Bani Bakr and Bani Khuza'ah may open the graves of our dead".

The Prophet deputed Anas and Munis bin Fazalah to go and bring information about Quraysh. These two persons brought the news that the army of Quraysh had reached near Madina and they had left their animals of mount in the fields of Madina to graze. Hubab bin Munzir brought information that the advance guard of the army of Quraysh had reached near Madina.

Thursday afternoon it was confirmed that most of the army of Quraysh had advanced towards Madina. The Muslims were afraid lest the enemies should harm the Prophet by carrying out a night-attack. The chiefs of Aws and Khazraj, therefore, decided to arm themselves and to spend the night in the mosque so as to guard the house of the Prophet and the gates of the city till they were assigned other duties according to war plans after sunrise.

The Uhud Region

The big and lengthy valley which joined the trade route of Syria with Yemen is called Wadiul Qura. Different Arab tribes and the Jews took up their abode at a spot where necessities of life were available. A number of villages, therefore, came into existence and their sides were fenced by stones. Yathrib (which was later named Madinatur Rasul i.e. city of the Prophet) was considered to be the centre of these villages.

Whoever came from Makkah to Madina was obliged to enter there from the southern side. However, as this region was stony and it was difficult for an army to move into it, the army of Quraysh bent its route and established itself in the north of Madina in the valley named 'Aqiq, situated at the foot of Mt. Uhud. This area was fit for all sorts of military operations as there was no palm-grove in it and the land was also even. Madina was more vulnerable from this side because there were very few natural obstacles in this part.

The forces of Quraysh encamped at the foot of Mt. Uhud on Thursday, the 5th of Shawwal, 3 A.H. The Prophet remained in Madina on that day and also on the night preceding Friday. He formed a military council on Friday and asked the officers and other experienced men to offer suggestions regarding the defence of the city.

Consultations In The Matter Of Defence

Almighty Allah had ordered the Prophet of Islam to consult his companions in important matters and to keep their suggestions in view while taking decisions and by doing so he set a great example for his followers and created a spirit of democracy, truthfulness and realism amongst them. Did he profit from their views or not? The learned ulemah and scholars of scholastic theology have given replies to this question.

However, it is an established fact that these consultations are living examples of our constitutional regulations which have come down to us from the Prophet. This method of his was so instructive and impressive that the caliphs of Islam also followed it after his death and accepted in toto the lofty views of Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, with regard to military matters and social problems.

In a big assembly in which the officers and brave soldiers of the army of Islam were present, the Prophet said, "Let me have your views" i.e. he asked the officers and soldiers to express their views regarding the protection of Islam which was being threatened by Quraysh.

Abdullah bin Ubayy, who was one of the hypocrites of Madina, suggested fortified defence. It meant that Muslims should not go out of Madina but make use of towers and buildings, the women should stone the enemy from the roofs of the buildings and the towers and the men should fight hand to hand in the streets.

He said: "In the past we used to practice the method of fortified defence and women helped us from the roofs of the houses and it is for this reason that the city of Yathrib has remained untouched. The enemy has not so far been able to utilize this method. Whenever we defended ourselves in this way we were victorious and whenever we went out of the city we met with harm".

The old and experienced persons from amongst the Muhajirs and the Ansar supported this view. However, the young people, and especially those who had not participated in the Battle of Badr and were keen to be engaged in a battle, severely opposed this view and said: "This method of defence will encourage the enemy and we shall lose the honour which we acquired in the Battle of Badr. Is it not a shame that the brave and self-sacrificing worshippers of Allah should confine themselves to their homes and allow the enemy to reach there?

At the time of the Battle of Badr our strength was far less than the present one and in spite of that we were victorious. We have been waiting for long for such an opportunity and now we have got it".

Hamzah, the brave officer of Islam, said: "By Allah, who has revealed the Qur'an, I shall not take my meals today until I have fought against the enemy outside the city". This group insisted that the army of Islam should go out of the city and give a fight to the enemy.5

Drawing Lots For Being Killed

A pious old man named Khaysamah stood up and said: "O Prophet of Allah, Quraysh have been active for full one year and have been able to align the Arab tribes with themselves. If we don't go out now to defend this place it is quite possible that they may besiege Madina. It is also possible that they may lift the siege and return to Makkah.

However this very thing will encourage them and we shall not remain secure from their attacks in future. I am sorry that I could not participate in the Battle of Badr when my son and I were both very keen to take part in it and each one of us wished to steal a march on the other.

In the Battle of Badr I said to my son: "You are young and have many aspirations and can spend the vigour of your youth in such a way that you may gain the pleasure of Allah. So far as I am concerned my life is now almost finished and my future is not bright. It is, therefore, necessary that I should participate in this sacred jihad (Battle of Badr) and you should shoulder the responsibilities with regard to my dependents".

"However, my son was so keen to participate in the battle that we decided to draw lots. The lot fell upon him and he met martyrdom in the Battle of Badr. Last night every one was talking about the siege by Quraysh and I went to sleep with these thoughts in my mind. I saw my son in a dream. He was walking in the gardens of Paradise and was enjoying its fruits. He addressed me with great love and said "Dear father! I am waiting for you ".

"O Prophet of Allah! My beard has become grey and my bones have lost flesh. I request you to pray to Allah for my martyrdom in the path of truth".6

You will come across many such brave and self-sacrificing persons in the pages of the history of Islam. The training schools, which are not founded on faith and belief in the Almighty, and in the Day of Judgement, can rarely train self-sacrificing soldiers like Khaysamah.

This spirit of self-sacrifice, which makes a soldier seek his death in the path of righteousness with tears in his eyes, cannot be inculcated in any school except in the school of godliness. In the industrial countries of the world today great importance is attached to the living conditions of the officers and other ranks of the armed forces.

However, as the object during the modern wars is better life and maintenance for them, their main aim is to save their lives. In the school of the godly people, however, the object of fighting is to seek the pleasure of Allah and, if this object can be achieved by being killed, the soldier of Allah faces all dangers

unswervingly.

Result Of Consultations

The Prophet treated the view of the majority to be final and preferred going out of the city instead of resorting to fortified defence and hand to hand fight. It was not at all appropriate that after all the insistence by officers like Hamzah and Sa'd bin 'Ubadah he should accord preference to the suggestion of Abdullah Ubayy, who was one of the hypocrites of Madina.

Although, from the viewpoint of defence and war principles, his suggestion guaranteed victory, or at least ensured that the Muslims should not meet defeat, but it was totally erroneous from the psychological viewpoint for the following reasons:

1. Disorderly hand to hand fighting in the narrow streets of Madina and allowing women to participate in these defensive operations and to remain confined in their homes and leaving the path open to the enemy would have been a sign of the weakness and helplessness of the Muslims and would not have been in keeping with the strength displayed by them in the Battle of Badr.

2. The siege of Madina by the enemy and his control over the roads of the city and the silence of the Muslim soldiers in the face of all this could have very well killed the spirit of warfare in them.

3. It was not impossible that Abdullah Ubayy who nursed a grudge against the Prophet, wished to give him a hard blow by this means.

The Holy Prophet Takes Decision

After determining the line of defence the Prophet entered his house. He put on the coat of mail, girded a sword, put a shield on his back, hung a bow on his shoulder, held a spear in his hand, and, having thus equipped himself, reappeared before the people. This scene gave a severe jolt to the Muslims. Some of them thought that their insistence on going out of the city was not in accordance with Islamic principles and they had persuaded the Prophet unnecessarily to go out for fighting.

To make amends, therefore, they said that they submitted to his views and would abide by whatever decision he might take i.e. if it was not expedient to go out they were prepared to remain in the city. The Prophet, however, replied "When a Prophet wears a coat of mail it is not proper for him to take it off unless he has fought against the enemy".7

The Holy Prophet Goes Out Of Madina

The Prophet offered Friday prayers and then left Madina for Uhud with an army consisting of one thousand men. He did not take with him persons like Usamah bin Zayd Harith and Abdullah bin Umar on

account of their tender age, but two young men named Samurah and Rafe', who were not more than fifteen years of age, participated in the battle, because, in spite of their being young, they were good archers.

On the way some Jews, who were allies of Abdullah Ubayy, expressed their desire to participate in the defence of the city, but the Prophet did not consider it expedient, for some reasons, to allow them to do so. In the meantime Abdullah Ubayy also declined to participate in jihad on the excuse that the Prophet had accepted the suggestion of young men in preference to his. He, therefore, returned from half-way along with three hundred men belonging to the tribe of Aws, who were his kinsmen.

The Prophet and his companions were keen to proceed by the shortest route so as to reach their camping-place soon. For this purpose they were obliged to pass through the garden of a hypocrite named Jumuh. He expressed great annoyance in a mulish way on account of the entry of the Islamic army into his property and was disrespectful to the Prophet. The companions of the Prophet wanted to kill him but the Prophet said: "Leave alone this misguided and obstinate person".8

Two Self-Sacrificing Soldiers

At one point the Prophet reviewed his soldiers. Their self-sacrificing mettle and brilliant faces were shining through the lights of the swords. The army which the Prophet brought to the foot of Mt. Uhud consisted of persons in whose ages there was much divergence. Most of them were old men with white heads and faces but there could also be seen brave boys, whose ages did not exceed fifteen years.

The thing which prompted these persons to participate in the battle was nothing else except the love for perfection which could be achieved only under the auspices of the defence of Islam. In support of this statement we narrate hereunder the stories of two persons i.e. an old man and a young man who had been married only one night earlier.

1. 'Amr bin Jumuh: He was an old man with a bent back, whose physical strength was exhausted and one of whose feet had also been injured in an incident. He had four brave sons whom he had sent to the battlefield and he was happy that they were fighting for the sake of truth and reality.

However, he thought within himself that it was not proper for him to remain away from the battle and thus to lose the blessings (of jihad). His kinsmen severely objected to his participating in the battle and said that the laws of Islam had absolved him from all such responsibilities. Their words did not, however, satisfy him and he approached the Prophet personally and said: "My kinsmen prevent me from participating in jihad. What is your view in the matter?"

The Prophet replied "Allah considers you to be excused and no responsibility devolves upon you". He, however, insisted and entreated for the acceptance of his request. While his kinsmen were encircling him, the Prophet turned to them and said: "Don't prevent him from meeting martyrdom in the path of

Islam". When he came out of his house he said: "O Allah! Make me successful in laying my life in Your path and don't make me return to my home".

A person who goes to meet death with open arms is sure to achieve his end. The attacks of this lame person were very exciting. He attacked in spite of his lame foot and said: "I am desirous of Paradise". One of his sons was also advancing along with him. Consequently both of them fought till they achieved the honour of martyrdom.9

2. Hanzalah: He was a young man who had not yet completed twenty four years of his age. It has been said: "He brings into existence pure children from impure parents". He was the son of Abu 'Amir, an enemy of the Prophet. His father participated in the Battle of Uhud from the side of Quraysh and was one of those mischievous elements who instigated Quraysh to wage war against the Prophet. He worked against Islam till his death and was one of the founders of Masjid-i Zirar. A detailed account of it will be given in connection with the events of the ninth year of migration.

Filial sentiments did not make Hanzalah deviate from the right path. The night preceding the day on which the Battle of Uhud took place was his wedding night. He had married the daughter of Abdullah Ubayy, the well-known member of the tribe of Aws and was obliged to consummate the marriage rites the same night.

When he heard the call to jihad he was perplexed. He found no alternative but to seek permission from the supreme commander to spend that night in Madina and reach the battlefield on the following day.

As quoted by Allamah Majlisi10 the following verse was revealed about him:

The true believers are those who have faith in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are dealing with the Messenger in important matters, they do not leave without his permission. Muhammad, those who ask your permission believe in Allah and His Messenger. When they ask your leave to attend to their affairs, grant permission to whomever you please and implore Allah to forgive them. Allah is forgiving and merciful. (**Surah al-Nur, 24:62**)

The Prophet granted him permission for one night to consummate the nuptial rites. In the morning he reached the battlefield even before taking ceremonial bath. When he wished to come out of his house tears came in the eyes of the bride whose marriage had taken place only a night earlier. She put her arms round the neck of her husband and asked him to wait for a few moments. She then called four persons, who had stayed on in Madina on account of some excuse, to witness that marriage had taken place between them during the previous night.

When Hanzalah went, the bride turned to the four persons mentioned above and said: "Last night I dreaMt. that the sky was split and my husband entered it and thereafter the two parts of the sky rejoined each other. I feel, on account of this dream, that my husband and his soul will fly to Paradise".

Hanzalah joined the army. His eyes fell on Abu Sufyan who was parading between the two armies. He made a brave attack on him with his sword but it struck the back of Abu Sufyan's horse and he himself fell down.

The cries of Abu Sufyan attracted the attention of the soldiers of Quraysh. Shaddad Dulaythi attacked Hanzalah, as a consequence of which Abu Sufyan made good his escape.

A spearhead from amongst the soldiers of Quraysh attacked Hanzalah and thrust his spear into his body. In spite of the wound Hanzalah pursued that man and put him to the sword. He himself also fell down on the ground and breathed his last on account of the wound sustained by him.

The Prophet said: "I have seen that the angels were washing Hanzalah". That is why he is called 'Ghasilul Mala'ikah' (i.e. one who was washed by the angels). When the people of the tribe of Bani Aws recounted the causes of their glory and honour they used to say: "One of us was Hanzalah who was washed by the angels".

Abu Sufyan used to say: "If they killed my son Hanzalah in the Battle of Badr I also killed Hanzalah of the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud".

No doubt the mentality, sincerity and faith of this couple is surprising, because their fathers were the sworn enemies of Islam. The father of the bride was Abdullah bin Ubayy Salul, who was the chief of the hypocrites of Madina, and Hanzalah was the son of Abu 'Amir, who was a monk during the Age of Ignorance and after the advent of Islam joined the idolaters of Makkah. He was the person who invited Hercules to attack and destroy the newly-formed Islamic State.11

Array Of The Two Armies

In the morning of the 7th of Shawwal, 3 A.H., the Islamic forces arrayed themselves opposite the invading and aggressive forces of Quraysh. The Muslim army selected as their camping-place a point which had a natural barrier and protection at the back of it in the shape of Mt. Uhud. There was, however a particular gap in the middle of the mountain and it was probable that the enemy forces might turn round the mountain and appear at the back of the Muslim army through that gap and might attack them from behind.

In order to obviate this danger the Prophet posted two groups of archers on a mound and addressed their Commander Abdullah Jabir in these words: "You should drive away the enemies by shooting arrows. Don't allow them to enter the battlefield from behind and take us by surprise. Whether we are victorious or defeated, you should not vacate this point.

The events of the Battle of Uhud show clearly that this passage was extraordinarily sensitive and the defeat of the Muslims after they had achieved victory was due to the fact that the archers displayed indiscipline and vacated this important passage and the defeated and retreating enemy made a quick

surprise attack through it.

The strict orders given by the Prophet to the archers not to move from their place were an evidence of his perfect knowledge of the principles of warfare. However, a commander's knowledge of the principles of warfare does not guarantee victory if the soldiers display indiscipline.

Strengthening The Morale Of The Soldiers

The Prophet did not ignore strengthening of the morale of the soldiers in the battles. This time, too, when seven hundred Muslims were arrayed against three thousand persons, he strengthened their morale by an address. The great Historian of Islam, Waqidi, says: "The Prophet posted fifty archers on the isthmus of Ainayn and kept Mt. Uhud in the back and Madina in front of the Muslim forces. While walking on foot he arrayed the troops and fixed the place of every officer. He kept one group in the front and another in the rear. He arrayed the rows so minutely that if the shoulder of any soldier was ahead of others he immediately asked him to move behind.

After arraying the rows the Prophet addressed the Muslims in these words: "I advise you to follow what has been enjoined by Almighty Allah in His Book. I remind you to obey the orders of Allah and refrain from opposing Him ".

Then he added: "It is a difficult and onerous task to fight with the enemy, and there are very few, who can remain steadfast before them except those, who have been guided and supported by Allah, for Allah is with those, who obey Him and Satan is with those, who disobey the Almighty. Above anything else you should remain steadfast in jihad and should acquire by this means the blessings, which Allah has promised you. The messenger, the Archangel Jibreel has said to me that none dies in this world unless he has eaten the last little bit of his daily portion fixed by Providence .....And until orders are given to start fighting none should resort to it".12

The Enemy Organizes His Rows

Abu Sufyan divided his army into three parts. He placed the armour-clad infantry men in the middle, a group under the command of Khalid bin Walid on the right and another group under the command of 'Ikrimah on the left. He also posted a special platoon in front of the army by way of vanguard, and this group also included the standard-bearers, all of whom belonged to the tribe of Abdud Dar.

Then he addressed them saying: "Victory of an army depends on the steadfastness and perseverance of the standard-bearers. On the Day of Badr we were defeated in this field. If the tribe of Abdud Dar don't display competence in protecting the standard, it is possible that the honour of bearing the standard may be transferred to another tribe". Talhah bin Abi Talhah, who was a brave man and the first standard bearer felt these words. He stepped forward immediately and challenged the adversary to fight.

Psychological Stimulations

Before the battle commenced the Prophet held a sword in his hand and, in order to stir the blood of the brave soldiers, turned his face towards them and said: "Who is the person, who holds, this sword in his hand, and gives it its due? " Some persons stood up but the Prophet did not hand over the sword to them. Then Abu Dujanah, who was a brave soldier, stood up and said: "What is due to this sword and how can we give it?"

The Prophet said: "You should fight with it so much that it should bend". Abu Dujanah said: "I am prepared to pay its due". Then he tied to his head a red handkerchief which he called 'the handkerchief of death' and took the sword from the Prophet. Hence, by tying this head–band to his head he meant that he would fight till his last breath. He walked like a proud leopard and was very happy to receive the honour which he did and the red handkerchief added to his dignity.13

No doubt such ostentation is the best stimulant to encourage an army, which fights for the defence of truth and spirituality, and which has no aim other than the spreading of freedom of faith, and no motive except the love for perfection. Perhaps this action of the Prophet was not only to stimulate the person of Abu Dujanah, for by this means he also encouraged others and impressed upon them that their bravery and determination too should be of such a standard that they should deserve such military medals.

Zubayr Awam, who was himself a brave soldier, felt somewhat uneasy because of the Prophet's not giving the sword to him. He, therefore, said to himself: "I should pursue Abu Dujanah to see the standard of his bravery".

He said: "I followed him in the battlefield. He cut down every warrior that faced him". Then he said: "There was a champion amongst Quraysh, who quickly cut off the heads of wounded Muslims, and I was very much disturbed on account of this unusual act of his. By some lucky chance he came face to face with Abu Dujanah.

A few blows were exchanged between them and eventually the champion of Quraysh was killed at the hands of Abu Dujanah. Abu Dujanah said: "I saw someone encouraging Quraysh to fight. I went up to him and when he saw the sword hanging on his head he began to bewail and cry. Suddenly I realized that it was a woman (Hind wife of Abu Sufyan) and I considered the sword of the Prophet too pure to be struck on the head of a woman (like Hind)".14

The Battle Begins

Ibn Hisham writes:15 "The battle commenced through Abu 'Amir who was one of those who had fled Madina. He belonged to the tribe of Aws but, on account of his enmity with Islam, had taken refuge in Makkah and fifteen persons of Bani Aws were with him. He was under the impression that if the people of Aws tribe saw him they would desert the Prophet. He, therefore, stepped forward to achieve this end.

However, when he confronted Muslims he had to face their taunts and abuses. After a short fighting, therefore, he kept himself aloof from the front.

Self-sacrifices of some warriors in the Battle of Uhud are well-known amongst the historians, and the sacrifices made by Ali are specially worthy of appreciation. Ibn Abbas says: "In all the battles Ali was the standard-bearer and a standard-bearer was always selected from amongst experienced and steadfast persons and in the Battle of Uhud the standard of Muhajirs was in the hands of Ali".

According to many historians, after Mus'ab bin Umayr, the standard-bearer of the Muslims, was martyred the Prophet gave the standard to Ali and the reason for Mus'ab having held the standard in the first instance was perhaps that he belonged to the family of Bani Abdud Dar and the standard-bearers of Quraysh also belonged to the same family". (This view has been taken from Balazari).

Talhah Abi Talhah, who was called Kabshul Katibah (a man equal to a vanguard of an army) entered the battlefield shouting and said: "O companions of Muhammad! You believe that our people, who are killed, go to Hell whereas yours go to Paradise.

In the circumstances is there anyone amongst you whom I may send to Paradise or he may send me to Hell?" His voice was ringing in the battlefield. Ali went forward and after the exchange of some blows Talhah fell down.

After Talhah was killed, his two brothers became the standard-bearers, one after the other. However, both of them succumbed to the arrow shots of 'Asim bin Thabit.

It is learnt from the speech which Ali made before the consultative body which was formed to select a caliph after the death of the Second Caliph that the army of Quraysh had kept nine persons in reserve for the office of standard-bearer and it had been decided that they would bear the standard in a specified order and if the first person was killed the second would bear the standard and so on and so forth.

All these standard-bearers who belonged to the tribe of Bani Abdud Dar were killed at the hands of Ali. After them an Ethiopian slave named Sawab, who had a frightening figure and a dreadful mien, picked up the standard and asked for an adversary. He too fell to a blow of Ali.

In a big assembly, in which the companions of the Prophet were present, Ali said: "Do you remember that I relieved you of the mischief of nine persons of the tribe of Bani Abdud Dar, everyone of whom held the standard by turn and asked for an adversary?" All those present confirmed the statement of Ali, the Commander of the Faithful.16

He added: "Do you remember that after the nine persons, the Ethiopian slave Sawab entered the field and had no object but to kill the Prophet of Allah. He was so furious that his mouth was emitting foam and his eyes had become red. On seeing that dreadful warrior all of you were astonished and retreated,

whereas I went forward and, striking a blow on his back, brought him to the ground". Those present confirmed these remarks as well.[17]

Who Were Fighting For The Sake Of Lust?

It is learnt from the verses, which Hind and other women were reciting with tambourines to instigate the warriors of Quraysh and to incite them to blood-shed and revenge, that these people were not fighting for the sake of spirituality, purity, freedom and moral virtues. On the contrary they were prompted by sexual and material consideration.

The song which the women sang with tambourine and a particular tune amongst the rows of the army was: "We are the daughters of Tariq. We walk on costly carpets. If you face the enemy we shall sleep with you, but if you show your back to the enemy and flee, we shall disengage ourselves from you".

It is an admitted fact that there is a clear contrast and a vast difference between people, whose warfare is prompted by sexual desires and who have no aim other than the satisfaction of material gains and beastly pleasures and the people, who fight for a sacred spiritual object like establishing freedom, raising the level of thinking and relieving man of the worship of wood and stone.

On account of the two different stimulants which existed in the minds of these two groups it was not long before as a consequence of the self-sacrifice of the brave officers of Islam like Ali, Hamzah, Abu Dujanah, Zubayr and others, the army of Quraysh threw their weapons and provisions on the ground and ran away disgracefully from the battlefield. Another glory was thus achieved by the warriors of Islam.[18]

Defeat After Victory

We may mention here as to why the warriors of Islam were victorious. It was due to the fact that till the last moment of their victory they had no motive except that of jihad in the path of Allah, acquisition of His pleasure, conveying the message of Allah and the removal of every impediment in its path.

Why were they defeated thereafter? It was because, after achieving victory, the aim and intention of most of the Muslims underwent a change. Attention towards the booty, which the army of Quraysh had themselves thrown in the battlefield and had fled, affected the sincerity of a large group and they ignored the orders given by the Prophet.

Here are the details of the event: While explaining the geographical conditions of Uhud we had mentioned that there was a particular gap in the middle of Mt. Uhud and the Prophet had entrusted fifty archers under the command of Abdullah Jabir to guard the valley behind the battle front and had given these orders to the commander of the group: "Prevent the enemy from passing through the gap in the mountain by shooting arrows and don't vacate this point at any cost whether we are defeated or

victorious".

The fire of warfare blazed up on both the sides. Every time the enemies wished to cross his valley they were repulsed by the archers.

When the army of Quraysh threw away their weapons and property on the ground and ignored everything else to save their lives, a few brave officers of Islam whose oath of allegiance was perfectly sincere pursued the enemy outside the battlefield. But the majority ignored the pursuit and placing their weapons on the ground began collecting the booty and imagined that the battle had come to an end.

The persons guarding the valley behind the battle front also decided to avail of the opportunity and said to themselves: "It is useless for us to stay here and it is profitable that we too should collect the booty". Their commander, however, reminded them that the Prophet had ordered that whether the Muslim army gained victory or was defeated they should not move from their post.

Majority of the archers, who were guarding the passage, opposed their commander and said: "Our staying here is useless and the Prophet meant only that we should guard this passage when the battle was in progress, but now the fighting has ended".

On the basis of this false presumption forty men came down from the vigilance post and only ten persons remained there. Khalid bin Walid, who was a brave and experienced warrior and knew from the very start that the mouth of the passage was the key to victory and had attempted many times to reach at the back of the war–front through it, but had to face the archers, took advantage of the small number of the guards this time.

He led his soldiers towards the back side of the Muslim army and making a surprise attack reached at the party of the Muslims. The resistance by the small group which was stationed above the mound could not prove effective till all the ten persons after putting up a tough fight were killed at the hands of the troops of Khalid bin Walid and 'Ikrimah bin Abi Jahl. Soon after that the unarmed and neglectful Muslims were subjected to a severe attack of the enemy from behind.

After having gained possession of the sensitive point Khalid sought the collaboration of the defeated army of Quraysh, which was in a state of flight, and strengthened the spirit of resistance and perseverance of Quraysh with repeated shootings and cries. On account of disruption and confusion which prevailed in the ranks of the Muslims, the army of Quraysh soon surrounded the Muslim warriors and fighting commenced between them once again.

This defeat was due to the negligence of those persons who vacated the passage for their material gains and unintentionally cleared the way for the enemy in such a manner that the mounted soldiers under orders of Khalid bin Walid entered the field from behind.

The attack by Khalid was supported by an attack by 'Ikrimah bin Abi Jahl and unprecedented and

surprising disorder prevailed in the forces of Islam. The Muslims had no alternative but to defend themselves as a scattered group. However, as liaison with the command had also been disrupted they did not succeed in defending themselves and suffered heavy casualties, so much so that some Muslim soldiers were inadvertently killed by other Muslims.

The attacks by Khalid and 'Ikrimah strengthened the morale of the army of Quraysh. Their retreating forces reentered the field and lent them support. They encircled the Muslims from all sides and killed a number of them.

The Rumour About The Prophet Being Killed Spreads

A brave warrior of Quraysh named Laythi attacked Mus'ab bin Umayr, the daring standard–bearer of Islam, and after exchange of a number of blows between them the standard–bearer of Islam was killed. As the Muslim warriors had hidden their faces Laythi thought that the person killed was the Prophet of Islam. He, therefore, shouted and informed the chiefs of the army that Muhammad had been killed.

This rumour spread from man to man in the army of Quraysh. Their chiefs were so happy that their voices were ringing in the battlefield and all of them were saying "O people! Muhammad has been killed! O people! Muhammad has been killed! "

Publicity of this false news encouraged the enemy and the army of Quraysh came into motion. Everyone of them was keen to participate in cutting the limbs of Muhammad so that he might secure a high status in the world of polytheism.

This news weakened the morale of the warriors of Islam much more than it gave strength to the morale of the army of the enemy, so much so that a considerable majority of Muslims abandoned fighting and took refuge in the mountains and none of them, except a few, who could be counted on fingers, remained in the field.

Is It Possible To Deny The Flight Of Some Persons?

It is not possible to deny that some companions fled the field and the fact that they were companions of the Prophet or that later they acquired status and honour amongst the Muslims should not prevent us from accepting this bitter reality.

Ibn Hisham, the famous historian, writes thus "Anas bin Nazr, the uncle of Anas bin Malik says: "When the army of Islam came under pressure and the news of the death of the Prophet was afloat, most of the Muslims thought of their own lives and every person took refuge in one corner or the other".

He adds: "I saw a group of Muhajirs and Ansar, including Umar bin Khattab and Talhah bin Ubaydullah Taymi, who were sitting in a corner and were anxious for themselves. I said to them with a tone of protest: "Why are you sitting here?" They replied, "The Prophet has been killed and it is, therefore no use

fighting". I said to them: "If the Prophet has been killed it is no use living. Get up and meet martyrdom in the same path in which he has been killed".19

According to many historians, Anas said: "If Muhammad has been killed his Lord is alive". And then he added: "I saw that my words had no effect on them. I put my hand to my arms and began to fight with determination". Ibn Hisham says that Anas sustained seventy wounds in this battle and none could identify his dead body except his sister.

A group of Muslims were so much depressed that in order to ensure their safety they planned to approach Abdullah Ubayy so that he might obtain security for them from Abu Sufyan.20

The Holy Qur'an Reveals Some Facts

The verses of the Holy Qur'an tear the veils of fanaticism and ignorance and make it abundantly clear that some companions thought that the promise given by the Prophet about victory and success was baseless and the Almighty Allah says thus about this group:

To some others (***a group of companions***) ***of you, your lives were so important that, you, like ignorant people, began thinking suspiciously of Allah saying, 'Do we have any say in the matter?"*** (**Surah Ale Imran, 3:153**)

You can learn the hidden facts about this battle by studying the verses of Surah Ale Imran. These verses fully bear out the facts in which the Shi'ah believe. The Shi'ah believe that all the companions were not self-sacrificing or lovers of Islam, and some persons with weak faith were hypocrites who were amongst them. And at the same time there were among the companions a large number of true believers and pious and sincere persons.

Nowadays a group of Sunni writers attempt to draw a curtain on many of these unworthy acts of the companions (their specimens have been seen by you in connection with the events of this battle). They protect the position of all of them by offering unrealistic explanations which only show their fanaticism and cannot hide the real facts of history.

Who can deny the substance of this verse which says clearly:

(***Believers, remember***) ***when you were fleeing without even glancing to either side even though the Messenger was calling you back.*** (**Surah Ale Imran, 3:152**)

This verse is about the same persons, who were seen by Anas bin Nazr with his own eyes when they were sitting in a corner and were anxious about their future.

The following verse is more clear than that quoted above:

Those of you, who ran away on the day when the two armies met, must have been seduced by

Satan on account of some evil they had done. But now Allah has pardoned them, He is Forgiving and Forbearing. (**Surah Ale Imran, 3:154**)

Allah reprimands in the following verse those persons who made the news about the Prophet's assassination an excuse for abandoning fight and were thinking of approaching Abu Sufyan through Abdullah bin Ubayy to guarantee their safety:

Muhammad is only a Messenger. Other Prophets have passed away before him. If he dies or be slain, would you then turn back to your pre-Islamic behaviour. Whoever does so can cause no harm to Allah. Allah will reward the thankful. (**Surah Ale Imran, 3:144**)

Bitter Experiences

When we study the events of Uhud some bitter and sweet experiences are gained; the strength of the perseverance and steadfastness of one group and the instability of the other group can be clearly observed. The historians, annalists and others who record facts; it becomes crystal clear that all companions cannot be considered inherently pious and just, only because they were companions, hence, the persons, who vacated the mound of archers, and those, who climbed the mountain in delicate moments and ignored the call of the Prophet consisted of the same dignified companions.

The great historian of Islam, Waqidi, says: "On the day of Uhud eight persons swore allegiance to the Prophet assuring him of laying down their lives for him. Out of them three were Muhajirs (Ali, Talhah and Zubayr) and the remaining five were Ansar and with the exception of these eight persons took to their heels at the delicate moment".

Ibn Abil Hadid writes:21 In the year 608 A.H. I was present in an assembly in Baghdad in which some persons were reading the book of Mughazi-i Waqidi in the presence of the great scholar Muhammad bin Ma'ad 'Alavi.

When they reached the stage at which Muhammad bin Maslamah narrates clearly: "On the day of Uhud I saw with my own eyes that the Muslims were climbing the mountain and the Prophet was calling them with their particular names and was saying: 'O such and such! O such and such!' But not even one of them gave a positive reply to the Prophet's call".

The teacher said to me: "By 'such and such' the same persons are meant who acquired position and office after the Prophet", and the narrator has not mentioned their actual names on account of fear, and because of the respect, which he was expected to accord to them".

He has also narrated in his commentary that most of the narrators are agreed upon it that the Third Caliph was one of those persons who were not constant and stable in the battlefield at delicate moments.

Later you will read a sentence of the Prophet about a self-sacrificing lady of Islam named Nasibah who defended the Prophet in the battlefield of Uhud. In that sentence there is also an allusion to the lowering of the position and personality of those who had run away. We have not to settle accounts with any one of the companions of the Prophet.

Our object is to bring realities to light and to state facts. We blame their running away to the same extent to which we praise the perseverance and steadfastness of the other group and consider their character to be commendable.

Five Persons Conspire To Kill The Holy Prophet

At the time when the army of Islam was faced with disorder and chaos, the Prophet was being attacked from all sides. Five notorious men of Quraysh determined to put an end to his life at any cost. They were:

1. Abdullah bin Shahab who wounded the forehead of the Prophet.

2. 'Utbah Abi Waqqas who, by flinging four stones, broke his ruba'iyat teeth of the right side.22

3. Ibn Qumi'ah Laythi who inflicted a wound on the face of the Prophet. The wound was so severe that the rings of the Prophet's helmet penetrated into his cheeks. These rings were extracted by Abu 'Ubaydah Jarrah with his teeth and he lost four of his own teeth in doing so.

4. Abdullah Hamid, who was killed, at the time of attack, at the hands of the hero of Islam, Abu Dujanah.

5. Abi Khalf. He was one of those persons who fell at the hands of the Prophet himself. He faced the Prophet at the time when he (the Prophet) had managed to reach in the valley and some of his companions had come round him, on having identified him. Abi Khalf advanced towards the Prophet. The Prophet took a spear from Hasis bin Simmah and thrust it in the neck of Abi Khalf as a consequence of which he fell down from his horse.

Although the wound sustained by Abi Khalf was minor, he had become so much terrified that when his friends consoled him he could not compose himself and said: "I said to Muhammad in Makkah that I would kill him and he said in reply that he would kill me, and he never tells a lie". All was over with him on account of the wound and fear, and after some time he breathed his last on his way back to Makkah.23

No doubt this event indicates one extreme meanness of the polytheists. Notwithstanding the fact that they admitted that the Prophet was truthful and never uttered a lie, but as they had become his enemies, they wanted to shed his blood.

The Prophet did not move from his place. He remained as firm as a rock and continued to defend his

own person as well as Islam. Notwithstanding the fact that the distance between his life and death had become extraordinarily short and he could very well see that the army of the enemy was turning towards him like a wave, he did not move from his place nor uttered any word which might betray any fear or anguish on his part.

Only at the time of cleansing his forehead of blood he said: "How can the people achieve salvation if they besmear the face of their Prophet with blood when he invites them to the worship of Allah". And this shows his extreme compassion and kindness even for his enemies.

Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, says: "The Prophet was nearest to the enemy in the battlefield and provided us asylum as and when matters became difficult. Hence one of the reasons for the Prophet remaining safe was his defending himself and Islam personally, but there was another reason, which guaranteed his life, and that was the self-sacrifice of a few of his sincere and faithful friends and companions who purchased his life at the cost of their own lives, and kept this luminous candle safe from being extinguished. The Prophet gave a tough fight on the Day of Uhud and shot all the arrows in his quiver, so much so that his bow was broken and its bow-string was also severed.24

The number of those who defended the Prophet did not exceed a few persons.25 However, the steadfastness of all of them is not indisputable, but it is definite from the viewpoint of the art of history. What is definite and final amongst the historians is the perseverance of a very small group. An account of the defence conducted by them is given here.

Defence Associated With Success And Renewed Victory

It will not be inappropriate if we give the name of 'renewed victory' to this part of the history of Islam. What is meant by this victory is that contrary to the expectations of the enemies, the Muslims succeeded in saving the Prophet from death. And this was the renewed victory which fell to the lot of the army of Islam.

If we are associating this victory with the entire army of Islam we are doing so as a mark of respect to the warriors of Islam. In fact, however, the heavy burden of this victory fell on the shoulders of a few persons who could be counted on fingers. These were the persons who protected the Prophet by risking their own lives and in fact it was due to the self-sacrifice of this minority that the State of Islam remained intact and this luminous candle did not extinguish.

Here is a brief account of the feats of these self-sacrificing persons:

1. The first constant and steadfast person was a brave officer, who had by then completed only twenty six years of his life, and who had been in attendance upon the Prophet since his very childhood up to the moment of the death of the Prophet and did not forsake self-sacrifice and assisting him even for a moment. This senior officer and real devotee was Imam Ali, the Chief of the Pious and the Commander

of the Faithful, whose services and devotion to the cause of Islam has been recorded in history

Basically this renewed victory was achieved, like the first victory, by means of the valour and self-sacrifice of that devoted person, because it is evident that the cause of the flight of Quraysh in the initial stages of the battle was that their standard-bearers were killed, one after the other, at the hands of Ali and as a consequence of it the army of Quraysh became so much aghast that they lost their power of stay and resistance.

The contemporary Egyptian writers, who have analysed the events, have not done justice to Ali commensurate with his position or with the real facts recorded in history and have considered the services of the Commander of the Faithful to be at par with those of others. We, therefore, consider it necessary to give here a brief account of his devotion and the sacrifices made by him.

Ibn Athir says:26 "The Prophet became the object of the attack of various units of the army of Quraysh from all sides. Ali attacked, in compliance with the Prophet's orders, every unit that made an attack upon him (the Prophet) and dispersed them or killed some of them, and this thing took place a number of times in Uhud.

In the meantime the Archangel Jibreel came and praised the devotion of Ali before the Prophet and said: 'It is the height of sacrifice which this officer is displaying'. The Prophet confirmed the remark of Jibreel and said 'I am from Ali and Ali is from me'.

Then a voice was heard in the battlefield saying: *La Saifa illa Zulfiqar, La Fata illa Ali* (i.e. There is no sword which renders service except Zulfiqar (which was in the hands of Ali) and there is no brave man except Ali).

Ibn Abil Hadid has given a more detailed account of this event and says: "Everyone of the units which were trying to kill the Prophet consisted of fifty persons and although Ali was on foot he dispersed them all".

Then he has given an account of the coming of Jibreel and says: "Besides the fact that this event is an admitted phenomenon from the viewpoint of history, I have read about the coming of Jibreel in Muhammad bin Ishaq's book entitled Kitabul Ghzawat and chanced to enquire one day about its authenticity from my teacher Abdul Wahhab Sakinah.

He said: 'It is correct'. I then asked him: 'Why has this tradition not been mentioned by the compilers of the Sihah?' (the six authentic books of Hadith amongst Ahle Sunnat). He replied: 'We have a number of authentic traditions which the compilers of the Sihah have neglected to insert in their books".27

In the detailed speech which Ali delivered for "Ra's al-Yahud" in the presence of a group of his own companions he refers to his sacrifices in these words: "....When the army of Quraysh attacked us like one single force the Ansar and the Muhajirs proceeded to their homes and I sustained seventy wounds

defending the Prophet".

Then he (Ali) drew aside his garment and pointed out the places where the signs of the wounds were still present.[28] Moreover, as recorded in 'Ilalush Shara'i'[29] Ali, while defending the Prophet, exhibited so much valour and self-sacrifice that his sword broke into two. The Prophet then gave him his own sword named Zulfiqar and with this sword he continued jihad in the path of Allah.

In his valuable book[30] Ibn Hisham has mentioned the figure of those killed from amongst the idolaters to be twenty two and has also mentioned their names and particulars giving also the name of tribe etc. Out of these twenty two persons twelve were killed by Ali and the remaining ten were killed by other Muslims. The said biographer has mentioned clearly the names and particulars of those who were killed.

We admit that it has not been possible for us to depict in these pages the services rendered by Ali as mentioned in the books of both the sects and especially in the book entitled Biharul Anwar.[31] It is learnt from the study of different narratives and traditions that in Uhud none was as constant as Ali and even Abu Dujanah who was a brave and valiant officer of Islam could not equal him in the matter of defence.

2. Abu Dujanah: After the Commander of the Faithful, Abu Dujanah was the second officer who defended the person of the Prophet in such a manner that he made himself a helmet for him. Arrows were settling on his back and he was thus protecting the Prophet from becoming their target.

The late Sipahr, has recorded a sentence about Abu Dujanah in his book entitled Nasikhut Tawarikh,[32] it has not been possible for us to locate its source. He writes: When the Prophet and Ali were encircled by the idolaters the Prophet's eyes fell upon Abu Dujanah and he said to him: "O Abu Dujanah! I absolve you from your allegiance. However, Ali is mine and I am his".

Abu Dujanah wept bitterly and said: "Where should I go? Should I go to my wife who has to die? Should I go to my house which will be ruined? Should I go to my wealth and property which will be destroyed? Should I run towards death which must come?"

When the Prophet saw tears in the eyes of Abu Dujanah he permitted him to fight and both he and Ali protected the Prophet from the severe attacks of Quraysh.

In the books on history we also come across the names of other persons like 'Asim bin Thabit, Sahl Hunayf, Talhah bin 'Ubaydullah etc. in the capacity of those who remained steadfast, and some historians have mentioned the number of such persons to be near thirty six.

However, what is decisive from the viewpoint of history is the constancy of Ali, Abu Dujanah, Hamzah and the lady named Umme 'Amir and the constancy of those excepting these four persons is suspected and in some cases dubious.

3. Self-sacrifice of a brave officer: There have been a number of brave and self-sacrificing officers and strong and powerful champions in the army of Islam but the bravery of Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib is

recorded in the pages of history and in fact constitutes the golden leaves of the history of the battles of Islam.

Hamzah, the uncle of the Prophet of Islam, was one of the most brave men of Arabia and a well-known officer of Islam. It was he, who insisted earnestly that the army of Islam should go out of Madina and fight against Quraysh. It was Hamzah, who protected the Prophet in Makkah during the delicate moments with all his might and in order to avenge the insult and harm done to the Prophet by Abu Jahl, he broke, the latter's head in a big assembly of Quraysh and none dared to oppose him.

He was the same senior and valiant officer who killed the brave champion of Quraysh Shaybah and others and also wounded a group of the enemies in the Battle of Badr. He had no object in mind except to defend truth and virtue and to maintain freedom in the lives of human beings.

Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, was the daughter of 'Utbah. She nursed a grudge against Hamzah and was determined to take her father's revenge on the Muslims at any cost.

Wahshi, an Ethiopian warrior, was the slave of Jabir Mut'am and an uncle of Jabir had also been killed in the Battle of Badr. He (Wahshi) had been appointed by Hind to help achieve her object by hook or by crook. She asked him to kill one of the three persons (viz. the Prophet, Ali or Hamzah) so that she might avenge her father's death.

The Ethiopian warrior said in reply: "I cannot approach Muhammad at all, because his companions are nearer to him than anyone else. Ali too is extraordinarily vigilant in the battlefield. However, Hamzah is so furious that, while fighting, he does not pay any attention to any other side and it is possible that I may be able to make him fall by some trick or by taking him unawares".

Hind was contented with this and promised that if he was successful in performing the job she would set him free. Some believe that Jabir made this promise with his slave (Wahshi) as his (Jabir's) uncle had been killed in the Battle of Badr.

Wahshi, the slave, says: "On the Day of Uhud I was pursuing Hamzah. He was attacking the centre of the army like a ferocious lion. He killed every one whom he could approach. I hid myself behind the trees and stones, so that he could not see me. He was too busy in fighting. I came out of ambush.

Being an Ethiopian, I used to throw my weapon like them (i.e. like the Ethiopians) and it seldom missed the target. I, therefore, threw my javelin towards him from a specific distance after moving it in a particular manner. The weapon fell on his flank and came out from between his two legs.

He wanted to attack me but severe pain prevented him from doing so. He remained in the same condition till his soul departed from his body. Then I approached him very carefully and having taken out my weapon from his body returned to the army of Quraysh and waited for my freedom.

After the Battle of Uhud I continued to live in Makkah for quite a long time until the Muslims conquered

Makkah. I then ran away to Ta'if, but soon Islam reached that area as well. I heard that however grave the crime of a person might be, the Prophet forgave him. I, therefore, reached the Prophet with Shahadatayn on my lips (i.e. I testify that there is no god but Allah and I also testify that Muhammad is His Prophet).

The Prophet saw me and said: "Are you the same Wahshi, an Ethiopian?" I replied in the affirmative. Thereupon he said: "How did you kill Hamzah?" I gave an account of the matter. The Prophet was moved and said: "I should not see your face until you are alive, because the heart-rending calamity fell upon my uncle at your hands".

It was the same great spirit of the Prophet of Islam which made him set this man free although he could execute him on many grounds.

Wahshi says: "So long as the Prophet was alive I kept myself hidden from him. After his death the battle with Musaylimah Kazzab took place. I joined the army of Islam and used the same weapon against Musaylimah and succeeded in killing him with the help of one of the Ansar. If I killed the best of men (i.e. Hamzah) with this weapon, the worst man, too, did not escape its horror"

The participation of Wahshi in the battle against Musaylimah is something which he himself claims, but Ibn Hisham says: "During the last days of his life Wahshi was like a black crow who was always hated by Muslims on account of his being a drunkard and was punished twice on account of drinking wine. On account of his indecent actions his name was struck off the army records and Umar Khattab used to say: "The murderer of Hamzah does not deserve to be pardoned in the other world".33

4. Nasibah, the self-sacrificing lady: It is indisputable that jihad is unlawful for women in Islam. It may be mentioned in this connection that a representative of the women of Madina who had the honour of presenting herself before the Prophet spoke to him about this deprivation and complained in these words: "We meet all the needs of life of our husbands and they participate in jihad with a peaceful mind, whereas we women are deprived of this great blessing".

Thereupon the Prophet sent the following message, through her, to all the women of Madina: "If you are deprived of this great blessing on account of some natural and social reasons you can acquire the blessing of jihad by carrying out the responsibilities of married life". In this connection he also uttered the following historical sentence:

"Performance of the duties of married life (by a woman) in a proper manner is equal to jihad in the path of Allah".

At times, however, some experienced women came out of Madina with the mujahids (who were mostly their sons, brothers and kinsmen) to help them, and they assisted the Muslims in achieving victory by providing water to the thirsty, washing the clothes of the warriors and dressing the wounds of the wounded.

Umme 'Amir, whose real name was Nasibah, says: "I joined (the Battle of Uhud) to provide water to the warriors and saw that the fragrant air of victory was blowing towards the Muslims. But, soon afterwards, the tables were suddenly turned and the defeated Muslims began to flee. I also saw that the life of the Prophet was in danger, and I considered it my duty to save his life even at the cost of my own. I, therefore, placed the water-skin on the ground and began repelling the attacks of the enemy with a sword which had come into my hand. At times I also shot arrows".

Then she mentions the wound which she had sustained on her shoulder and says: "At the time when the people had turned their backs to the enemy and were running away the eyes of the Prophet fell upon a person who was in the condition of flight and he said to him: "Now that you are running away throw your shield on the ground". He did so and I picked it up to utilize it myself.

Suddenly I saw a man named Ibn Qumi'ah shouting and saying: 'Where is Muhammad?' He recognized the Prophet and rushed towards him with a drawn sword. Mus'ab and I prevented I him from achieving his purpose. In order to keep me back he struck a blow on my shoulder. Although I also gave him some blows but his blow had a serious effect on me; it continued for one year, while my blow had no effect on him as he was wearing two coats of mail.

The blow which I received on my shoulder was very serious The Prophet saw that blood was flowing profusely from my wound. He at once called one of my sons and asked him to bandage my wound. He did so and I again resorted to fighting.

In the meantime I came to know that one of my sons had been wounded. I at once picked up the pieces of cloth which I had brought with me to dress the wounds of the wounded including that of my son. However, as the life of the Prophet was in danger every moment I turned to my son and said to him: "My son! Get up and engage yourself in fighting".

The Prophet was very much surprised to see the bravery and valour of this self-sacrificing woman. When, therefore, he saw the person who had struck her son he at once pointed him out to her and said: "This is the man who struck your son".

The cheerless mother who was hovering round the Prophet just as a moth hovers round a candle at once attacked that man like a ferocious lion and struck a blow on his calf which brought him to the ground. This time the surprise of the Prophet about the bravery of the woman increased further and he laughed on account of this in such a manner that his hind-most teeth became visible and then he said to her: "You have avenged the attack made on your son".

On the following day, when the Prophet made his army corps march towards Hamra'ul Asad, Nasibah wished to go with the army, but the severe wound, which she had sustained, did not permit her to do so. On return from Hamra'ul Asad the Prophet sent someone to the house of Nasibah to enquire about her health and was very much pleased to learn that her condition was better.

As a reward for all these sacrifices this lady requested the Prophet to pray to Allah that she might be allowed to remain in his service in Paradise. The Prophet prayed for her and said; "O Lord! Make them my companions in Paradise".34

The way in which this lady fought was so much delightful to the Prophet that he said about her: "Today the position of Nasibah daughter of Ka'b is better than that of such and such persons ".

Ibn Abil Hadid says: "The narrator of this tradition has been dishonest with the Prophet, because he has not mentioned clearly the two persons whom the Prophet named on this occasion".35

I, however, think that the words 'such and such persons' refer to the same persons who acquired high positions amongst the Muslims after the Prophet's death and the narrator has not mentioned their names openly on account of the respect and the fear demanded by their position.

Trail Of The Happenings At Uhud

The Prophet's life was saved from the real danger by means of the self-sacrifice of a minority. Fortunately the majority of the enemies were under the impression that the Prophet had been killed and they were making a search for his dead body amongst the martyrs. And as regards the minority among the enemies who were aware of his being alive their attacks were being repulsed by Ali and Abu Dujanah and (possibly) by some others.

In the meantime it was decided that the news of the death of the Prophet might not be denied and the Prophet should move to the valley along with his companions. While on his way to the valley the Prophet fell down in a pit which had been dug by Abu 'Amir for the Muslims. Ali held his hand at once and brought him out of the pit. The first man to recognize the Prophet was Ka'b Malik. He saw the eyes of the Prophet shining from under his helmet and shouted at once: "O Muslims! The Prophet is here! He is alive! Allah has saved him from being harmed by the enemies!"

As the publicity of the news of the Prophet's being alive was likely to invite renewed attacks by the enemies, the Prophet advised Ka'b to keep the matter secret. He, therefore, kept quiet, till the Prophet reached the valley. In the meantime the Muslims who were in the neighbourhood of that place were very happy to find the Prophet alive and felt ashamed in his presence.

Abu Ubaydah Jarrah pulled out two rings of the helmet which had penetrated into the face of the Prophet whereas Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, filled his shield with water to enable the Prophet to wash his face. While washing his face (the Prophet) uttered these words: "The wrath of Allah became severer on the people who besmeared the face of their Prophet with blood"

The Opportunists Among The Enemy

When the Muslims were faced with a great defeat at Uhud the enemy seized the opportunity and started such devices against the Islamic view of Oneness of Allah as had an immediate influence on simple-minded persons.

A contemporary writer says: "No opportunity is more favourable for influencing the beliefs and thoughts of the people than the time when they are faced with defeat, adversity, affliction and great distress. At the time of severe hardship the morale of an afflicted people becomes so weak and unstable that their intellect loses the power of decision and assessment and it is at such time that evil propaganda influences the minds of the defeated people".

Abu Sufyan, 'Ikrimah and others, who were holding big idols in their hands and were feeling very jubilant, fully availed of this opportunity and cried: "Exalted be Hubal! Exalted be Hubal!" (Hubal was the name of an idol). By this they wished to tell the Muslims that their victory was on account of their worshipping idols and if there had been any other god and the worship of One Allah had been the true religion, the Muslims should have been victorious.

The Prophet realized that the enemies were propagating something very dangerous in those delicate moments and were taking full advantage of the opportunity which they had got at that time. He, therefore, forgot all his sufferings, and immediately ordered Ali and other Muslims to reply to this proclamation of idolatry in these words: "Allah is Great and Powerful" (i.e. this defeat suffered by us is not due to the fact that we worship Allah but is the result of some persons disobeying the orders of the commander).

Abu Sufyan did not, however, stop propagating his venomous ideas and said: "We have an idol like Uzza whereas you do not have its like". The Prophet seized this opportunity and ordered the Muslims to say in reply: "Allah is our Lord and you don't have a lord like Him". (i.e. if you depend on an idol which is nothing more than a piece of stone or wood we depend on "Allah" who is Great and Powerful).

The proclaimer of polytheism said for the third time: "This day is in retaliation for the Day of Badr". To this the Muslims replied in compliance with the Prophet's orders: "These two days are not equal to each other, because our brothers who have been killed are in Paradise, whereas yours are in Hell".

Abu Sufyan was very much upset by these sharp replies which were coming out of the throats of hundreds of Muslims. Hence, after saying: "We shall meet again next year" he left the battlefield and decided to return to Makkah.36

The Muslims, of whom seventy were killed and many wounded, were, however, obliged to perform their Divine duty (noon and afternoon prayers). On account of excessive weakness the Prophet offered the prayers in congregation in a sitting posture, and then performed shrouding and burial of the martyrs.

End Of The Battle

The flames of warfare were put out, and the two parties separated from each other. The casualties of Muslims were three times as many as those of Quraysh. It was necessary for them to perform the requisite religious duties and to bury their dear ones as early as possible.

Before the Muslims were able to bury their dead, the women of Quraysh, who had seen the battlefield free from all sorts of criminal acts, had resorted to very great crimes after victory . Crimes which are unparalleled in the history of mankind. They were not contented with their apparent victory and, in order to take more revenge, cut off the limbs, ears and noses of the Muslims who were lying dead on the ground and thus settled a shameful stain on their character.

In all the nations of the world the dead ones of the enemy, who are helpless and undefended, are accorded respect. However, the wife of Abu Sufyan made a necklace and earrings of the limbs of the Muslims. She also pierced the belly of the devoted officer of Islam, Hamzah, and took out his liver. She tried her best to chew and eat it, but failed to do so.

This action of hers was so shameful and abominable that even Abu Sufyan said: "I renounce this act and did not give orders that this should be done. However, I am not much displeased with this thing either".

On account of this indecent act, Hind became known amongst the Muslims as 'Hind, the liver-eater' and later her children also became known as 'children of the liver-eating woman'.

The Muslims arrived in the battlefield along with the Prophet to bury their dead. The Prophet's eyes fell on the corpse of Hamzah and he was moved extraordinarily to see his tragic condition. A storm of anger rose up in his mind and he said: "The anger and wrath which I am feeling in myself now is unprecedented in my life".

The historians and exegetes write unanimously that the Muslims pledged their word (and at times they also include the Prophet amongst them) that if they gained control over the idolaters they would treat their killed ones in the same manner and would mutilate the bodies of thirty of them as against one of a Muslim. Soon after their determination to do so the following verse was revealed:

If you want retaliation, let it be equal to that which you faced. But if you exercise patience it will be better for you. **(Surah al-Nahl, 16:126)**

By means of this verse, which is in itself an established principle of Islamic justice, Islam once again displayed its spiritual and sentimental aspect and proved that this Divine faith (Islam) is not a religion of vengeance. It does not ignore the principles of justice and moderation even in the most difficult moments, when one is overpowered by wrath; and implements justice in all events.

Safiyah, the sister of Hamzah, insisted on seeing the dead body of her brother, but, as ordered by the

Prophet, her son Zubayr prevented her from approaching it. She said to her son: "I understand that they have mutilated his body. I swear by Allah that if I come near him I shall not display any annoyance and shall bear this calamity in the path of Allah".

This trained lady came near the dead body of her brother with a dignified composure, offered prayers for him, prayed for his salvation and returned.

No doubt the strength of faith is the greatest strength. It controls the most severe excitement and tension and lends dignity and solace to the afflicted person. This in itself is a separate topic which has been discussed by the scholars in connection with prophethood and doctrines of faith.

Thereafter the Prophet offered prayers for the martyrs of Uhud and then buried them singly or in pairs. He ordered in particular that 'Amr bin Jumuh and Abdullah 'Amr might be buried in one grave, as they were friends when alive, and it would be better if they also remained together after death.37

Last Words Of Sa'd Bin Rabi'

Sa'd Rabi' was one of the sincere followers of the Prophet. His heart was imbued with faith and devotion. When he fell down on the ground after having sustained twelve wounds, a man passed by him and said: "They say Muhammad has been killed". Sa'd said to him: "Even if Muhammad has been killed the Lord of Muhammad is alive and we are performing jihad to spread the Divine religion and to defend monotheism".

When the flames of war were extinguished the Prophet thought of Sa'd Rabi' and said: "Who can bring me news about Sa'd?" Zayd bin Thabit undertook to bring authentic news for the Prophet about Sa'd's being alive or killed.

He found Sa'd lying amongst those who had been killed and said to him: "The Prophet has deputed me to ascertain your condition and to communicate to him the correct news about you". Sa'd replied: "Convey my salam (regards) to the Prophet and tell him that not more than a few moments of the life of Sa'd are now left and O Prophet of Allah! May Allah give you the best recompense worthy of a Prophet".

He also added: "Convey my salam to the Ansar and to the companions of the Prophet and tell them that in case the Prophet meets any harm while they are alive they will not be extenuated by Almighty Allah". The man deputed by the Prophet had not yet left Sa'd when the latter breathed his last.38

The love of man for himself is so strong that he never forgets his own self and sacrifices everything belonging to himself for its preservation. However, the power of faith and love for one's object and interest in one's ideal is something stronger, because as clearly stated in history, this brave soldier forgot himself at the most critical moment when he was not far away from death and remembered the Holy Prophet, whose protection was the greatest means of the achievement of his ideal. And the only message which he sent through Zayd bin Thabit was that the companions of the Prophet should not be

negligent of his safety and protection even for a moment.

The Holy Prophet Returns To Madina

The sun is moving towards the west and throws its golden rays on the other side of the hemisphere. Uhud is now perfectly calm and quiet. The Muslims, some of whose companions have been killed and others wounded, are obliged to return to their homes to regain their strength and to dress the wounds of the wounded.

The supreme commander gave orders to his men for moving to Madina. The Prophet as well as the Muhajirs and the Ansar later arrived in the city of Madina–the same city from some of the houses the cries of the bereaved mothers, and of the wives, who had lost their husbands, could be heard.

The Prophet reached the houses of Bani Abdul Ashhal. The wailings of their women moved him. Tears began to flow from his eyes and he said in an undertone: "It gives me great pain that none is weeping for Hamzah".39

When Sa'd Mu'az and some others became aware of what the Prophet desired they asked some women to observe mourning for Hamzah, the devoted soldier of Islam. When the Prophet became aware of this he prayed for the women and said: "I have always enjoyed the material and spiritual assistance of Ansar". Then he asked the women to return to their homes.

Exciting Record Of A Faithful Woman

The life of self–sacrificing women in the early period of Islam is something wonderful and inspiring. When we say that it is wonderful, it is because we rarely find women like them in the modern history.

Nowadays slogans of bravery and heroism come out of the throats of the women of the world, and they claim to possess strength and stability enough to face the shaking events of the time, but they cannot equal the faithful and self–sacrificing women of the early days of Islam. This strength and stability of those women was the direct result of their faith in the Divine Judgement and their hope of recompense in the Hereafter.

A lady belonging to the tribe of Bani Dinar, who had lost her husband, father, and brother, was sitting amongst some women and shedding tears, and the other women were bewailing. Suddenly the Prophet chanced to pass by that group of women. This bereaved lady enquired about the Prophet from the people, who were present near her.

All of them replied: "Thanked be Allah, he is quite well". She said, "I am keen to see him from a near distance". The place where the Prophet was standing was not far off. They therefore, pointed her out the Prophet. When the woman saw the face of the Prophet she immediately forgot all her woes and said something from the core of her heart, which created a revolution in the minds of those present there.

She said: "O Prophet of Allah! All unpleasant things and adversities are easy in your path". (i.e. if you are alive we consider every calamity, which befalls us to be insignificant, and we ignore it).

Praised be this steadfastness and praised be this faith which keeps a person safe from instability just as an anchor keeps a boat safe from storms while it travels over the seas![40]

Another Example Of Self-Sacrificing Women

In the foregoing pages we have made a brief mention of 'Amr bin Jumuh. Although he was lame and it was not obligatory for him to perform jihad, he insisted upon taking part in it and, having obtained permission from the Prophet, he joined the vanguard of the mujahids (soldiers of Islam). It was not only he who joined the rows of the mujahids, but his son Khallad and his brother-in-law (wife's brother) Abdullah bin 'Amr also participated in this sacred jihad and all of them met martyrdom.

His wife Hind, daughter of 'Amr bin Hazm and paternal aunt of Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari, came to Uhud. She picked up the dead bodies of her martyrs and dear ones from the battlefield, loaded them on a camel and left for Madina.

The rumour had spread in Madina that the Prophet had been killed. The women left for Uhud to gain the correct news about the Prophet. On the way Hind met the wives of the Prophet who enquired from her about the Prophet's welfare. Notwithstanding the fact that she was carrying the corpses of her husband, brother and son on the camel she said to them with great composure, as if no calamity had befallen her: "I have a happy news for you. The Prophet is alive and as compared with this blessing all hardships are insignificant. Secondly Allah turned back the unbelievers while they were filled with anger and wrath.[41]

Then she was asked about the dead bodies which she was carrying on the back of the camel. She replied: "They are related to me. One of them is my husband, the other is my son and the third is my brother. I am carrying them to Madina to bury them there".

Here we find, in the history of Islam, one of the sublimest marks of faith (i.e. considering all calamities to be easy, and bearing all sorrows and hardships for the achievement of one's spiritual aim). The school of materialism cannot train such self-sacrificing men and women. These persons fight for the achievement of a spiritual purpose and not for material gains or for acquiring status.

The latter part of this story is even more wonderful and does not at all agree with the material criteria and with the principles which materialism has laid down for the analysis of historical problems. Only the godly persons and those who have firm belief in Allah and His assistance can analyse the following story and consider it to be totally true.

She (Hind) had the bridle of the camel in her hand and was driving it to Madina. However, the camel was moving with great difficulty. One of the wives of the Prophet said: "The burden on the camel is certainly heavy". Hind replied: "This camel is very strong and can carry the load of two camels and there

is certainly some other reason for its doing so, because whenever I turn it to Uhud it walks quite easily, but whenever I turn it to Madina it is either moves on great difficulty or kneels down on the ground.

Hind decided to return to Uhud and to inform the Prophet of the matter. She, therefore, came to Uhud along with the camel and the dead bodies and informed the Prophet about the condition of the camel. The Prophet said: "What did your husband pray for to Allah when he was going to the battlefield?" She replied: "He said: O Lord! Don't make me return to my home".

The Prophet said: "The reason for (the camel's) refusal to go to Madina has become clear. Your husband's prayer has been granted. Allah does not desire that this dead body should go to Amr's home. It is necessary that you should bury all the three dead bodies in this land of Uhud and you should know that these three persons will remain together in the other world also". Hind, while tears were trickling from her eyes, requested the Prophet to pray to Allah that she too might be with them.42

The Prophet arrived in his house. The eyes of his dear daughter Fatimah Zahrah fell on his wounded face and tears began to flow from her eyes. The Prophet gave his sword to his daughter so that she might wash it.

Ali bin 'Isa Arbali, the traditionalist and historian of the 7th century writes: "The Prophet's daughter brought water to wash off blood from her father's face. The Commander of the Faithful poured water and Zahrah washed blood from the sides, but as the wound on the face was deep, the blood did not stop. At last a piece of mat was burnt and its ashes were applied to the wounds and then the blood stopped flowing from the wounds of his faced.43

The Enemy Should Be Pursued

The night, during which the Muslims rested in their houses in Madina after the event of Uhud, was a very delicate night. The hypocrites and the Jews and the followers of Abdullah bin Ubayy were jubilant over this happening. The cries and wailings of the bereaved persons could be heard from most of the houses.

Above all there was a danger that the hypocrites and the Jews might revolt against the Muslims, or might at least destroy the political unity and integrity of the centre of Islam by creating differences and dissensions amongst its inhabitants.

The harm which is done by internal differences is much more than that which is caused by the attacks of external enemies. It was, therefore, necessary that the Prophet should admonish the internal enemies and make them understand that the strength of Islam could not be weakened by disorder and chaos and every activity or propaganda which threatened the foundation of Islam would be nipped in the bud with full force.

The Prophet was ordered by Allah to pursue the enemy on the day following that night. He, therefore, appointed a person to make a proclamation in all parts of the city in these words:

"Persons who were in Uhud yesterday should get ready to pursue the enemy tomorrow. However, those who didn't participate in the battle have no right to join us in this jihad".44

No doubt this restriction was imposed with some good purposes in view, which cannot remain hidden from intelligent political-minded persons; firstly this restriction was a sort of attack upon those persons who had failed to participate in the Battle of Uhud; it was in fact a negation of the competence of that group, which did not possess worthiness for defence and for participation in a battle; and secondly it was a chastisement for those, who had participated in the Battle of Uhud.

As Islam had suffered this blow on account of their indiscipline it was necessary that they themselves should make amends for this defeat so that they might not display such indiscipline in future.

The announcement made by the Prophet's proclaimer reached the ears of a man belonging to the tribe of Bani Abdul Ashhal, when he was sleeping, with his wounded body, along with his brother. This proclamation shook both of them in such a manner that though both of them had no means of transport except one animal for riding and their departure was also difficult for certain reasons, they said to one another: "It is not at all proper that the Prophet should proceed for jihad and we should remain behind". Although these two brothers had to perform the journey by riding alternately they managed to join the soldiers of Islam.45

The Prophet Goes Upto Hamra'ul Asad

The Prophet appointed Ibn Umme Maktum as his representative in Madina and encamped at Hamra'ul Asad which is at a distance of eight miles from Madina. Ma'bad Khuza'i, the chief of the Khuza'ah tribe, although a polytheist, offered his sympathy to the Prophet.

The members of the tribe of Khuza'ah, including Muslims or non-Muslims, had always supported Islam. In order to render service to the Prophet, Ma'bad went from Hamra'ul Asad to Rowhah, the headquarters of the army of Quraysh, and met Abu Sufyan. He found that Abu Sufyan was

determined to return to Madina and destroy the remaining strength of the Muslims. Ma'bad dissuaded him from doing so and said: "O Abu Sufyan! Beware of Muhammad, who is in Hamra'ul Asad now. He has come out of Madina with a larger army and those, who didn't participate in the battle yesterday, are also with him today. I have seen faces which are flushed with anger and I have not seen similar faces throughout my life. They are very much regretful for the disorder which took place yesterday". He dilated so much upon the apparent strength and the high morale of the Muslims that he made Abu Sufyan abandon his decision.

The Prophet, along with his companions, remained in Hamra'ul Asad during the first part of the night and ordered that fire might be kindled at various spots in the desert so that the enemy might imagine that the strength of the Muslims was greater than that which they had witnessed in Uhud. Safwan Umayyah

addressed Abu Sufyan thus: "The Muslims are angry and vexed. It is better that we should content ourselves with what we have already achieved and should return to Makkah".46

A True Believer Is Not Cheated Twice

The above sentence is the resume of the remarks of the Prophet who said: "A true believer is not stung from the same hole again". He said these words when Abu 'Azza Jumahi requested him for freedom. He had been captured in the Battle of Badr and the Prophet had set him free and had taken a promise from him that he would not join the idolaters in their activities against Islam.

However, he broke the promise by participating in the Battle of Uhud against Islam. It so happened that, while returning from Hamra'ul Asad, the Muslims again captured him. This time also he requested the Prophet to forgive him and to set him free.

The Prophet did not, however, pay any heed to his request and by uttering the above sentence (viz: A true believer is not stung from the same hole twice) gave orders for his execution. With this the tragedy of Uhud, which was perfectly instructive, came to an end.47

1. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, pp. 184–190; Tabaqat, vol. II, pp. 31–34 and Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 101.
2. Commentators and historians like Ali bin Ibrahim, Shaykh Tabrasi (A'lamul Wara') and Ibn Hisham, differ from one another on the question of the number of soldiers. What is said above, however, is plausible.
3. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, pp. 203–204, and some historians believe that the messenger brought the letter to Madina when the Prophet was in the mosque and Abi bin Ka'b read it out for him.
4. Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page III.
5. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, page 211
6. Biharul Anwar, vol. II, page 125.
7. Mughazi, vol. I, page 214 and Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. II, page 38.
8. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 65.
9. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 9.
10. Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 57.
11. Usudul Ghabah, vol. II, page 59 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 57.
12. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, pp. 221–222.
13. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 66.
14. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, Page 68 – 69.
15. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 12.
16. An account of nine standard–bearers who were killed by Ali has been recorded in Biharul Anwar, vol. II. page 51.
17. Khisal, vol. II, page 121.
18. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 68 and Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, p. 194.
19. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 83.
20. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 109.
21. Ibn Abil Hadid, Sharh–i Nahjul Balaghah, vol. XV, pp. 23 – 24.
22. 'Ruba'iyat' are the teeth (four in number) which are between the front teeth and the canine teeth.
23. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 84 and Mughazi, vol. I, page 244.
24. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 107.
25. Ibn Abil Hadid, Sharh–i Nahjul Balaghah, vol. XV, page 21.
26. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 107.

27. Ibn Abil Hadid, Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah, vol. XIV, page 251.
28. Khisal, vol. II, page 15.
29. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 14.
30. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 81.
31. Volume XX, page 84 onwards.
32. Volume I, page 357.
33. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, pp. 69-72.
34. The chain of the services of this self-sacrificing woman did not end here. She later participated, along with her son, in the campaign against Musaylimah Kazzab (the impostor) and lost one hand in that battle.
35. Abil Hadid, Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah, vol. XIV, pp. 265 - 267.
36. Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, pp. 44-45.
37. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 498; Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 131.
38. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II. page 95.
39. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 99.
40. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 99.
41. As quoted by Ibn Abil Hadid she recited the Qur'anic verse: Allah turned back the unbelievers in their rage; they did not obtain any advantage, and Allah sufficed the believers in fighting; and Allah is Strong, Mighty. Then he says: "Surely she uttered the purport of the first part of the verse, because this verse was revealed at the time of the Battle of the Ditch, which took place after the Battle of Uhud. (Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah, vol. XIV, page 262).
42. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. I, page 265.
43. Kashful Ghummah, page 54.
44. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 101.
45. Ibid.
46. Tabaqat-i Kubra, vol. II, page 49.
47. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 104.

The political effects of the defeat suffered by the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud became crystal clear with its end. Although they displayed steadfastness before the victorious enemy and prevented his return (to Madina), but after the Uhud incident the internal and external movements to overthrow Islam increased.

The hypocrites and the Jews of Madina and the polytheists residing out of the city as well as the idolatrous tribes at distant places developed unusual courage and did not refrain from conspiring and collecting forces and weapons against Islam.

The Prophet silenced the internal movements with great skill, and suppressed, by sending forces, those external tribes which intended to attack Madina. In the meantime a report was received that the tribe of Bani Asad intended conquering Madina and killing the Muslims and looting their property.

The Prophet immediately sent a unit consisting of 150 persons under the command of Abu Salman to the centre of conspiracy. He ordered the commander to keep his object hidden, to travel by a deviated path and to take rest during daytime and travel at night. He acted on the instructions of the Prophet and, besieging the tribe of Bani Asad at night, nipped the plot in the bud and returned to Madina victorious with some war booty. This event took place in the 35th month of migration.

A Dexterously Drawn Plan To Kill The Missionaries

The Prophet frustrated the plans of the conspirators by dispatching military units, and attracted the impartial tribes to the teachings of Islam by sending missionary groups to the different tribes and the centres of populated areas.

Trained missionaries, who had memorized the Holy Qur'an as well as the commandments and traditions of the Prophet, were prepared heart and soul to convey the teachings of Islam to the residents of distant areas, in an elucidated and elegant manner, at the cost of their very lives.

By sending the military units and the missionary groups the Prophet discharged two great responsibilities attached to the lofty office of prophethood. In fact the purpose of dispatching the military units was to maintain place and to eliminate insecurity and chaos so that the missionary group should perform, in an atmosphere of peace and freedom, its momentous responsibility which consisted of ruling over hearts and guiding the thoughts of the people.

However, some savage and mean tribes practiced deceit upon the missionary group, who constituted the spiritual force of Islam and who had no aim other than advancement of justice and freedom and eradicating infidelity and idolatry. They murdered them in a very tragic manner. We give below an account of what happened to some trained missionaries of Islam, whose number was six according to Ibn Hisham and ten according to Ibn Said

Cruel Massacre Of The Missionaries Of Islam

A group consisting of the representatives of the tribes residing in the adjoining areas practiced deceit to diminish the strength of Islam and to take revenge. They came before the Prophet and said "O Prophet of Allah! Our hearts are inclined towards Islam and our environments are ready for its acceptance. It is necessary that you should depute some of your companions to go with us so that they may propagate Islam in our tribe and teach us the Holy Qur'an and inform us about things which have been made lawful or unlawful by Allah".1

It was the duty of the Prophet to give a positive reply to this group, which consisted of representatives of big tribes, and the Muslims are under obligation to avail of such an opportunity at any cost. Hence the Prophet ordered a party to proceed to those areas under the leadership of Marsad, along with the representatives of the tribes.

This group, accompanied by the representatives of the tribes, left Madina and went out of the zone of authority of the Muslims and reached a place named Raji'. There the representatives of the tribes manifested their evil intentions and decided, with the help of the tribe named Huzayl, to arrest and kill the persons deputed by the Prophet.

While the Muslims had been encircled from all sides by armed groups they had no means of protecting themselves. They could not do without resorting to draw their swords. They, therefore, unsheathed their swords and got ready to defend themselves. Their enemies, however, swore that they had no other object except that they should arrest them so that they might deliver them alive to the authorities of Quraysh and get money in reward.

The Muslims looked towards one another and decided to fight. They, therefore, replied that they did not rely upon promises of the polytheists and the idolaters, and then resorted to arms and laid down their lives bravely in the path of propagation and defence of Islam. However, three persons named Zayd bin Dasinah, Khubayb Adiy and Tarah sheathed their swords and surrendered. While they were on their way Tarah regretted and felt ashamed of having surrendered.

He, therefore, managed to release his hand from the chain, took the sword in his hand and attacked the enemies. The enemies retreated and made him yield by flinging stones at him. They stoned him so much that he fell down on the ground and succumbed to his injuries. He was buried at the same place.

The two other prisoners were, however, handed over to the official authorities of Quraysh and against them two prisoners who belonged to the tribe which had arrested the Muslims, were set free.

Safwan Umayyah, whose father was killed in the Battle of Badr, purchased Zayd so as to take revenge of his father. It was decided that Zayd should be hanged in the presence of a big gathering. The gallows was set up at Tan'im.2 Quraysh and their friends gathered at that spot on a particular day.

The condemned person was standing by the side of the gallows and only a few minutes of his life were left, when Abu Sufyan, who was the Pharaoh of Makkah and whose hand worked behind the curtain in all these events turned to Zayd and said: "I put you on oath to tell me in the name of the Lord in whom you believe whether you wish that Muhammad may be killed in your place and you may be set free and may return home". Zayd replied bravely: "I don't wish that even a thorn may prick the foot of the Prophet, although I may be set free in lieu thereof".

Zayd's reply had a great effect on Abu Sufyan. He wondered at the extraordinary devotion of the companions of the Prophet and said: "During my entire life I have not seen such devoted and self-sacrificing friends of anyone as those of Muhammad".

Immediately after that Zayd was hanged on the gallows and his soul departed to the other world. He sacrificed his life for the sake of Islam.

The second person namely Khubayb was kept under detention for some time. The Council at Makkah then decided that he too should be hanged at Tan'im.3 Arrangements were made to set up the gallows. While standing by the side of the gallows Khubayb sought permission from the official authorities to offer two rak'ats (units) of prayers. The permission having been granted he offered two rak'ats of prayers with perfect brevity.

Then he turned to the chiefs of Quraysh and said: "If it had not been the fact that you might have thought that I was afraid of death I would have offered more prayers4 and would have prolonged ruku' and sujud (kneeling and prostration) of the prayers." Then he raised his face to heavens and said: "O Allah! We performed the duty which was entrusted to us by the Prophet".

Order was given and Khubayb was hanged to death. While on the gallows he said: "O Allah! You can see that there is not even one friend around me who could convey my salam to the Prophet. O Lord! You may kindly convey my salam to him". It would appear that the religious sentiments of this godly person upset Abu 'Uqbah. He rose and killed him by giving a blow on his body.

Ibn Hisham5 has quoted that Khubayb recited some couplets before he breathed his last on the gallows: "By Allah! If I die as a Muslim I am not worried about the region in which I am buried. This tragic death of mine is in the path of Allah and if He wishes he can make this martyrdom auspicious for my dismembered limbs".

This heart-rending event deeply moved the Prophet and also overwhelmed all the Muslims with grief. Hassan bin Thabit, the great poet of the Muslims, recited doleful verses which have been quoted by Ibn Hisham in his Seerah.

The Prophet feared that this incident might be repeated and the missionary force, which was trained after taking great pains, might, in this way, sustain an irreparable blow. He also feared that this sacred force, which was superior even to the mujahids who fought on the war-front, might fall prey to the evil designs of the enemies of Islam.

The dead body of Khubayb remained on the gallows for a long period and a group of persons kept a watch on it. Eventually however, as ordered by the Prophet two brave Muslims went at night and buried it.6

Tragedy Of Bl'r Ma'unah

The third year of migration, with all its bitter and instructive events, came to an end and the fourth year started with the sighting of Muharram moon. In the month of Safar of the same year Abu Bara'a came to Madina and the Prophet invited him to embrace Islam. To this he did not agree, but he also did not seek aloofness. He said to the Prophet: "If you send a strong missionary force to the people of Najd it may be hoped that they will embrace Islam as they are much inclined to it". The Prophet replied: "I am afraid of the deceit and enmity of the people of Najd. I apprehend that the tragedy of Raji', which resulted in a number of learned and missionary persons being killed may be repeated". Abu Bara'a said: "The force to be deputed by you will be under my protection and I guarantee that I will protect them from every harm".

Forty learned Muslims who had memorized the Holy Qur'an and various religious tenets of Islam left for Najd under the leadership of Munzir and encamped by the side of Bi'r Ma'unah. The Prophet wrote a

letter (consisting of invitation to the religion of Islam) to one of the chiefs of Najd named 'Amir. Not only that 'Amir did not read the letter but he also put its bearer to death. He also sought assistance from the adjoining tribes, and the area where the missionary force had encamped was encircled by his men.

The persons forming the missionary force of Islam were not only senior and proficient missionaries but they were also considered to be brave and war-like persons. They, therefore, thought it a shame for themselves to surrender. Hence, they took up arms and all of them, except one, met martyrdom after giving a tough fight. The only survivor was Ka'b bin Zayd who reached Madina with a wounded body and gave information about what had happened.7

These two tragic events were the evil results of the defeat sustained by the Muslims at Uhud, which encouraged the adjoining tribes to resort to their killing.

Partial Behaviour Of The Orientalists

The orientalists, who make capital of a scratch on the face of an idolater and cast aspersions on Islam and the Muslims to prove that Islam was spread with the force of sword, close their lips with regard to these two tragic events and do not utter even a word about them.

Where in the world learned and sacred people are put to sword? If Islam has flourished under the shadow of sword what for did these missionary groups sacrifice their lives?

These two events possess certain vital and instructive points. The strength of faith, self-sacrifice, valour and moral heroism of these great souls is the ground on which the fate of the Muslims is based. It deserves their admiration and should serve as an example for them.

A True Believer Is Never Stung From The Same Hole Twice

The tragic events of Raji' and Bi'r Ma'unah which culminated in the murder of the missionary force of Islam grieved the Muslims very much. At this juncture most of the readers may be automatically inclined to ask as to why the Prophet resorted to this action. When he had bitter experience of the first event (Raji') why did he send forty persons to Bi'r Ma'unah? Had not the Prophet himself said: "A true believer is never stung from the same hole twice?"

Reply to this question becomes clear when we refer to the texts of history, because the safety of the second group had been guaranteed by Abu Bara'a 'Amir bin Malik bin Ja'far who was the chief of the tribe of Bani 'Amir, and a tribe never acted against the intentions of its chief. Furthermore, in order to give more assurance, he himself decided to remain in Madina till the return of the missionary party.

The plan drawn out by the Prophet was correct and capable of yielding results. The fact is that the members of the Muslim missionary party were not killed at the hands of the tribesmen of Abu Bara'a. No doubt his nephew viz.

'Amir bin Tufayl instigated the tribe of Abu Bara'a against the missionary party but none of them listened to him and all of them said: "Your uncle has guaranteed their safety". Eventually 'Amir bin Tufayl obtained help from other tribes like Salim and Zakwan and killed the members of the missionary party of Islam.

When the Muslim missionary party proceeded to the region of Abu Bara'a they selected two persons from amongst themselves named 'Amr bin Umayyah and Harith bin Simmah8 so that they might take the camels for grazing and look after them. These two persons were performing the duty entrusted to them and were not aware of the fate of their companions. Suddenly 'Amir bin Tufayl fell upon them. As a result of this Harith bin Simmah was killed, whereas 'Amr bin Umayyah escaped.

While on his way back to Madina 'Amr bin Umayyah came across two men and felt sure that they belonged to the tribes whose members had killed the missionary party of Islam. He, therefore, killed both of them while they were asleep and then returned to Madina.

'Amr had made a wrong conclusion. Those persons belonged to the tribe of Abu Bara'a (Bani 'Amir tribe) who respected the blood of the Muslim missionaries because of the respect which they had for their own chief.

This incident also added to the grief of the Prophet and he decided to pay the blood money for the two men.

1. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, page 354.
2. 'Tan'im' is a point which is considered to be the beginning of 'Haram' and the end of 'Hil' and ehram is worn at that spot For Umra–i Mufradah'.
3. Waqidi says that both the captives were hanged on the same day. (Mughazi, vol. I, page 358).
4. Mughazi Waqidi, vol. I, page 359.
5. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 170.
6. Safinatul Bihar, vol. I, page 382.
7. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. I, pp. 349–364.
8. As quoted by Ibn Hisham in his Seerah, vol. II, page 186, it was Munzir bin Muhammad.

The hypocrites and the Jews of Madina were very happy on account of the defeat of the Muslims and the annihilation of their missionary force. They were awaiting an opportunity to create disturbances in Madina and to make the tribes residing outside Madina realize that there was no unity in the city so that the young State of Islam might be toppled down by means of attacks by the external enemies.

In order to gain information about the intentions and the way of thinking of the Jews belonging to Bani Nuzayr tribe the Prophet visited their fortress along with some of his companions. However, the apparent object of the Prophet's meeting Bani Nuzayr was to obtain assistance from them in the matter of payment of blood–money for the two men who had been killed by 'Amr bin Umayyah, because the tribe of Bani Nuzayr were living under the protection of the Islamic State and it was only proper that on such

an occasion they should contribute towards the compensation which was due to be paid.

Moreover they had also concluded treaties with the Muslims as well as with the tribe of Bani 'Amir and the tribes which had concluded mutual treaties always assisted each other on such occasions.

The Prophet dismounted opposite the gate of the fortress and mentioned the purpose of his visit to the chiefs of the tribe. They received him warmly and promised to contribute towards the blood–money. Then, while addressing the Prophet with his patronymic, Abul Qasim, they requested him to enter the fortress and spend the day with them. The Prophet did not, however, accede to their request and, as quoted by some historians, he only dismounted opposite the fortress and after taking his seat in the shade of the wall of the fortress along with his companions began conversing with the chiefs of Bani Nuzayr.1

The Prophet felt that this glib talking was coupled with a chain of mysterious activities. There was heavy movement of people in the precincts of the place where the Prophet was seated. Whispering in one another's ears which creates suspicion and pessimism was abundant. In fact the chiefs of Bani Nuzayr had decided to take the Prophet unawares. They had appointed one of their men named 'Amr Hajjash to ascend the roof and kill the Prophet by throwing a big stone on his head.

Fortunately their plan was frustrated. Their evil plots and designs were divulged on account of their activities, and, as quoted by Waqidi, the Prophet learned about the conspiracy of the Jews through Divine revelation.

He left that place in such a manner that the Jews thought that he was going on account of some business and would return. In fact the Prophet decided to go to Madina direct and did not inform even his companions about his decision. They also kept waiting for his return, but it was all in vain.

The Jews of Bani Nuzayr were greatly perturbed. They thought that the Prophet had probably become aware of their plot and would, therefore, accord them severe chastisement. They also thought within themselves: "Now that the Prophet is beyond our reach we may take revenge on his companions". But then the thought crossed their mind immediately that in that event the matter would become very serious and the Prophet would certainly take revenge on them.

At this juncture the Prophet's companions decided to follow him and to find out his whereabouts. They had not yet gone far away from the fortress when they met a man who told them that the Prophet had already arrived in Madina. They visited him and became aware of the design of the Jews which had also been confirmed by revelation.2

How To Deal With This Crime?

Now what should have been the duty of the Prophet with regard to this band? These were the people who enjoyed privileges granted by the Islamic State and whose property and honour were protected by

the Muslim soldiers! They were a community who witnessed clear signs of prophethood in the Prophet and read in their own books about the proofs of his prophethood and the evidence of his truthfulness.

What was the proper way to deal with this group of people who, in spite of enjoying all the privileges, plotted against his life and decided to assassinate him instead of showing hospitality? What were the demands of justice in this behalf? And what should have been done so that such incidents were not repeated in future?

The way to solve the problem was the same which the Prophet adopted. He ordered all the soldiers to remain alert. Then he called Muhammad bin Maslamah, a member of the Aws tribe, and ordered him to convey the message to the chiefs of Bani Nuzayr as early as possible. He contacted the chiefs of Bani Nuzayr and said to them: "The exalted leader of Islam has sent you a message through me that you should quit this place as early as possible and within ten days at the latest, because you have acted in a deceitful manner. And if you do not depart from this region within ten days your blood will be shed".

They were dejected on hearing this message and every one of them held others responsible for the developments. One of their leaders suggested that all of them should embrace Islam. This suggestion was, however, not accepted by the obstinate majority. They felt a strange helplessness.

Eventually they turned to Muhammad bin Maslamah and said to him: 'O Muhammad! You belong to the tribe of Aws and before the arrival of the Prophet of Islam we had a defence pact with your tribe. Why are you on war terms with us now?" In reply he said with perfect valour which behoves every Muslim: "That time has passed. Now the hearts have changed".

The basis of Prophet's determination was the very pact which the Muslims had concluded with the tribes of the Jews in the early days and which had been signed by Hay bin Akhtab on behalf of Bani Nuzayr. We have already reproduced the text of this pact in early pages and quote here an extract from it:

"The Prophet concludes a pact with every one of the three groups (Bani Nuzayr, Bani Qaynuqa'a and Bani Qurayzah) that they will not take any steps against the Prophet of Allah and his companions and will not harm him with their hands or tongue. As and when any one of these tribes acts contrary to the text of the pact the Prophet will be free to shed their blood, to confiscate their property and to captivate their women and children".

Crocodile Tears

At this juncture also the orientalists have shed crocodile tears in sympathy with the treacherous Jews, who violated the pacts and have said that the action of the Prophet was not consonant with equity and justice.

The deception and cavilling practiced by the orientalists is to hide the facts, because the reference to the text of the pact shows that the punishment imposed by the Prophet was much lighter than that stipulated

in the pact.

Nowadays hundreds of crimes and oppressions take place in the east and west at the hands of the masters of these very orientalists and none of them raises the least objection to them. However, when the Prophet of Islam awards even lesser punishment to a group of conspirators than that agreed on earlier, some writers who analyse the event with various personal motives, raise a hue and cry against it.

Role Of The Hypocrites

The most dangerous enemies of Islam were the group of hypocrites who were wearing a mask of friendship on their faces and Abdullah Ubayy and Malik bin Ubayy Nawfal etc. were their ring leaders. They immediately sent a message to the leaders of Bani Nuzayr that they (the hypocrites) would help them with two thousand warriors and their allies, i.e. the tribes of Bani Qurayzah and Ghatfan, would also not leave them alone.

This false promise encouraged the Jews, and, though they had decided in the beginning to surrender and quit the place, they now changed their decision. They shut the gates of their fortresses and, having equipped themselves with ammunition would defend themselves at any cost from the towers and would not willfully allow the army of Islam to assume control of their gardens and farms.

One of the leaders of Bani Nuzayr (Salem bin Mushkam) considered the promise of Abdullah to be futile and said: "It is expedient for us to depart". However, Hay bin Akhtab advised them to remain firm and steadfast.

The Prophet became aware of the message sent by Abdullah to the Jews. He appointed Ibn Umme Maktum to be his representative in Madina and with *Takbir* (Allah is Great) on his lips moved to besiege the fortress of Bani Nuzayr. He made the area between Bani Qurayzah and Bani Nuzayr his encampment place and thus cut off the liaison between the two tribes.

According to Ibn Hisham,3 the fortress was besieged for one day and one night and according to some others it was besieged for fifteen days. However, the Jews became more steadfast and perseverant. The Prophet ordered that the date palm trees around the fortress might be cut down so that the cause for the Jews coveting the territory might be removed once and for all.

At this moment the cries of the Jews became loud from within the fortress and all of them said: "O Abul Qasim! (addressing the Prophet) You have always prohibited your soldiers from cutting the trees! Why are you doing this thing now?" However, the reason for resorting to this action was as mentioned above.

Eventually the Jews submitted to their fate and said: "We are prepared to be exiled, provided that we are permitted to take away our belongings with us". The Prophet agreed that they might carry away their belongings, except the weapons which they had to surrender to the Muslims.

The greedy Jews made their best efforts to take away their property, so much so that they pulled out the doors of their houses to take them away and then destroyed the buildings. Some of them proceeded to Khayber and others to Syria. Two from amongst them embraced Islam.

In order to hide their defeat the vanquished and helpless Jews left Madina beating drums and singing songs. Hence, they wanted to give an impression that they were not at all unhappy to leave the place.

The Farms Of Bani Nuzayr Are Distributed Among The Muhajirs

According to the Holy Qur'an (Surah al-Hashr, 59:6) the booty which the Muslims acquired without fighting belonged to the Prophet and he could spend it for the welfare of Islam and the Muslims, as he deemed fit.

The Prophet considered it proper to distribute the farms, water reserves and gardens (left behind by Bani Nuzayr) amongst the Muhajirs, because, since their migration from Makkah, they were hard up and in fact they were dependent upon the Ansar of Madina and were their guests. Sa'd bin Mu'az and Sa'd bin 'Ubadah also supported this view.

Hence, the entire property was distributed amongst the Muhajirs and none from amongst the Ansar got any share except Sahl bin Hunayf and Abu Dujanah, who were extremely poor. In this way the financial position of the Muslims improved generally. A costly sword, which previously belonged to one of the chiefs of Bani Nuzayr, was given to Sa'd Mu'az.

This event took place in the month of Rabi'ul Awwal of fourth year of migration when Surah al-Hashr was also revealed to mention the causes of this event and to invite the attention of the Muslims.

Most of the historians of Islam believe that no bloodshed took place in this event. However, the late Shaykh Mufid4 says that during the night of this conquest a brief skirmish did take place and ten Jews were killed and their death provided a basis for the surrender of the Jewish forces.

1. Mughazi says that the Prophet arrived in their meeting (vol. I, page 364).
2. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. I, page 365.
3. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 191.
4. al-Irshad, pp.47-48.

Prohibition Of Alcoholic Drinks

Wine and the intoxicating drinks in general have been and are one of the greatest ruinous calamities for human society and it is sufficient to say in reproof of this deadly poison that it wages war against the greatest blessing of man which distinguishes him from other living beings viz. intellect and reason.

The prosperity of man depends upon his wisdom and the difference between him and other living beings is because of his power of intellect, and alcohol is considered to be the greatest enemy of wisdom and intellect. It is on this account that all the divine Prophets have prohibited the use of alcoholic drinks. In fact they have been declared unlawful in all the revealed religions.

In the Arabian Peninsula drinking prevailed like a general calamity and a contagious disease, decisive campaign against which needed quite a long time, and the state of affairs prevailing in the society and the conditions of the Arabs in general did not also permit that the Prophet should declare it unlawful without taking preliminary steps. He was also obliged to prepare the temperament of the society for waging a decisive war against it.

Hence, the four verses which have been revealed to express aversion to wine are not alike. The Prophet commenced with advice till he was successful in declaring its use to be unlawful.

A careful study of these verses tells us about the method adopted by the Prophet regarding the propagation of the laws of Islam and it is appropriate that the proficient writers and orators should adopt this method of instruction and should campaign against social evils in the same manner.

The basic condition for campaigning against an evil practice at the first stage is to awaken the thinking of the society and to invite its attention to its disadvantages and harmful effects. Until there is spiritual preparedness and internal stimulation in a society and the people themselves are responsible it is not possible to undertake a campaign against an evil practice.

Hence, in the first instance the Holy Qur'an told the society, the part of whose life was drinking, that preparation of wine with dates and grapes was inconsistent with good nourishment and this way of speech was in fact a warning to awaken the thoughts of the people. It says:

(***We provide you***) ***fruits of the date palm and vine from which you derive strong drink and wholesome food.*** (**Surah al-Nahl, 16:67**)

The Holy Book announced for the first time that making wine with these things is not 'good nourishment'. 'Good nourishment' means that they should be eaten in their natural shape.

This verse gave a jolt to the thoughts of the people and made their temperaments ready so that the Prophet might make his tone more strong and declare through other verses that 'some material utility' derived from wine and games of chance is insignificant as compared with their evil effects. This fact has been mentioned in this verse:

They question you about strong drink and game of chance. Say: In both is great sin, and (***some material***) ***utility for men; but the sin of them is greater than their usefulness.*** (**Surah al-Baqarah, 2:219**)

No doubt such comparison between profit and loss, which shows that something is more evil than good,

is sufficient to make intelligent people express aversion to it. However, the people at large do not avoid an evil practice unless it is totally forbidden.

Notwithstanding the fact that the verse quoted above had already been revealed Abdur Rahman bin Awf arranged a feast and also served wine on the dining cloth. Those present began offering prayers after drinking wine. One of them read a verse incorrectly whereby its meaning was changed i.e. instead of saying '(O idolaters!) I worship not that which you worship' he uttered a sentence with an opposite meaning by dropping the word *'la'* (*not*) from it.

These incidents made the temperaments of the people ready that so far as the conditions permitted drinking of wine should be prohibited at least in certain special circumstances. In the light of these conditions it was declared openly that no Muslim was entitled to offer prayers while he was intoxicated and this Divine order was proclaimed in these words:

Believers, do not pray when you are drunk, till you know what you say. **(Surah al-Nisa, 4:46).**[1]

The effect of this verse was that a group of persons gave up drinking permanently, and their argument for doing so was that a thing which was harmful for prayers deserved to be entirely eliminated.

However, some others did not forsake this habit, so much so that a person from amongst Ansar arranged a feast and notwithstanding the fact that he was aware of the said verse he served wine as well on the dining cloth. The guests, after having drunk wine, began to dispute and hurt one another.

Thereafter they complained to the Prophet. The Second Caliph, who used to drink wine till that time, being under the impression that the above-mentioned verses did not make drinking of wine totally forbidden, raised his hands in prayer and said: "O Allah! Reveal clear and convincing orders for us".

It is evident that such unpleasant occurrences had made the atmosphere ready for this that if the use of wine was totally banned, all the Muslims would have accepted this ban wholeheartedly. Hence, at the last stage, this verse was revealed: *Wine, gambling, idols and Azlam* (*a sort of lottery*) *are filthy acts of Satan and all of you should refrain from them.* As a result of this eloquent and emphatic order those persons who had been drinking wine till that time on the excuse that orders regarding giving it up were not final also refrained from it. On hearing this verse the Second Caliph said, "I renounce it from now onwards".[2]

Battle (Ghazwah) Of Za'tur Riqa'

In the Arabic language Riqa' means a 'Patch'. This sacred jihad is called Zatur Riqa' for the reason that at this front the Muslims came across a chain of high and low places which appeared like patches. According to another version it is called Za'tur Riqa' for the reason that to alleviate the hardship of walking the soldiers had wrapped their feet with rags.

In any case this battle was not a primary campaign so that the army of Islam should have fallen upon a community on the plea of their being polytheists. In fact their aim was to extinguish a spark which was about to flare up i.e. to suppress the enthusiasm which was being displayed by two families of Ghatfan (Bani Maharib and Bani Sa'labah) against Islam.

It was customary for the Prophet to depute wise and intelligent persons to different areas so that they might inform him about their general conditions. Suddenly a report was received that the above-mentioned two families were gathering arms and men to conquer Madina.

The Prophet proceeded to Najd with special columns and encamped near the territory of the enemy. The brilliant past record of the army of Islam and their self-sacrifice and valour which had astonished the Arabian Peninsula made the enemy retreat and take refuge in mountains and high regions without fighting.

However, as the Prophet offered the obligatory prayers in this battle, along with the soldiers of Islam, as *Salat-i Khawf* (offering prayers during the time of danger) and taught the Muslims the method of offering it by means of 103rd verse of Surah al-Nisa, it may be conjectured that the enemy's forces were well-equipped and that the fighting had assumed a very delicate shape, but eventually Muslims were victorious.

Forbearing Guards

Although in this battle the army of Islam returned from the headquarters of the enemy to Madina without fighting, they acquired a small booty. On their way back they stayed at night in an extensive valley to take rest. Here the Prophet appointed two brave soldiers to undertake guarding the mouth of the valley. These two soldiers named 'Abbad and 'Ammar divided the hours of the night between themselves and it was agreed that 'Abbad should guard the mouth of the valley during the first half of the night.

A man belonging to the tribe of Ghatfan was pursuing the Muslims so that he might do them some harm and then return immediately. This man took advantage of the darkness of the night and shot an arrow at the person guarding the valley while the latter was offering prayers. The sentry was so much absorbed in invocations that he did not much feel the prickly sensation caused by the arrow. He pulled out the arrow from his foot and continued his prayers.

However, the attack was repeated thrice. The last arrow of the enemy struck his foot so severely that he could not continue his invocations as he wished. He, therefore finished his prayers immediately and then awakened 'Ammar.

The tragic condition of 'Abbad moved 'Ammar very much and he said by way of protest "Why did you not awaken me at the very outset?" The wounded sentry replied "I was praying and was reciting a surah of the Holy Qur'an when suddenly the first arrow hit me.

The enjoyment of invocations and the deliciousness of attention towards the Almighty Allah kept me from breaking my prayers. If the Prophet had not made me responsible for guarding this point I would not at all have broken my prayers and the surah which I was reciting and would have surrendered my very life making invocations to Allah before I intended to break my prayers.3

The Second Badr

At the end of the Battle of Uhud, Abu Sufyan declared: "Next year we shall meet you in the desert of Badr at this very time and shall take a greater revenge upon you".

Under orders of the Prophet the Muslims announced their readiness to fight. The fixed time of one year expired and Abu Sufyan, who then ruling over Quraysh, was involved in various difficulties. Na'im bin Mas'ud, who had friendly relations with both the parties arrived in Makkah.

Abu Sufyan requested him to return to Madina immediately and dissuade Muhammad from deciding to come out of Madina. He added: "It is not possible for us to leave Makkah this year and the demonstrations and military manoeuvres of Muhammad in Badr, which is a common market of the Arabs, will bring about our defeat".

Whatever motive he might have, Na'im returned to Madina. His words did not, however, make the least effect on the morale of the Prophet. He encamped in Badr in the beginning of the month of Zi Qa'dul Haram with 1500 warriors and some horses and a quantity of merchandise, and stayed there for eight days, which coincided with the annual public market of the Arabs.

The Muslims sold their merchandise there and earned enormous profit. Thereafter the people who had come from different areas dispersed, but the army of Islam continued to wait for the arrival of the army of Quraysh.

Reports reached Makkah that Muhammad had arrived in Badr. The chiefs of Quraysh had no alternative left to save themselves from disgrace, except to leave Makkah for Badr. Abu Sufyan, who was well-equipped, came up to Marruz Zahran, but returned from mid-way making an excuse of famine and dearth.

The return of the army of the idolaters was so shocking that Safwan protested to Abu Sufyan and said: "By this retreat we have lost all the honours that we had gained, and if you had not made a promise last year of waging a war we would not have been faced with this psychological defeat".4

1. Refer to Sunan-i Abi Daud, vol. II, page 128.
2. Mustadrak, vol. IV, page 143 and Ruhul Ma'ani, vol. VII, page 15.
3. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, pp. 208-209.
4. According to Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. I, page 484, this incident took place in the 45th month of migration.

The most important historical events of the fifth year of migration are the Battle of Ahzab, the story of Bani Qurayzah and the Holy Prophet's marriage with Zaynab daughter of Jahash. According to the historians the first event which took place was the marriage of the Prophet with Zaynab.

The Holy Qur'an has narrated the above-mentioned story in the 4th, 6th and 36th to 40th verses of Surah al-Ahzab and has left no room for fabrication of falsehoods by the orientalists and the novelists. We shall study this event in the light of the most authentic source (viz. the Holy Qur'an) and shall also scrutinize the remarks of the orientalists very minutely.

Who Was Zayd Bin Harith?

Zayd was a person who was captured during his childhood from a caravan by the nomadic Arab plunderers and was sold as a slave in the market of 'Ukaz. He was purchased by Hakim bin Hizam for his paternal aunt, Khadijah, and she made a gift of him to the Prophet after their marriage.

Zayd was enamoured of the pure spiritual mind, sublime sentiments and good morals of the Prophet; so much so that when, after some time, his father came to Makkah and requested the Prophet to set him free, so that he might take him to his mother and other members of his family, Zayd declined to go and preferred remaining with the Prophet. He gave complete authority to the Prophet whether he should stay with him or return to his homeland.

This spiritual attachment and these deep sentiments existed on both the sides. If Zayd was fond of the morals and sentiments of the Prophet, he also loved him in such a way that he selected him as his son and people began calling him Zayd bin Muhammad instead of Zayd bin Harith.

To make this matter formal the Prophet held his hand one day and said to the people of Quraysh: "This is my son and we inherit from each other". This cordial relationship continued to exist till Zayd breathed his last in the Battle of Mo'ta and the Prophet was so much moved on this account as if he lost his own son.1

Zayd Marries The Prophet's Cousin (Paternal Aunt's Daughter)

One of the sacred aims of the Prophet was to reduce class distinctions and to bring together all human beings under the banner of humanity and piety and to introduce moral excellence and natural human qualities as the standard of superiority and distinction.

Hence, it was necessary that he should uproot, as early as possible, the old despicable customs of the Arabs (that the daughters of the nobility should not be married to indigent people) and nothing could be better than that he should commence this programme from his own family and should marry his cousin Zaynab, the grand-daughter of Abdul Muttalib, to his former slave, who had since been set free, so that people should know that these imaginary barriers should be removed as early as possible and they

should also know that when the Prophet says: "The criterion of superiority is piety and a Muslim woman is equal to a Muslim man" he himself was the first to enforce this law and the first to act upon it.

In order to do away with this wrong custom the Prophet went to Zaynab's house personally and formally asked for her consent to marry Zayd. In the first instance she and her brother were not inclined to accept the proposal, because the ideas of the Days of Ignorance had not yet been completely wiped out from their minds. Hence, notwithstanding the fact that it was an unpleasant task for them to refuse to comply with the Prophet's orders, they excused themselves on the plea of Zayd having been a slave in the past.

Soon afterwards Divine revelation condemned the action of Zaynab and her brother in these words:

The believing men and women must not feel free to do something in their affairs other than that which has been already decided for them by Allah and his Messenger. One who disobeys Allah and His Messenger is in plain error. (**Surah al-Ahzab, 33:36**)

The Prophet immediately recited the verse to them. The pure and perfect faith of Zaynab and her brother Abdullah in the Prophet and his sublime ideals was instrumental in the daughter of Jahash giving her consent without any delay and as a result, a lady of noble birth was married to a freed slave of Muhammad. In this manner, therefore, a part of the invigorative programme of Islam was implemented and a wrong custom was dispensed with in a practical way.

Zayd Separates From His Wife

Eventually, for certain reasons, this marriage culminated in divorce. Some say that the reason for this separation was the mentality of Zayd's wife, as she mentioned the lowness of her husband's descent to his very face and prided herself on account of the greatness of her own family and had thus made his life bitter for him.

However, it is probable that Zayd himself might have been responsible for the divorce, because his biography shows that he led a sequestered life, as he married many women and divorced all of them (except the last one who was still alive when he was killed in a battle) and these successive divorces show that Zayd possessed a spirit of unsociability.

The second testimony about the view that Zayd had a share in this incident is the harsh manner in which the Prophet addressed him. Because, when the Prophet came to know that Zayd had decided to divorce his wife, he was annoyed and said: "Keep your wife and fear Allah's wrath".

In case the fault was entirely his wife's, Zayd's separating from her was not contrary to piety and virtue. Eventually, Zayd separated from Zaynab.

Marriage For Banning Another Wrong Custom

Before we look into the basic cause of this marriage it is necessary to keep in view the role of lineage which is a vital factor for a sound society. Admittedly the relationship like that of father and son has a creative basis and in fact a father is the material source for the birth of a child and the child is the heir of the corporeal qualities and mentality of his parents. On account of this oneness and common blood the father and the child inherit the property of each other and specific laws regarding marriage and divorce become applicable to them.

Hence, a relationship, which has a congenital basis cannot be established verbally (vide 4th and 5th verses of Surah al–Ahzab) and an adopted son of a person cannot become his real son. As such, various orders regarding inheritance, marriage divorce etc., as applicable to a real son, cannot also apply to an adopted son.

For example, although a real son inherits from his father and vice versa and although it is unlawful for a person to marry the divorced wife of his real son it cannot at all be said that an adopted son has also the same rights in these matters as the real son has. Undoubtedly the chain of such a right besides being devoid of a correct basis, is also a sort of buffoonery in respect of an important factor (lineage) of a sound society.

In the circumstances, if adoption is resorted to with the aim of expressing sentiments it is very appreciable and proper, but if it is proposed to associate the adopted child with various social laws, all of which originate from matters relating to birth, this act will be far beyond social limits.

The Arab society considered an adopted son to be as good as a real son. The Prophet, therefore, was called upon to eradicate this wrong practice by marrying Zaynab, who was previously the wife of his adopted son (Zayd) and thus to remove this unwholesome custom in a practical way from amongst the Arabs, because this method is more effective than enunciating a law.

This marriage had no other reason besides this, because in those days none could pick up courage to take such an action in view of the fact that it was imagined to be a very shameful act to marry the former wife of an adopted son. Almighty Allah, therefore, formally invited the Prophet to perform this task. He says:

When Zayd set her free, We gave her in marriage to you so that the believers would not face difficulties about the wives of their adopted sons when they are divorced. **(Surah al–Ahzab, 33:37)**.

We think that this marriage, besides doing away with a wrong custom, also became a great manifestation of equality, because the Prophet married a lady who was previously the wife of his freed slave and in those days such a marriage was also considered to be socially undignified.

This brave step of the Prophet brought forth a torrent of criticism by the hypocrites and the short-sighted persons and they were spreading the news: "Muhammad has married the wife of his adopted son".

In order to crush such thinking the Almighty Allah revealed this verse:

Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets. **(Surah al-Ahzab, 33:40).**

The Holy Qur'an did not content itself with this only. Allah praised His Prophet, who had displayed great valour and bravery in carrying out His orders vide the 38th and 39th verses of Surah al-Ahzab. The gist of these two verses is this:

Muhammad is like other Prophets who conveyed Allah's messages to the people and he does not fear anyone in carrying out His order.[2]

This is the philosophy of the marriage of Prophet Muhammad with Zaynab. Now we study minutely the viewpoint of the orientalists on the subject.

The Forged Story About Zaynab Is A Mere Fiction

The marriage of the Prophet with Zaynab is a simple matter which is free from all ambiguities. However, as some orientalists have made this incident a pretext for misleading the simple-minded and ignorant people and have in this way tried to weaken the faith of those who do not have correct information about the character of the Prophet, it appears necessary that we should examine the remarks of this group of the orientalists and make matters clear.

As is well-known, the colonial powers do not utilize their military and economic power only to dominate the countries of the East, but at times they also enter through the door of learning and research and try, by means of carefully worked out schemes, to impose the worst type of colonialism (viz. intellectual colonialism) on these people.

In fact an orientalist is that very expansionist colonialist who acts in a particular manner in the heart of the society and amongst the enlightened people and pursues his colonial ends by stupefying the intellects of the educated class.

It is possible that most of the western writers and lovers of knowledge and learning may not endorse our above remarks and may accuse us of stiffness and fanaticism and may think that national or religious bias has made us express this opinion.

However, the writings of the orientalists and their concealment of facts and partial behaviour in matters relating to the history of Islam is a clear proof of the fact that most of them have not been motivated by thirst of knowledge and search for truth and their writings have been contaminated by a series of anti-

religious and anti-national thoughts.3390

The subject under discussion bears testimony to this fact. With the imagination peculiar to the people of the West they have given this marriage, the sole object of which was to abolish a false custom, the colour of 'love' and, fabricated a story, like the novelists and the story-tellers, associated it with the most sacred personality of the human world.

In any case the basis of this fiction are the sentences which have been quoted by Tabari4 and by Ibn Athir5 and some exegetes to the effect that one day the Prophet chanced to see Zaynab, the wife of Zayd. Zayd felt that the Prophet had fallen in love with Zaynab.

On account of the excessive regard which he had for the Prophet he came before him and proposed to divorce Zaynab, so that there might be no impediment in the way of the Prophet marrying her. The Prophet repeatedly forbade him to divorce his wife, but he eventually divorced her and the Prophet married her.

However, the orientalists, instead of studying authentic history, have not contented themselves even with this fabricated story and have embellished it so much that it has assumed the shape of the stories of the Arabian Nights.

No doubt those persons, who are acquainted with the lofty character of the Prophet have treated the original story and the embellishments thereon to be fabricated and a mere fancy and whim as they are absolutely incompatible with the positive standards of the life of the Prophet of Islam.

Moreover, scholars like Fakhr-i Razi and Alusi have clearly contradicted this story and say that it has been fabricated by the enemies of Islam and circulated amongst the Muslim writers.6

How can it be said that this historical fragment was believed in by Tabari and Ibn Athir, when dozens have quoted the reverse of it and consider the Prophet of Islam to be free from every corruption.

However, we should like to mention in these pages the signs and symptoms of the story being a fabricated one and to make the position too clear to need any further explanation and defence. Here are our testimonies:

1.The above-mentioned story is opposed to the final authority of Islam and the Muslims, because as evidenced by the 38th verse of Surah al-Ahzab the Prophet's marriage with Zaynab was to contradict the false notion of the Arabs that a person was not permitted to marry the former wife of an adopted son and this marriage took place in compliance with the Command of Allah and not as a consequence of love and romance.

In the early days of Islam none contradicted this fact and in case the remarks of the Qur'an had been opposed to reality the Jews, the Christians and the hypocrites would have immediately stood up to criticize them and would have kicked up a row, when, in fact, they could not prove anything adverse,

although they were always keen to find fault with the Prophet.

2. Zaynab was the same lady who had, before her marriage with Zayd, offered to marry the Prophet. However, notwithstanding her inclination, the Prophet insisted that she should marry his freed slave, Zayd. If the Prophet had really desired to marry her, there was no impediment in his way to do so. Then why did he not marry her? On the contrary we see that in spite of all the inclination which he observed in Zaynab he not only did not give her a positive reply but persuaded her to marry another person.

When their views are refuted by history there is no ground for embellishments by the colonialist intellectuals. And we consider the life of the Prophet, (who spent his time till the age of fifty years with a lady who was seventeen years older than he) to be too pure and superior to justify any repulsive remarks about him. We, therefore, refrain from quoting here the narrations of the orientalists.

Explanation Of Two Parts Of The Verse

To complete the discussion we reproduce here the verse which has been revealed on this subject including its two parts, which are the cause of hesitation and doubt among some persons who are not well–informed, and also give their explanation. Here is the text of the verse:

Say to the person to whom you and Allah have granted favour: "Keep your wife and have fear of Allah ". (**Surah al –Ahzab, 33:39**)

There is no ambiguity about this part of the verse. But the following two parts need explanation:

1. *"You hide within yourself what Allah wants to make public".* Now the question is while giving advice to Zayd what was the Prophet hiding which Allah was to bring to light?

It may possibly be imagined that what the Prophet was keeping secret was that although he was prohibiting Zayd from divorcing his wife he wished that he should divorce Zaynab so that he might marry her himself.

Such an eventuality cannot be correct for any reason, because if the Prophet was secretly thinking on these lines why did the Almighty not mention this fact through other verses when He says in this very part that whatever the Prophet was keeping secret would be divulged by Him?

Our great exegetes, therefore, say that what is meant by the thing which he was hiding is the revelation sent to him by Allah. To state explicitly: Allah had revealed to him that Zayd would divorce his wife and he (the Prophet) would marry her so as to contradict the false notion (i.e. it is unlawful for a person to marry the former wife of his adopted son). Hence, when he was advising Zayd he had this revelation in mind but kept it secret from Zayd and others. However, in the verse mentioned above, Allah tells the Prophet that He would make manifest what he has in his mind.

What has been stated above is supported by the fact that at the bottom of the same verse the Holy Qur'an mentions the matter in these words:

When Zayd set her free, We gave her in marriage to you so that the believers would not face difficulties about the wives of their adopted sons when they are divorced.

From the portion of the verse reproduced above it is learnt that what the Prophet was hiding was the very Divine revelation that to nullify a wrong custom he should marry the wife of his adopted son when the latter had divorced her.

2. You are afraid of people while it is Allah whom one should fear.

This portion is the second part which is less ambiguous as compared with the first portion, because to abolish a custom which has been prevalent in the polluted surroundings for some years or more (i.e. marriage with the former wife of an adopted son) is naturally coupled with mental uneasiness which is eliminated from the hearts of the Prophets by their paying attention to the Divine orders.

If the Prophet felt uneasy or was worried, it was because he was thinking that the Arabs, who had dissociated themselves from him, through ignorance and unclean thoughts would say: "The Prophet has resorted to something indecent" although, in fact, it is not indecent.

1. Refer to Usudul Ghabah, al-Isti'ab and al-Isabah under the root-word Zayd.
2. The text of the two verses are: The Prophet cannot be blamed for carrying out the commands of Allah. It was the tradition of Allah with those who lived before. The command of Allah has already been decreed and ordained. Those who preach the message of Allah and are humble before Him should not be afraid of anyone besides Allah. Allah is sufficient in keeping the account. (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:38-39)
3. For further information refer to the book, al-Mustashriqun.
4. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II.
5. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 121.
6. Mafatihul Ghayb Razi, vol. XV, page 212 and Ruhul Ma'ani, chapter 22, pp. 23-24.

In this battle the forces of the idolatrous Arabs and the Jews were mobilized against Islam and, after forming a strong military alliance, they besieged Madina for about one month. As various tribes and groups participated in this battle and as the Muslims dug a ditch around Madina to check the advance of the enemy, this battle is called the Battle of Ahzab (i.e. Battle of the Tribes); it is also named Battle of Khandaq (i.e. Battle of the Ditch).

Those, who sparked off this war, were the leaders of the Jewish tribe of Bani Nuzayr and also a group of Bani Wa'il. The strong blow which the Jews of Bani Nuzayr had received at the hands of the Muslims and the manner in which they left Madina under compulsion and settled in Khayber, made them draw out a minute plan for toppling down the very foundation of Islam. And, in fact, they did draw out a dangerous plan and confronted the Muslims along with various tribes. This occurrence was unprecedented in the

history of the Arabs.

Their planning was that the leaders of the tribe of Bani Nuzayr, like Salam bin Abil Haqiq and Hay bin Akhtab arrived in Makkah along with some persons belonging to the tribe of Wa'il and, having contacted the chiefs of Quraysh, spoke to them thus:

"Muhammad has made you and us his targets and compelled the Jews of Bani Qaynuqa' and Bani Nuzayr to quit their homeland. You people of Quraysh should rise and seek help from your allies and we have seven hundred Jewish swordsmen (Bani Qurayzah) who will rush to assist you. The Jews of Bani Qurayzah have ostensibly concluded a defence pact with Muhammad but we shall persuade them to ignore the pact and join you.1

The chiefs of Quraysh were disillusioned and tired of fighting with the Muslims but the boasting of these three persons impressed them and they liked and approved their plan. However, before expressing their approval they questioned the leaders of the Jews thus:

"You are the people of the Scriptures and followers of Heavenly Books and can very well distinguish between truth and falsehood. You know that we have no differences with Muhammad except on account of his religion which is opposite to ours. Now please tell us frankly which of the two religions is better – ours or his which is based on the worship of One Allah and breaking of the idols and pulling down of the idol–temples."

Let us see what reply these people (who considered themselves to be the supporters of the doctrine of Oneness of Allah and the standard–bearers of monotheism) gave to the ignorant and uninformed group who had acknowledged them to be learned and had placed their difficulties before them. They shamelessly replied: "Idolatry is better than the religion of Muhammad. You should remain steadfast in your faith and should not show the slightest inclination to his religion.2

It was a shameful stain on the character of the Jews, who made the face of the history of Judaism, which was already dark, still darker. This blunder on their part is so unpardonable that the Jewish writers express great sorrow for it. Dr. Israel writes thus in his book entitled History of the Jews and Arabia:

"It was not proper that the Jews should have committed such a mistake even though Quraysh might have rejected their request. Furthermore, it was not at all proper that they should have sought protection of the idolaters, because such an action is not in conformity with the teachings of the Taurat".3

In fact this is the policy which the materialist politicians of today adopt for the achievement of their aims and objects. they earnestly believe that one should utilize all permissible and unpermissible means to achieve one's object and in fact, according to their thinking, achievement of a purpose makes unpermissible things permissible for them, and morality is only that which helps then achieve their object.

The Holy Qur'an says thus about this bitter incident:

Haven't you seen how those who had been given a share of the Scripture believe in idols and Satan and say the disbelievers are better guided than the believers!. **(*S*urah al-Nisa, 4:51)**

The word of these so-called scholars impressed the idolaters. They, therefore, expressed agreement with their plan and the time of their advance to Madina was also settled.

Those people who there keen to trigger off the war came out of Makkah with happy hearts and first proceeded to Najd to contact the tribe of Ghatfan, who were the sworn enemies of Islam. Out of Ghatfan tribe the families of Bani Fazarah, Bani Murrah and Bani Ashja' conceded to their request on the condition that, after victory was achieved, they would be given one year's proceeds of Khayber.

The matter did not, however, end here, because Quraysh corresponded with their allies-Bani Salim, and Ghatfan with their allies - Bani Asad, and invited them to join this military alliance. Bani Salim and Bani Asad accepted their invitation and on the appointed day all these tribes rushed from different parts of Arabia to invade and conquer Madina.4

Intelligence Bureau Of Muslims

From the day the Prophet had settled down in Madina he always sent clever persons to different sides, so that they might inform him about the conditions prevailing in those areas as well as the activities of people residing outside the territories of Islam. The informants reported that a strong military alliance had been formed against Islam and those people would march on an appointed day to besiege Madina. The Prophet immediately formed a consultative council so that they might take decisions keeping in view the bitter experiences gained from the Battle of Uhud.

Some persons preferred fortified defence from the towers and the high places instead of going out of the city to face the enemy. However, this scheme was not adequate, because the huge pack of warriors of Arabia with thousands of soldiers could destroy the fortresses and the towers and could overpower the Muslims. It was, therefore, necessary to take steps to ensure that the enemy did not succeed in approaching Madina.

Salman Farsi, who was fully conversant with the art of Iranian warfare, said: "In Persia, as and when people are threatened with an attack by the enemies, they dig a deep ditch around the town and thus check their advance. Hence, it would be appropriate to safeguard the vulnerable points of Madina by means of a ditch and thus to hold back the enemy in those areas.

Simultaneously, towers and sentry posts should be constructed by the bank of the ditch for purposes of defence and the enemies should be prevented from crossing the ditch by shooting arrows and hurling stones on them from the towers and the fortresses".5

The suggestion made by Salman was accepted unanimously and this defensive scheme contributed a good deal towards the safety of the Muslims accompanied by some persons, personally inspected the vulnerable points and marked out the spots where the ditch was to be dug. It was decided that the ditch should be dug from Uhud up to Ratij and, in order to maintain a good order, every forty cubits were entrusted to ten men.

The Prophet himself struck the first pick on the ground and began digging the earth when Ali busied himself with throwing the clay out. The face and forehead of the Prophet was perspiring and he was uttering, "Real life is the life of the Hereafter. O Allah! Forgive the Muhajirs and the Ansar! "

By engaging himself in this work the Prophet manifested a part of the programme of Islam and made the Muslim society understand that a commander of the army and a leader of the society should endure hardships like others and should alleviate their burden.

The Prophet's labour created a peculiar enthusiasm amongst the Muslims and all of them, without any exception, started work, so much so that the Jews belonging to the tribe of Bani Qurayzah who had concluded a pact with the Muslims also rendered help by providing implements.6 The Muslims were very hard up in those days for provisions, and the well-off families were rendering help to the soldiers of Islam.

When the digging of the ditch became difficult on account of the appearance of big stones they approached the Prophet, who himself broke the big rocks with a strong blow.

The length of the ditch can be estimated by taking into account the number of workers. According to a popular version the number of the Muslims in those days was 3000,7 and if digging of 40 cubits was performed by ten persons the length of the ditch would come to 12,000 cubits and its breadth was so much that clever and experienced riders could not cross it on horseback.

The Well-Known Remarks Of The Prophet About Salman

When the workers were being distributed a dispute cropped up between the Muhajirs and the Ansar with regard to Salman. Each of the two parties claimed that Salman belonged to them and should work along with them. At this juncture the Prophet put an end to the dispute with a decisive order and said: "Salman is one of the members of my household".

The Prophet spent his days and nights by the bank of the ditch till the work was completed. However, the hypocrites failed to do the work on various excuses and at times went away to their houses without obtaining permission from the Prophet, while the true believers remained busy in their work with firm determination, and discontinued work on good excuse after obtaining permission from the commander, and returned to work again when the excuse ceased to exist. This matter has been narrated in the 62nd and 63rd verses of Surah al-Nur.

The Army Of The Arabs And The Jews Besieges Madina

The Arab army encamped like swarms of ants and locusts on the bank of the deep ditch, which was dug by the Muslims only six days before their arrival. They had been expecting to face the army of Islam at the foot of Mt. Uhud, but when they reached the desert of Uhud they did not find any trace of the Muslims there.

They, therefore, continued their march till they reached the bank of the ditch. They were surprised to see the ditch round the vulnerable parts of Madina and all of them said: "Muhammad has learnt these war tactics from an Iranian, because the Arabs are not acquainted with this type of warfare".

Number Of Soldiers Of The Two Forces

The army of the Arabs exceeded 10,000 persons. The lustre of their swords from behind the ditch dazzled the eyes. As quoted by Maqrizi in al-Imta', Quraysh alone encamped on the bank of the ditch with 4000 soldiers, three hundred horses and 1500 camels, and the tribe of Salim joined them in Marruz Zahran with 700 men. The tribe of Bani Fazarah with 1000 men and the tribes of Bani Ashja' and Bani Murrah with 400 men each and other tribes, whose total number exceeded 10,000 men, encamped in another part.

The Muslims did not exceed three thousand and their camping place was in the foot of Mt. Sala', which is an elevated spot. This point fully controlled the ditch as well as its outer parts and all the activities and movements of the enemy could be seen clearly from there.

Some Muslims had been posted to protect the towers and the sentry posts and to control traffic over the ditch, and they prevented the enemy from crossing the ditch by means of natural and artificial fortifications.

The army of the Arabs stayed on the other side of the ditch for about one month and during this period not more than a few persons were able to cross it. And those who tried to cross the ditch were repulsed by means of special stones which were used in those times instead of the bullets of today. During this period the Muslims had some interesting adventures with the transgressing Arabs which are recorded in history.8

The Rigours Of Winter And The Shortage Of Provisions

The Battle of Ahzab took place in winter. Madina was faced with drought that year and a state of semi-famine prevailed. The provisions available with the army of the Arabs were not sufficient to permit them to stay on any more, because they had never thought that they would be detained on the bank of a ditch for full one month. On the contrary they were sure that with a single attack they would be able to overcome the warriors of Islam and would put them to the sword.

Those who had sparked off the war (i.e. the Jews) realized this critical situation after a few days. They understood that with the passage of time the resolution of the commanders of the army would be weakened and they would succumb to the rigours of winter and the shortage of fodder and foodstuffs. They, therefore, thought of seeking help from Bani Qurayzah, who were residing within Madina, so that they might trigger off the war within the city and thus open the way for the army of the Arabs to enter it.

Hay Bin Akhtab Arrives In The Fortress Of Bani Qurayzah

Bani Qurayzah were the only Jews who were residing in Madina, side by side with the Muslims, in perfect peace and tranquility and respected the pact which they had concluded with Prophet Muhammad.

Hay bin Akhtab felt that victory could be gained by seeking help for the army of the Arabs from inside Madina. He decided to instigate Bani Qurayzah to repudiate the pact made with the Muslims so that fighting might flare up between them and this internal disturbance might facilitate victory for the army of the Arabs. With this plan in his mind he approached the fortress of Bani Qurayzah and introduced himself. Ka'b, who was the chief of Bani Qurayzah, ordered that the gate of the fortress might not be opened.

However, Hay insisted and entreated and said aloud: "O Ka'b! Are you not opening the gate because you are afraid of your bread and water (i.e. because you are afraid that you will have to feed me?) This sentence reflected upon the generosity and manliness of an indisputable chief like Ka'b. It, therefore, prompted him to order that the gate might be opened for Hay.

The war-monger sat by the side of his co-religionist and spoke to him thus: "I have brought a world of honour and greatness towards you. The chiefs of Quraysh, the nobles of Arabia and the princes of Ghatfan who are fully equipped, have encamped on the bank of the ditch to destroy the common enemy (the Prophet) and have given me a promise that until they have killed Muhammad and his companions they will not return to their homes".

Ka'b replied: "I swear by the Almighty that you have brought humiliation and disgrace. In my view the army of the Arabs is like a rainless cloud which thunders but does not rain. O son of Akhtab! O war-monger! Keep your hands off us. The fine qualities of Prophet Muhammad prohibit us from ignoring the pact which we have concluded with him. We have seen nothing from him except truthfulness, sincerity and righteousness. So how can we betray him?

Like a skilled camel-man who tames a refractory camel by rubbing its hump, Hay bin Akhtab said so many things to Ka'b that eventually he agreed to repudiate the pact. Hay also promised Ka'b that if the army of the Arabs was not victorious over Muhammad, he (Hay) himself would come to the fortress and share the fate of Ka'b.

Ka'b called the chiefs of the Jews in the presence of Hay and formed a consultative council and invited their opinions. All of them said: "You may decide whatever you consider expedient and we shall obey you".9

Zubayr Bata, who was an old man, said: "I have read in the Taurat that in later times a Prophet will rise from Makkah. He will migrate to Madina. His religion will spread throughout the world and no army will gain a victory over him. If Muhammad is the same Prophet this army will not be victorious over him".

The son of Akhtab said at once: "That Prophet will be from amongst Bani Israel, whereas Muhammad is a descendant of Isma'il; he has collected these people around him by means of deceit and magic".

He talked so much on the subject that he succeeded in making them decide to violate the pact. He also called for the pact which had been concluded between Prophet Muhammad and Bani Qurayzah and tore it into pieces before their very eyes. Then he said: "The matter is now finished. You should get ready to wage war".10

The Prophet Becomes Aware Of The Violation Of The Pact By Bani Qurayzah

The Prophet was informed by his skilled functionaries about the violation of the pact by Bani Qurayzah at this critical juncture. He was very much worried on this account. He at once deputed Sa'd Mu'az and Sa'd 'Ubadah, who were brave soldiers of Islam and chiefs of the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, to collect authentic information.

He also instructed them that if the betrayal by Bani Qurayzah was found to be a fact they should inform him about it by using the code-word of 'Azal and Qarah (names of two tribes who invited Muslim missionaries to their lands and then cut off their heads) and if they were firm with regard to the pact they should contradict the accusation openly. Both of them went up to the gate of the fortress of Bani Qurayzah along with two other persons.

On their first encounter with Ka'b they heard nothing from him except abusive and foul language. One of them then said with occult inspiration: "By Allah! The army of the Arabs will go away from this territory and the Prophet will besiege this fortress and will chop off your heads and will make time difficult for your tribe". Then they returned immediately and said to the Prophet: 'Azal and Qarah ".

The Prophet said loudly: "Allah is Great! O Muslims! There are good tidings for you that victory is near". This sentence, which manifests the perfect bravery and sagacity of the great leader of Islam, was uttered to ensure that the morale of the Muslims might not be weakened on hearing about the violation of the pact by Bani Qurayzah.11

Initial Transgressions By Bani Qurayzah

The initial plan of Bani Qurayzah that in the first instance they should plunder Madina and frighten the women and the children of the Muslims who had taken shelter in their houses. They, therefore, put this plan in to practice in Madina gradually.

For example the brave men of Bani Qurayzah began going to and fro in the city in a mysterious manner, so much so that Safiyah, daughter of Abdul Muttalib, said: "I was staying in the house of Hassan bin Thabit and Hassan and his wife were also residing there.

Suddenly I saw a Jew loitering about around the fort in a mysterious manner. I said to Hassan: "The intentions of this man are not good. Get up and drive him away". Hassan said: "O daughter of Abdul Muttalib! I don't possess enough courage to kill him and I am afraid that if I go out of this fort I shall meet harm". I, therefore, got up myself, girded my loin, picked up a piece of iron and killed the Jew with one blow.

The person appointed by the Muslims to collect information reported to the Prophet that Bani Qurayzah had asked Quraysh and Ghatfan to make available two thousand soldiers who should enter Madina from within the fortress and plunder the city. This report was received when the Muslims were guarding the bank of the ditch lest the enemy should cross it.

The Prophet immediately appointed two officers named Zayd Harithah and Maslamah Aslam along with five hundred soldiers to patrol the city and, while uttering *Takbir* (*Allaho Akbar*– Allah is Great!) prevent Bani Qurayzah from committing transgression so that the women and the children should feel comforted by hearing *Takbir.* 12

Encounter Between Faith And Infidelity

By the time the Battle of Ahzab took place the idolaters and the Jews had fought various battles against Islam. However, all these were special battles limited to one community or group only, and did not possess a general aspect to involve the entire Arabian Peninsula in a battle against Islam. As, however, they did not succeed, in spite of all their efforts, to topple down the newly–founded State of Islam, but on this occasion, a mixed army, consisting of the people of different tribes, so as to finish Islam. Speaking idiomatically, they shot the last arrow in their quiver at the Muslims.

Hence, after spending much money and also requesting others for help, they mobilized a big army so that if the Muslims did not take any precautionary measures to defend Madina they might gain an easy victory over them and thus achieve their goal. For this purpose they also brought with them the great champion of Arabia ('Amr bin Abdiwad) so that all difficulties might be solved through the strength of his arm.

On this account, during the days of the Battle of Ahzab and in fact at the time of the encounter between the two respective champions of polytheism and Islam, infidelity and Islam faced each other and this combat was between infidelity and Faith (Islam).

One of the reasons for the failure of the army of the Arabs was the very ditch which had been dug in their way. The army of the enemy tried day and night to cross the ditch, but every time they were faced with the furious attacks of the sentries as planned by the Prophet.

The biting winter of that year and the shortage of foodstuff and fodder were threatening the lives of the Arab army and their animals. Hay bin Akhtab (who had initiated the war) obtained twenty camel-loads of palm-dates from the Jews of Bani Qurayzah but the same were confiscated by the Muslims and distributed amongst the soldiers of Islam.13

One day Abu Sufyan wrote the following letter to the Prophet: "I have come with a big army to overthrow your religion. But what to do? For it appears that you have considered confrontation with us to be abominable and have dug a ditch between us and yourself. I do not know from whom you have learnt this military strategy, but I have to tell you that until I have waged a bloody battle like Uhud I will not return".

The Prophet sent him this reply: "From Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah to Abu Sufyan bin Harb.....You have been priding yourself since long and imagine that you can extinguish the light of Islam. However, you should know that you are too humble to do this. You will return soon after suffering defeat and I shall later, break the big idols of Quraysh before your very eyes".

Reply to the letter, which was indicative of the firm determination of the writer settled in the heart of the commander of the enemy like an arrow. As those people believed in the truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad their morale was weakened.

In spite of this, however, they did not give up their efforts. One night Khalid bin Walid attempted to cross the ditch along with a special battalion. However, he had to retreat on account of the vigilance of two hundred soldiers of Islam serving under the command of Usayd Khizr.

The Prophet was not negligent of strengthening the morale of the soldiers of Islam even for a moment and encouraged them with his stirring and impressive speeches, to defend the freedom of their faith.

One day he turned his face to the soldiers and the officers in a magnificent gathering and after a brief invocation to Allah addressed them thus: "O soldiers of Islam! Remain steadfast before the enemy and remember that Paradise is under the shadow of those swords which are drawn in the path of truth and justice".14

Some Champions Of The Arab Army Cross The Ditch

Five champions named 'Amr bin Abdiwad, 'Ikrimah bin Abu Jahl, Hubayrah bin Wahab, Nawfal bin Abdullah and Zirar bin Khattab put on their military dress and, standing in front of the army of Bani Kananah, said with peculiar vanity: "Get ready for fighting. Today you will realize as to who are the real champions of the Arab army".

Then they galloped their horses and jumped over the ditch at a point at which its breadth was a little lesser. These five champions went beyond the reach of the arrows of the soldiers who were guarding the ditch. However, the point at which they had crossed was encircled immediately and trespassing by others was prevented.

The halting place of these five champions who had come for single combat was situated between the ditch and the Sal'a mountain (the headquarters of the army of Islam). The Arab champions were playing with their horses with a peculiar vanity and pride, and were challenging their adversaries by means of hints and signs.[15]

Out of these five persons, however, the one who was most famous for his valour and skill, came forward and formally challenged his opponent to fight. Every moment he was raising his voice and his demand for an adversary was ringing in the field and making the hearers shiver. The silence of the Muslims made him bolder and he said:

"Where are the claimants of Paradise? Don't you, Muslims, say that those who are killed from amongst you will go to Paradise and those who are killed from amongst us will go to Hell? Is not even one of you prepared to send me to Hell or to go to Paradise at my hands? He also composed some verses in this behalf, the purport of the first verse is: "I have got tired of shouting and challenging (to a single combat) and my voice has become hoarse".

Perfect silence prevailed in the army of Islam in reply to 'Amr's shouting. Although the Prophet kept asking that one man should get up and relieve the Muslims from the mischief of that man ('Amr), but none was prepared to fight with him (except Ali bin Abi Talib).[16] No alternative was, therefore, left except that this difficulty should be surmounted through Ali, the brave.

The Prophet gave him his own sword, tied a special turban on his head and prayed for him in these words: "O Allah! Protect Ali from all sides. O Lord! 'Ubaydah bin Harith was taken away from me on the Day of Badr and, the lion of Allah, Hamzah was taken away in the Battle of Uhud. O Nourisher! Protect Ali from being harmed by the enemy". Then he recited this verse:

"O *Nourisher! Don't leave me alone and you are the best inheritor".* [17] **(Surah al-Anbiya, 21:89)**

Ali walked as quickly as possible to cover the delay already caused. At this moment the Prophet uttered this historical sentence: "Entire faith is facing entire infidelity". Ali composed *rajaz* (epic verses), whose

rhythm and rhyme conformed with that of his adversary's, and said: "Don't be in a hurry, because a strong person has come in the field to give you a reply".

The entire body of Ali was covered with iron armour and his eyes were shining through the helmet. 'Amr desired to identify his adversary. He said to Ali: "Who are you?" Ali, who was famous for the clearness of his accent, replied: "I am Ali, son of Abu Talib".

'Amr said: "I shall not shed your blood, because your father was one of my old friends. I am thinking about your cousin who has sent you in the field with so much confidence. I can pick you up on the point of my lance and keep you suspended between the earth and the sky so that you are neither dead nor alive".

Ibn Abil Hadid says: "Whenever my teacher of history (Abul Khayr) explained this portion he used to say: "In fact 'Amr was afraid of fighting with Ali, because he was present in the Battles of Badr and Uhud and had witnessed his valour. He therefore, wished to dissuade Ali from fighting with him".

Ali said: "You need not bother about my death. In both the cases (i.e. whether I kill or am killed) I shall be blessed and my place shall be in Paradise, but in all cases Hell awaits you". 'Amr smiled and said: "O Ali! This division is not just. Both Paradise and Hell belong to you ".

Ali reminded him that one day he ('Amr) had put his hand into the coverings of the Holy Ka'bah and had made a promise to Allah that as and when any warrior made three suggestions to him in the battlefield he would accept one of them. Ali, therefore, suggested to him that he should embrace Islam. He replied: "O Ali! Leave this for it is not possible".

Then Ali said: "Abandon fighting and leave Muhammad to himself". He replied: "It is a matter of shame for me to accept this proposal, because tomorrow. the poets of Arabia will satirize me and will imagine that I did so on account of fear". Then Ali said: "Your opponent is on foot. You should also dismount so that we may combat with each other". He said: "O Ali! This is a very insignificant suggestion and I had never thought that an Arab would make such a request to me".[18]

Combat Between The Two Champions Commences

Fierce fighting started between the two champions and both of them were enveloped in dust, so that the on-lookers were not aware of the developments. They could only hear the clashing of their swords. 'Amr aimed his sword at the head of Ali and although the latter warded off the blow with his special shield his head was, nevertheless, wounded. He, however, availed of the opportunity and gave a sharp blow on his feet. Consequently one or both of the feet of 'Amr were cut off and he fell down on the ground.

The voice of Takbir was heard from within the dust which was a sign of Ali's victory. The scene of the fall of 'Amr on the ground created such a fear in the hearts of other warriors, who were standing behind him, that they galloped their horses involuntarily towards the ditch and all of them, except Nawfal, returned to

their camping-place. Nawfal's horse fell into the ditch. Those who were posted on the bank of the ditch began to stone him.

He, however, said loudly: "To kill a person like this is contrary to the code of bravery. Let one of you come down so that we may fight with each other". Ali plunged into the ditch and killed him.

Fear overtook the entire army of the polytheists and Abu Sufyan was more terrified than every one else. He thought that Muslims would mutilate the body of Nawfal to take revenge of Hamzah. He, therefore, sent some one to purchase the dead body of Nawfal for ten thousand Dinars. The Prophet, however, said: " Hand over the dead body to them and it is not permissible in Islam to take the price of the dead."

The Value Of This Blow

Although, ostensibly Ali killed a fierce enemy of Islam, but in reality he restored to life those persons who had been trembling to hear the heart-rending roarings of 'Amr and also terrified the ten thousand strong army which had determined to finish the newly-formed State of Islam. The value of this self-sacrifice would have become known if the victory (in the absence of Ali) had fallen to the share of 'Amr.

When Ali had the honour to present himself before the Prophet the latter assessed the value of the blow given by him to 'Amr in these words: "The value of this self-sacrifice excels all the good deeds of my followers, because, as a consequence of the defeat of the greatest champion of infidelity the Muslims have become honourable and the community of infidels has become degraded and humble".19

Magnanimity

The coat-of-mail of 'Amr was very costly but Ali was too magnanimous to touch it, although the Second Caliph criticized him for not having removed it from the body of 'Amr. 'Amr's sister came to know about the incident and said: "I am not at all sad on account of my brother being killed, because he has been killed at the hands of a magnanimous person. If it had not been so I would have been shedding tears throughout my life."20

The Army Of The Arabs Is Divided

The motive of the Arab and the Jew armies for fighting against Islam was not one and the same. The Jews were afraid of the ever-increasing expansion of Islam, whereas Quraysh were motivated by their old enmity for Islam and the Muslims. As regards the tribes of Ghatfan and Fazarah and other tribes they had participated in this battle for the sake of the proceeds of Khayber which the Jews had promised them.

Hence, the motive of the last group was purely material and if their object could be achieved through the Muslims they would very gladly have returned to their homes, especially because winter and shortage of

provisions and prolonged siege of the city had made them dejected and their animals were on the brink of death.

The Prophet, therefore, appointed a body of men to conclude a pact with the chiefs of the said tribes to the effect that the Muslims were prepared to give them one-third of the fruits of Madina, provided they dissociated themselves from the ranks of Ahzab (tribes) and returned to their own areas. The representatives of the Prophet drew up an agreement with the chiefs of the tribes and brought it to him for his endorsement.

However, the Prophet placed the matter before two brave officers namely Sa'd Mu'az and Sa'd 'Ubadah. Both of them stated unanimously that if this pact was to be concluded in compliance with the command of Allah it would be acceptable to the Muslims, but if it was according to the personal view of the Prophet and their opinion was being sought they thought that the proposal should end then and there and should not be approved. As regards the reason for their saying so they stated:

"We have never paid tribute to these tribes and none of them could pick up courage to take even one palm-date from us by force and coercion. And now that we have embraced Islam by the grace of Allah and under your guidance and have become honourable and respectable by means of Islam the question of our paying them any tribute does not arise. By Allah! We shall reply to their vain and hollow demand with our swords until the matter is settled by Divine commandment".

The Prophet said: "The reason for my thinking about such a pact was this that I saw that you had become the target of the Arab army and were being attacked from all sides. I, therefore, thought that this problem should be solved by creating a rift between the enemies.

However, now that your firm resolution has become evident, I hereby stay the conclusion of the pact and say to you-and believe in what I say that Allah will not humiliate His Prophet and will carry out His promise about the victory of monotheism over polytheism". At this stage Sa'd Mu'az deleted the contents of the deed with the permission of the Prophet and said: "The idolaters may do whatever they like. We are not a people who pay tribute".21

Factors Which Divided The Arab Army

1. The first factor of success was the talks between the representatives of the Prophet and the chiefs of the tribes of Ghatfan and Fazarah. For, although this agreement was not approved finally, its violation and rejection was also not announced. In this way the said tribes became double-minded with regard to their allies and were continuously awaiting the confirmation of the agreement and whenever they were asked to carry out a general attack they rejected such demands on one excuse or another in the hope of the conclusion of the agreement in question.

2 Many persons had pinned their hopes on the success and victory of 'Amr, the mighty champion of

Arabia. Consequently, when he was killed, intense fear prevailed among them. It was especially so, because, after 'Amr being killed, other champions fled the battlefield.

3. Na'im bin Mas'ud, who had embraced Islam recently, played a great part in creating differences between the tribes. He chalked out an excellent espionage plan which was not less shrewd than the activities of the spies of the present times; it was rather superior and more effective.

He came in the presence of the Prophet and said: "I have embraced Islam recently and have very old friendly relation with all these tribes, but they are not aware of my conversion to Islam. If there are any orders you may like to give, I shall carry them out". The Prophet said: "Do something to scatter these people" i.e. there is no harm if planning is done and a remedy is sought to safeguard some sublimer interests.

Na'im thought over the matter for some time. Then, in the first instance, he went to the tribe of Bani Qurayzah who were in fact the fifth column of the enemy and were threatening the Muslims from the back door. He arrived in the fortress of Bani Qurayzah and expressed deep affection and friendship with them and said all sorts of things whereby he could gain their confidence. Then he added:

"Your position is different as compared with the allied tribes (viz. Quraysh and Ghatfan), because Madina is the residence of your women and children and all your property is here and you cannot at all afford to shift elsewhere, whereas the centres of life and business of the allied tribes, who have come to fight against Muhammad, are outside Madina and far away from it. If they are successful in the war they will achieve their object, but if they are defeated they will at once march off to their places which are beyond the reach of Muhammad.

You should, however, know that if the tribes are not successful and return to their places abandoning warfare, you will be left at the mercy of the Muslims. I think that now, as you have associated yourselves with the tribes, it is better that you should stick to this decision.

However, in order to ensure that the tribes will not leave you alone during the war and return to their homes you should take some of their nobles and chiefs as hostages so that when the circumstances become difficult they should not abandon you and should settle the affairs, because they will be obliged to fight against Muhammad to the last in order to get their men released".

The views of Na'im were endorsed unanimously and he was satisfied that his words had the desired effect on them. Then he left their fortress and went to the camping-place of the tribes. The chiefs of Quraysh were his old friends. Hence, during his conversation with them he said:

"Bani Qurayzah are very much ashamed and repentant to have violated their pact with Muhammad and now wish to make amends for it. They have, therefore, decided to take some of your men as hostages and hand them over to Muhammad.

In this way they will prove their sincerity and Muhammad will kill your men immediately. They have already discussed this matter with Muhammad and have assured him that they will henceforth support him to the last moment of their lives and Muhammad has also endorsed their plan. Hence, if the Jews demand hostages from you, you should not agree at all. You should know that the result of such an action will be dangerous.

A clear proof of this fact is that in case you ask them tomorrow to take part in the battle and attack Muhammad from behind you will see that they will not at all agree to do so and will put forth different excuses. Then he went to the camping-place of Ghatfan and had a talk with them in a particular manner.

He said: "You, the tribe of Ghatfan are my kith and kin. I don't think you will accuse me for what I say. I will talk with you about something but I wish that you will not mention it to anyone. All acknowledged him to be a truthful person and their friend. Then he told them in detail what he had already told Quraysh and warned them about the activities of Bani Qurayzah and said: "You should not give them a positive reply in any circumstances".

He discharged his responsibility creditably well. Then he came to the camping-place of the Muslims secretly and published all this gossip amidst the army of Islam (i.e. the Jews wanted to take hostages from the forces of the Arabs and to surrender them to the Muslims). No doubt the object of this publicity was that the matter should cross the ditch and reach the ears of the Arabs.

Representatives Of Quraysh Visit The Fortress Of Bani Qurayzah

Abu Sufyan decided during the night preceding Saturday to settle the affair. The chiefs of Quraysh and Ghatfan sent their representatives to the fortress of Bani Qurayzah and they said to them (i.e. to Bani Qurayzah): "This is not the region of our residence, and our animals are dying. You should attack the Muslims tomorrow from the back door so that we may settle this affair". The chief of Bani Qurayzah said in reply:

"Tomorrow is Saturday and we Jews don't undertake any work on that day, because some of our ancestors resorted to work on this day and were subjected to Divine wrath. Furthermore, we are prepared to participate in fighting only if some of the nobles of the tribes are available in our fortress as hostages, so that you may fight to the last moment to ensure their release and may not leave us friendless".

The representatives of Quraysh returned and informed the chiefs of the tribes of the position. All of them said: "Na'im was correct in expressing sympathy with us and Bani Qurayzah want to deceive us". The representatives of Quraysh contacted the chiefs of Bani Qurayzah and said: "It is not possible for us to surrender our nobles to you as hostages and we are not prepared to give you even one of our men as a surety. In case you are inclined to attack the Muslims you should do so tomorrow and we shall assist

you with all our resources".

The words of the representatives of Quraysh and especially their saying that they were not prepared to surrender even one person as a hostage convinced Bani Qurayzah that whatever Na'im had said was correct. It confirmed their fears that Quraysh were far-sighted and if they did not succeed in the matter they would return home and leave them (i.e. Bani Qurayzah) at the mercy of the Muslims.22

The Last Factor

Another factor, which may, in fact, be called Divine assistance, was added to the above-mentioned factors and scattered the tribes. This factor was that suddenly the atmosphere became stormy and the weather grew very cold. The change in the atmosphere became so radical that the tents were pulled off, the pots in which food was being cooked were turned upside down, the lamps were extinguished and burning fire was scattered in the desert.

At this juncture the Prophet deputed Huzayfah to cross the ditch and collect information about the enemy. He says: "I managed to reach near Abu Sufyan and saw him addressing the commanders of the army. He was saying: "The spot at which we have encamped is not the place of our residence. Our animals are dying and the wind and storm has not spared tents, sheds and fire for us. Bani Qurayzah, too, have not helped us. It is better if we march off from here".

Then he mounted his camel whose knees were tied and whipped it repeatedly. The poor man was so much afraid and puzzled that he could not realized that the knees of the camel were tied.

It was not yet dawn, when the army of the Arabs left the place and none of them could be seen there any longer."23

1. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. II, page 441.
2. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 214; Tarikh-i Tabari, vol II, p. 233.
3. Hayat-i Muhammad.
4. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. II, page 443.
5. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 224.
6. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. II, page 445.
7. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 220; Mughazi, vol. II, p. 453.
8. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 238.
9. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. II, pp. 455 – 456.
10. Biharul Anwar, vol. II, page 223.
11. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. II, pp. 458-459.
12. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. II, page 335.
13. Seerah-i Halabi, Vol. II, page 345
14. Seerah-i Halabi. vol. II, page 349.
15. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 239 and Tabaqat-i Kubra, vol. II, page 86.
16. Waqidi says: Perfect silence prevailed amongst the Muslims when 'Amr was challenging (for a single combat), Mughazi, vol: II, page 470.

17. Kanzul Fawa'id, page 137.
18. Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 227.
19. Bihar, vol. XX, page 216 and Mustadrak Hakim, vol. III, page 32.
20. Mustadrak Hakim, vol. XXX, page 33.
21. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 223; Bihar, vol. XX, p. 252.
22. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, pp. 229-231; Tarikh-i Tabari, v. II, pp. 242-243.
23. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 244

During the first year of his arrival in Madina the Prophet drew up a vital document and a basic law for Madina and its suburbs to put an end to factions and internal differences and the Jews and the tribes of Aws and Khazraj generally agreed to defend this region. The articles and all the particulars of this document have already been studied by the readers.

Besides this he also concluded another pact with the Jews of Madina. It was endorsed generally by different groups of the Jews. It was agreed that if they did any harm to the Prophet or to his companions or supplied arms or animals of riding to their enemies the Prophet would be free to execute them confiscate their property and captivate their women and children.

The agreement was, however, violated and ignored by all groups of the Jews in different ways. Bani Qaynuqa killed a Muslim. Bani Nuzayr plotted to kill the Prophet and he, therefore, compelled them to leave their country and go out of the zone of the Muslims. As regards Bani Qurayzah, they co-operated wholeheartedly with the army of the Arabs to harm Islam. Now let us see how the Prophet chastised and punished Bani Qurayzah.

Before the day dawned the last unit of the tribes left the territory of Madina under extreme fear. Notwithstanding the fact that the signs of fatigue and weariness were apparent in the faces of the Muslims, the Prophet was ordered by Allah to settle the affair of Bani Qurayzah. The mu'azzin called the people to prayers and the Prophet offered noon prayers along with the Muslims. Then the mu'azzin announced under the orders of the Prophet: "The Muslims should offer their afternoon prayers in the area of Bani Qurayzah".

Then the Prophet gave the standard to Ali. Brave soldiers marched off under his command and besieged the fortress of Bani Qurayzah. The watch-man reported the movements of the army of Islam to the inmates of the fortress. The gates of the fortress were closed immediately but cold war commenced with the arrival of the army of Islam.

The Jews of Bani Qurayzah abused the Prophet from the windows and the towers of the fortress. The standard-bearer of the army, Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, proceeded to Madina to prevent the Prophet from coming near the fortress so that he might not hear the indecent words of the Jews.

The Prophet, however, told Ali that if they (the Jews) saw him they would refrain from using abusive

language. He, therefore, came near the fortress and spoke to them somewhat harshly and said: "Did the Almighty not humiliate you?"

This sort of harshness and vehemence on the part of the Prophet was unprecedented for the Jews. In order to pacify the Prophet, therefore, they said immediately: "O Abul Qasim! You were not a hot-tempered person!"

These words stimulated the sentiments of the Prophet so much that he turned back involuntarily and his cloak fell down from his shoulder.1

Consultations By The Jews Within The Fortress

Hay bin Akhtab Nuzayri, who had sparked off the Battle of Ahzab participated in these discussions, because, according to the promise made by him with Ka'b As'ad, the chief of Bani Qurayzah, he did not go to Khayber after the dispersion of the tribes and instead came to the fortress of Bani Qurayzah. The chief of the community put up three proposals and requested the people to accept any one of them. He said:

1. "All of us should embrace Islam, because the Prophethood of Muhammad is an established fact and proved to all, and the Taurat also confirms it.

2. We should kill our women and children and then come out of the fortress and fight with the Muslims with a free hand. If we are killed we have nothing to worry and if we are victorious we can acquire women and children once again.

3. This night is the night preceding Saturday. Muhammad and his companions must be thinking that the Jews don't do anything on the night preceding Saturday and on Saturday. Hence we should take advantage of their negligence and attack them at night".

The consultative body rejected all the three proposals and said: "we shall not renounce our religion and the Taurat, and our lives also will not be pleasant after our women and children (are killed). As regards the third proposal it cannot be acted upon in view of our religious beliefs, because if we do so we may become subjected to Divine wrath in the same manner in which former communities had to face God's punishment on account of their not having accorded due respect to Saturday".2

The speeches of the members of the consultative body are best guides for us to understand their mentality. Their rejection of the first proposal shows that they were an obstinate and inimical people, because if they really believed in the prophethood, (as stated by their chief) their opposition to him meant nothing except obstinacy.

As regards the second proposal the conversation which took place among them shows that they were a cruel and hard-hearted people, because killing of innocent women and children is not possible without

acute hard-heartedness. It deserves attention that the members of the consultative body rejected this proposal on account of the fact that their lives would not be pleasant without the women and the children.

Not even one person enquired as to what offence these helpless persons had committed on account of which they should be put to death and how could they, their kind and benevolent fathers, do such an act when the Prophet would never kill them if he gained control over them.

The third proposal shows that they had not properly assessed the spiritual strength of the Prophet and his knowledge of military arts and principles of defence, and thought that the Prophet of Islam would not take necessary precautions during the night and day of Saturday -and that too about an enemy like the Jews who are well-known for their deceit and cunning.

The study of the incident of Ahzab proves that there were only a few clever and wise persons amongst this community, or else they could protect their existence in a diplomatic manner without aligning themselves with any party (i.e. Islam or infidelity). In fact they could remain on-lookers of the fight between the Prophet and the army of the Arabs and, whichever party succeeded, their existence and supremacy would have been ensured.

Unfortunately, however, they were deceived by the glib-tonguedness of Hay bin Akhtab and they aligned themselves with the army of the Arabs, and their misfortune became acute when, after co-operating with the Arab army for a month, they declined to assist Quraysh and, while surrendering to the design of Na'im bin Mas'ud, sent a message to Quraysh that they would not assist them against the Prophet unless they handed over to them some of their noble persons as hostages.

At this moment these stupid persons completely lost their good sense. They did not realize that, on the one hand, they had risen up against the Prophet and if, on the other hand, they cut off their relations with Quraysh and, if the Arab army felt weak and returned to their homes abandoning warfare, they (Bani Qurayzah) would be at the mercy of the Muslims.

If they had chalked out a proper political plan they should have, immediately, on breaking off their relations with the Arab army, expressed regret for having violated their pact with the Muslims, so that they should have remained safe from the danger of their (Muslims) probable victory. However, they fell prey to ill luck, for they cut off their relations with Quraysh and did not also join the Muslims.

After the departure of the Arab army the Prophet could not afford to leave Bani Qurayzah to themselves, because it was probable that they (the Arab army) might come once again at some appropriate time, with sufficient equipment, to conquer Madina and endanger the very existence of Islam with the cooperation of Bani Qurayzah, who were the key to the victory and defeat of Islam and were considered to be its internal enemies. For this reason the solution of the problem of Bani Qurayzah and settlement of their affair was a vital matter for the Muslims.

Betrayal By Abu Lubabah

After having been besieged, the Jews of Bani Qurayzah requested the Prophet to send Abu Lubabah of Aws tribe to them so that they might consult him. Abu Lubabah had already concluded an agreement of friendship with Bani Qurayzah. When he arrived in the fortress the women and men gathered round him wailing and said: "Is it proper that we should surrender without any pre-conditions?" Abu Lubabah said: "Yes".

However, he made a sign with his hand towards his throat which meant that if they did so they would be executed. Abu Lubabah knew that the Prophet would not tolerate the existence of this community which was the most dangerous enemy of Islam. However, he regretted very much to have betrayed the higher interests of Islam and of the Muslims and to have divulged their secrets.

He, therefore, came out of the fortress trembling and disturbed, and went straight to the mosque. There he tied himself to one of the pillars of the mosque and made a vow that if Allah did not forgive him he would spend the rest of his life in the same condition.

The exegetes say that this verse was revealed with regard to the betrayal by Abu Lubabah:

Believers, do not be dishonest to Allah and the Messenger or knowingly betray your trust. (**Surah al-Anfal, 8:27**)

The news about Abu Lubabah reached the Prophet. He said: "If he had come to me before making a vow, I would have prayed for his forgiveness and Allah would have forgiven him, but now he should wait till he is forgiven by Allah".

His wife used to come at the time of prayers and untied the rope with which he had tied himself to the pillar. And after he had offered his prayers she tied him to the pillar again.

After six days the Archangel Jibreel came early in the morning with the following verse when the Prophet was in the house of Umme Salamah:

Some of them have already confessed their sins and have mixed virtuous deeds with sinful ones. Perhaps Allah will forgive them. Allah is All-forgiving and All-merciful. (**Surah al-Taubah, 9:102**)

The eyes of Umme Salamah fell on the face of the Prophet, while he had a smile on his lips. The Prophet said to her:

"Allah has forgiven Abu Lubabah's sin. Get up and convey this good news (to the people)". When the Prophet's wife informed the people of this good news they rushed to untie him but Abu Lubabah said: "It would be appropriate if the Prophet himself removes my cords". Later, the Prophet arrived in the mosque to offer morning prayers and set him free.3

The story of Abu Lubabah is instructive. His mistake was due to his injudicious sentiments. Wailings of treacherous men and women deprived him of his power of self-control and he divulged the secrets of the Muslims. However, the strength of faith and fear of Allah was even greater than that and he repented of what he had done in such a way that the thought of betrayal should never cross his mind again.

The Fate Of The Fifth Group

One day Shas bin Qays descended from the fortress in the capacity of a representative of the Jews and contacted the Prophet. He requested the Prophet to permit the tribe of Bani Qurayzah to pick up their belongings like other Jews and quit Madina.

The Prophet did not, however, accept his suggestion and said: "They should surrender unconditionally". Shas amended his suggestion and said: "Bani Qurayzah are prepared to surrender their property to the Muslims and to leave Madina". The Prophet declined to accept that suggestion also.4

The reason for the Prophet's not agreeing to these suggestions was absolutely clear, because it was quite probable that, like the tribe of Bani Nuzayr, these people, too, while they were beyond the reach of the Muslims, might have confronted the Muslims in a very dangerous way, in collaboration with the forces of idolatrous Arabs and might have become the cause of more bloodshed. For this reason, therefore, the Prophet did not agree with Shas, who returned and made the position known to his high-ups.

Bani Qurayzah eventually decided to surrender to the Muslims without any conditions or, as stated by some historians, to accept as final the decision of Sa'd Mu'az, with whom they had already concluded a pact. In view of this the gates of the fortress were opened by them. The Commander of the Faithful, therefore, entered the fortress with a special corps and disarmed all the Jews. He then detained them in one of the houses of Bani Najjar till their fate was finally decided.

As the Jews of Bani Qaynuqa', who had been arrested in the past by the Muslim army, had been forgiven on the intercession of Bani Khazraj and especially of Abdullah Ubayy and the Prophet had refrained from shedding their blood, the people of Bani Aws also pressed the Prophet, with a view to vie with Bani Khazraj, that as Bani Qurayzah had concluded a pact with them he might forgive them.

The Prophet did not, however, concede to their request and said: "I leave the decision to Sa'd Mu'az, your elder and the chief of Bani Aws. Whatever he says will be acceptable to me". All those present sincerely accepted this offer of the Prophet. Moreover, Bani Qurayzah themselves had also agreed to abide by the decision of Sa'd Mu'az. As quoted by Ibn Hisham and Shaykh Mufid, the Jews of Bani Qurayzah had sent a message to the Prophet that Sa'd Mu'az should arbitrate their case.5

In those days Sa'd Mu'az's hand had been wounded by an arrow-shot and he was confined to bed for its treatment in the tent of a woman named Zamidah, who was expert in surgery. The Prophet used to go

there occasionally to enquire after his health. The young men of Bani Aws got up and brought the chief of their tribe before the Prophet with special ceremonies.

When Sa'd arrived the Prophet said: "All of you should pay respect to your chief". All those present stood up as a mark of respect to Sa'd. Those who had accompanied Sa'd had also requested him repeatedly on the way that he should do good to Bani Qurayzah and save them from death.

However, as opposed to all this insistence, he gave his decision that all their soldiers should be put to death, their property should be distributed (amongst the Muslims) and their women and children should be made captives.6

A Study Of Sa'd Mu'az's Judiciousness

There is no doubt about the fact that if the sentiments of a judge overcome his intellect and reason the judicial machinery is disturbed and the entire order in the society gets topsy-turvy. Sentiments are like false hunger which displays harmful and undesirable things to be useful and profitable, whereas, by acting upon such sentiments the interests of thousands of persons including the welfare of the whole society are violated.

The sentiments and feelings of Sa'd Mu'az, the heartrending scene of the women and children of Bani Qurayzah, the tragic condition of their men who were under detention and the general thinking of Bani Aws who seriously insisted that the judge should ignore their offence-all these things demanded that the judge appointed by both the parties should base his judgement on the interests of a minority (Bani Qurayzah) in preference to the interests of a majority (the Muslims in general) and should acquit the criminals of Bani Qurayzah on some excuse or, at least, reduce their punishment as much as possible or to act upon one of the suggestions mentioned above.

However, logic, reason, freedom and independence as a judge, and regard for public interest guided him towards a path which he eventually adopted and gave his decision for the execution of the soldiers, confiscation of their property and captivity of their women and children. His judgement was delivered keeping in view the following arguments:

1. Some time earlier the Jews of Bani Qurayzah had concluded a pact with the Prophet stipulating that if they rose in opposition to the interests of Islam and the Muslims or assisted the enemies of Islam and created disturbance or instigated people to rise against the Muslims they (the Muslims) would be at liberty to kill them. The judge was of the view that if he punished them according to the terms of that pact he would not be acting against the principles of justice.

2. These people had, in violation of the pact, kept Madina in a state of insecurity for quite some time under the shadow of the spears of the Arab forces and had poured into the houses of the Muslims to intimidate them. And if the Prophet had not taken precautionary measures and had not sent a unit from

the army headquarters to the inner parts of the city to maintain law and order it was quite possible that Bani Qurayzah might have succeeded in the execution of their plan.

In that event they would have killed the Muslims, confiscated their property and captivated their women and children. Sa'd Mu'az thought that as he gave a similar judgement against them he would not be acting against truth and justice.

3. Sa'd Mu'az, who was the chief of Aws tribe, had concluded a pact with Bani Qurayzah and they had very good and friendly mutual relations. It is, therefore, possible that he was aware of the penal laws of the Jews.

The text of the Taurat of the Jews is this: "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee". (Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 20:10–14).

Possibly Sa'd thought that if he, who had been nominated as judge by both the parties, punished the transgressors according to their own religious laws, he would not be doing anything other than the administration of justice.

4. We think that the greatest reason for Sa'd Mu'az giving his decision was that he had seen with his own eyes that the Prophet had excused the people of Bani Qaynuqa' on the intercession of Bani Khazraj and had contented himself with only banishing them from the environments of Madina.

These people had not yet vacated the Islamic territories fully when Ka'b Ashraf went to Makkah and shed crocodile tears for those who had been killed in the Battle of Badr and did not rest till he had prepared Quraysh for war. As a consequence of this the Battle of Uhud took place. In that battle seventy soldiers of Islam were martyred.

Similarly Bani Nuzayr were forgiven by the Prophet. In response to this kind gesture, however, they formed a military alliance and brought about the Battle of Ahzab. And, but for the ingeniousness of the Prophet and the plan of digging the ditch, Islam would have been destroyed, and thousands of Muslims would have been killed.

Sa'd Mu'az visualized all these events. Past experiences did not permit him to succumb to sentiments, because there was no doubt about the fact that this time they would form a more extensive alliance and would endanger the security of the centre of Islam by instigating the Arab forces to rise against the Muslims as well as by chalking out other schemes. He, therefore, considered the existence of this group

to be totally harmful for the Muslim society.

If these reasons had not been there it would have been very important for Sa'd Mu'az to respect the public views on the subject, because the chief of a tribe needs most the support of his people, and to annoy them and to reject their recommendations and requests is very harmful for him. However, he considered all these requests to be opposed to the interests of the Muslims and consequently obeyed the dictates of reason and logic.

A testimony of his deep foresight and rational judgement is that when they (the Jews) were being taken away for execution they spoke out what they had in their hearts. The eyes of the war-monger Hay bin Akhtab fell at that time on the Prophet and he said: "I don't regret my being inimical towards you. However, he, whom Allah wishes to humiliate, is humiliated".7 Then he turned to the people and said: "Don't be anxious on account of the Command of Allah. Allah has finally destined suffering and humiliation for Bani Israel".

From amongst the women one of them was put to death, because she had killed a Muslim by flinging a stone of the handmill at him. And out of those condemned to death one person viz. Zubayr Bata was forgiven on the recommendation of a Muslim named Thabit bin Qays; even his women and children were set free and his property was also returned to him. Four persons from amongst Bani Qurayzah embraced Islam.

The war booty was distributed amongst the Muslims after deducting out of it one-fifth, which fell to the share of the Finance Department of Islam. The mounted soldiers were given three shares each and the infantrymen one share each. The Prophet gave one-fifth of the booty to Zayd with instructions that he should go to Najd and procure horses, arms and war provisions from its sale-proceeds.

1. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, v. ll, p. 234; Tarikh-i Tabari v. ll pp.245-246.
2. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 235.
3. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 237.
4. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. II, page 501.
5. Irshad Mufid, page 50.
6. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 240; Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. II, p. 510.
7. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 250.

The fifth year of migration had not yet come to an end when the attack by the tribes was repelled and the revolt of Bani Qurayzah was also suppressed. Madina and its environs came entirely under the control of the Muslims. The foundations of the young State of Islam became firm and relative tranquillity began to prevail in the Islamic territories.

This tranquillity was, however, temporary. It was necessary that the Prophet should keep watch over the affairs of the enemies and should nip all conspiracies against Islam in the bud with the help of the forces

available.

The tranquillity in the surroundings provided an opportunity to punish some of those persons who had sparked off the Battle of Ahzab and had gone out of the control of the Muslims after the tribes had decamped. Hay bin Akhtab, who was one of those, who made the first move towards the battle of Bani Qurayzah, but his comrade Sallam bin Abil Haqiq was residing in Khayber.

It was an established fact that this dangerous man would not sit still until he had instigated the tribes once again to rise against the Muslims, especially because the Arab idolaters were ready to wage a war against Islam and if the expenses of war were guaranteed the conditions of the Battle of Ahzab could be renewed.

Taking these matters into account the Prophet appointed the brave men of Khazraj to get rid of this impudent and spiteful element. This was, however, subject to the condition that they should not molest his family. The warriors of Khazraj arrived in Khayber at night and fastened from outside the gates of the houses adjoining that of Sallam, so that if there was any noise his neighbours might not be able to come out of their houses.

Then by means of a stair-case they reached the first floor of the house where Sallam was residing. They knocked at the door. His wife came out and enquired as to who they were. They replied: "We are Arabs and have some business with the chief. We need grains".

She was deceived by this introduction, opened the door without verification, and guided them to the room of Sallam, who had just then gone to bed. In order to prevent every sort of hue and cry they entered the room immediately, shut the door, and put an end to the life of a dangerous and mischievous element, who had deprived the Muslims of their peace of mind for quite a long time. Then they came downstairs at once and hid themselves in the place of entrance of water outside the fort.

The cries of Sallam's wife awakened the neighbours, and all of them pursued the warriors of Khazraj, holding lamps in their hands. However, although they searched a good deal but could not find any trace of them and eventually returned to their homes. The bravery of Muslims was at such a high pitch that one of them volunteered to go amongst the Jews incognito and find out the result of what they (i.e. the Muslims) had done, because they were under the impression that Sallam was still alive.

He joined the circle of the Jews when they were surrounding Sallam, and his wife was giving the details of the incident. Suddenly she looked at the face of Sallam and said: "By the Lord of the Jews! He is dead". He (i.e. the Muslim who had gone to collect information) then returned and informed his companions about the state of affairs. They, therefore, quitted their hiding place and proceeded to Madina. There they informed the Prophet of what had happened.1

A Band Of Quraysh Proceeds To Ethiopia

A band of far-sighted Quraysh, who were very much frightened on account of the ever-increasing advancement of Islam, proceeded to Ethiopia to settle there. They thought that, if Muhammad eventually gained mastery over the Peninsula, they should be already safe in Ethiopia and, if Quraysh were victorious, they would return to their homes.

Amr bin As was a member of the band which left the Hijaz for Ethiopia with many presents. Their arrival coincided with the arrival of the representative of the Prophet named 'Amr bin Umayyah, who had brought a message of the Prophet regarding Ja'far bin Abi Talib and other Muhajirs. In order to gain favour of the chiefs of Quraysh 'Amr bin As said to his companions: "I am going to seek an audience with the King of Ethiopia along with my particular presents and shall seek his permission to behead the representative of Muhammad".

He arrived in the royal court and made a curtsey to the king according to the old custom. The king spoke to him kindly and said: "Have you brought any gift for me from your land?" He replied: "Yes, your Majesty". He then presented the gifts and said, "The man who had just now taken leave of your Majesty is the representative of a man who has killed our elders and warriors. It will be a matter of great satisfaction for us if I am permitted to cut off his head as a measure of revenge".

The words of 'Amr bin As made the Negus very angry, so much so that he involuntarily slapped his own face so forcefully that it almost broke his nose. Then he said in a fit of rage: "Are you asking me to surrender to you the representative of a man, on whom the Archangel Jibreel descends, as it used to descend on Prophet Musa, so that you may kill him? By Allah! He is true and shall be victorious over his enemies".

'Amr bin As says: "On hearing these words I became inclined to the religion of Prophet Muhammad but didn't disclose this thing to my friends".2

Prevention Of Repetition Of Bitter Events

The bitter and unpleasant event of Raji', as a consequence of which the families of 'Azal and Qarah, who belonged to the tribe of Bani Lihyan, had killed the members of the missionary party of Islam in a cruel and cowardly manner and even arrested two persons alive and sold them to the authorities of Quraysh, who hanged them as a measure of revenge, had deeply grieved the Muslims and brought the journeys of missionary groups to a stand-still.

Now that all the obstacles had been removed from the path of the Muslims and the disturbances caused by the tribes and the Jews had also been suppressed, the Prophet of Islam considered it expedient to chastise Bani Lihyan so that other tribes might become aware of their duties and might not molest the missionary groups of Islam.

In the fifth month of the sixth year of migration the Prophet left Madina appointing Ibn Umme Maktum as his representative. He did not inform anyone of his intentions as he feared that Quraysh and Bani Lihyan might become aware of his plan.

He, therefore, adopted the northern route which went up to Syria, and after covering some distance changed his path and encamped in Gharan which was the territory of Bani Lihyan. However, the enemies had become aware of his intention and had taken refuge in the hills. This armed attack and the humiliation of the enemies had its psychological effect and they were extremely frightened and overawed.

In order to achieve his end the Prophet undertook a military manoeuvre and personally marched, with two hundred men, from Gharan to Asfan, which is situated near Makkah. Then he sent ten persons to the border of Makkah (Kira'ul Ghamim) in the capacity of an exploratory unit in such a manner that the movements of the soldiers of Islam and their display of strength could be known to Quraysh. Thereafter he gave them orders to decamp and all proceeded to Madina.

Jabir bin Abdullah says that after return from this battle the Prophet said: "I seek Allah's refuge from the sufferings of journey, the toils of transport and the unpleasant events in the material and family life of man".3

Battle Of Zl Qarad

Only a few days after the Prophet returned to Madina 'Uyainah bin Hisn Fazari plundered a herd of camels, which was grazing in the pastures of Madina, killed their herdsmen and made a Muslim woman captive and took her away with him. Salamah Aslami, who had come out of Madina for hunting, saw this occurrence. He at once came to the mound of Sala' and called the Muslims for help and said: "Wa Sabaha" (Arabs used to utter this sentence when they needed help). Then he pursued the plunderers and, by shooting arrows, prevented them from fleeing.

The Prophet was the first person to hear Salamah crying for help. He immediately dispatched some of his companions to pursue the plunderers. A skirmish took place between them. In it two Muslims and three persons of the opposite party were killed. The Muslims were however successful in recovering a large part of the camels from them as well as in getting the Muslim woman freed.

The enemy, however, took refuge in the region of the Ghatfan tribes. The Prophet stayed at a place called 'Zi Qarad' for a day and a night. Although the mounted soldiers of Madina insisted that the enemy should be pursued, the Prophet did not consider it expedient to do so and returned to Madina.4

Unpermissible Vow

The Muslim woman who had been freed came before the Prophet and said: "When I was being taken

away as captive along with this camel (she pointed to a camel which belonged to the Prophet) I vowed that if I got rid of the enemy I would slaughter this camel". The Prophet said to her with a charming smile on his lips:

"What a bad recompense you have decided to give to the camel! It procured your freedom and you are going to kill it? Then he made the matter more clear and said: "A vow which involves a sin or which is made with regard to something which belongs to another person is not permissible. You dedicated by your vow a camel which belonged to me. Hence, it is not necessary for you to act upon your vow".5

1. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, pp. 274 – 275.
2. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, pp. 276 – 277.
3. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, page 254 and Mughazi, vol. II, page 535.
4. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, page 255; Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. II. pp. 537 – 549.
5. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 280; Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. III, p. 133.

In the sixth year of migration the military power of the Muslims was appreciably strong, so much so that their special units could freely approach places adjoining Makkah and then return. However, this military strength had not been acquired to conquer the territories of the tribes or to seize their properties.

If the polytheists had not deprived the Muslims of their freedom, the Prophet would not have purchased even one sword and would not have dispatched even one soldier. As, however, the Muslims and their missionary parties were continuously threatened by the enemies, the Prophet was naturally and morally obliged to strengthen the defensive power of Islam.

The real causes of these battles, which took place up to the sixth year of migration and in fact up to the last moment of the Prophet's life were as follows:

1. To give replies to the cowardly attacks by the idolaters (like the Battles of Badr and Uhud and the Battle of the Ditch).

3. To punish the tyrants, who had killed the Muslims or their missionary parties in the deserts or at far–off places, or those who had violated the pacts concluded by them with the Muslims. To this category belong the battles fought against the three tribes of the Jews and the one against Bani Lihyan.

3. To neutralize the enthusiasm which was brewing up amongst the tribes who wished to collect force to attack Madina. Most of the skirmishes took place on this account.

The Battle Of Bani Mustaliq

Bani Mustaliq were a branch of the tribe of Khuza'ah who were the neighbours of Quraysh. Reports were received in Madina that Harith bin Abi Zirar (chief of the tribe) intended to besiege Madina. As on other occasions, the Prophet decided to check this mischief and, therefore, marched towards the tribe of Bani

Mustaliq along with his companions and encountered them by the Well of Marysi'. Fighting started between the two parties.

The valour of the Muslims and the fear which had overtook the Arab tribes on this account made the enemies disperse after a brief skirmish, in which ten of their men and one Muslim by mistake were killed. Consequently a large booty fell to the share of the army of Islam and the women of the enemies were also taken prisoners.1

The instructive points of this battle are the policies which the Prophet adopted afterwards keeping in view the events of this battle.

Dissensions, however, flared up between the Muhajirs and the Ansar for the first time and but for the prudence of the Prophet their unity would have been destroyed on account of the avarice of some short-sighted persons.

The cause of this incident was that after the conclusion of the battle two Muslims, one of whom was named Jahjah bin Mas'ud (a Muhajir) and the other Sinan Juhani (an Ansar) quarrelled over water. Each of them called his people for help. The result of these calls for help would have been that the Muslims should have fought with one another at a place far off from the centre and should have thus put an end to their own existence.

The Prophet came to know about the incident and said: "Leave these two persons to themselves. This call for help which is very abominable, resembles the calls of the Days of Ignorance and the inauspicious relics of ignorance have not yet been removed from their hearts. These two persons are not acquainted with the programme of Islam and do not know that Islam considers all Muslims to be the brothers of one another and every call which creates dissensions is against the religion of monotheism."2

A Hypocrite Fans The Flame Of Dissensions

In this way the Prophet prevented differences and kept the two groups from attacking each other. However, Abdullah Ubayy, one of the hypocrites of Madina, who nursed extraordinary grudge against Islam and participated in the battles only to share the war booty, expressed his enmity and hypocrisy and spoke thus to those who had gathered around him:

"All this is the result of our own doing. We provided quarters to the Muhajirs of Makkah in our land and protected them from their enemies. Our condition conforms with the well-known saying: *Nourish your dog and it will bite you.* By Allah! When we return to Madina it will be necessary that the strong and dignified people (of Madina) should turn out the weak ones (i.e. the Muhajirs)".

The speech of Abdullah before the people, in whose minds the Arabian party-spirit and the ideas of the Age of Ignorance still lurked, had a very unwholesome effect on them and it was possible that their unity might be jeopardized.

Fortunately, however, a zealous Muslim named Zayd Arqam, who was also present there, replied to his satanic words with full force and said: "By Allah! You are the person, who is mean and humble. You are the person, who doesn't enjoy the least position amongst his kinsmen. On the contrary Prophet Muhammad is respectable amongst the Muslims and their hearts are filled with love for him".

Then he departed from there and came to the Prophet and informed him of the seditious speech of Abdullah. To keep up appearances the Prophet rejected the words of Zayd thrice and said: "Maybe you are mistaken. Probably anger has actuated you to say this. It is possible that he considered you to be low and foolish and meant nothing else". However, Zayd replied in the negative with regard to all these possibilities and said: "No; his intention was to create differences and to fan dissensions.

The Second Caliph requested the Prophet to permit him to kill Abdullah. The Prophet, however, replied: "It is not proper to do so, because the people will say that Muhammad kills his own friends".3

Abdullah learned about Zayd bin Arqam's conversation with the Prophet. He came before the Prophet immediately and said: "I never said any such words". Some well-wishers of his also supported him and said that Zayd had erred in quoting him.

However, the matter did not end there, because temporary stillness is just like lull before the storm. The Holy leader of Islam wanted to do something which might make the parties concerned forget the matter completely. To achieve this end he ordered the people to move, although otherwise it was not the time for departure.

Usayd came to the Prophet and said: "It is not the appropriate time for departure. What is the reason for this order?" The Prophet replied: "Are you not aware of the speech of Abdullah and what he has sparked off?"

Usayd swore and said: "O honourable Prophet! The power is in your hands. You can turn him out. Dear and respectable are you. Mean and humble is he. Be lenient to him, for he is a defeated person. Before your migration to Madina the Aws and Khazraj tribes had agreed to make him the Ruler of Madina and were thinking of collecting gems so that he might be crowned. However, with the rising of the star of Islam his position underwent a change and the people deserted him. And he considers you to be the cause of all this".

Orders for departure were given and the soldiers of Islam continued their march for more than twenty four hours and did not stay at any place except for offering prayers. On the second day when the atmosphere was very hot and all had lost strength to continue their march any longer orders were given for them to encamp. As soon as they dismounted, all of them went to sleep on account of fatigue and all the bitter memories were washed away from their minds. By acting on this plan, therefore, their dissensions subsided.4

Conflict Between Faith And Sentiments Of A Soldier

Abdullah bin Ubayy was a pious Muslim. In accordance with the sublime teachings of Islam he was more kind than anyone else to his father a hypocrite though he was. He came to know about what his father had done and thought that the Prophet would put him to death. He, therefore, said to the Prophet:

"If it has been decided that my father should be executed I myself am prepared to enforce the sentence and would request that this job may not be entrusted to any other person. I make this request because I am afraid that, on account of Arabian emotions and filial sentiments, I may lose my self-control and may kill the person who executes my father and may thus smear my hands with the blood of a Muslim and may consequently spoil my own life.

The remarks of this man are the most excellent manifestation of faith. Why did he not request the Prophet to forgive his father? He did not do so, because he knew that whatever the Prophet did was in compliance with the orders of Allah. However, the son of Abdullah found himself in a peculiar psychological predicament. Filial sentiments and Arabian code of morality prompted him to take revenge on his father's executioner and thus to shed the blood of a Muslim.

On the other hand love for peace in the zone of Islam made him think that it was necessary that his father should be killed. To overcome this mental conflict he chose the third course so that the superb interests of Islam might remain safe and his sentiments might not also be injured. And the third course was that he himself should enforce the order of his father's execution. Although such an action is tormenting and heart-rending but the strength of faith and submission to Allah's will provides consolation to some extent.

However, the kind Prophet said to him: "Nothing of the sort is intended, and I will be lenient towards him".

These remarks got circulated amongst the Muslims and all of them wondered at the spiritual greatness of the Prophet. A shower of objections and reproaches were let loose at Abdullah. He was so much humiliated in the eyes of the people that thereafter none paid any heed to him.

During these events the Prophet taught memorable lessons to the Muslims and manifested some wise political policies of Islam. After this incident the leader of the hypocrites did not attract attention and was hated and despised by people in all matter. Once the Prophet said to Umar: "You asked for my permission to kill him. The people who might have been moved on that day on his being killed and might have risen in his support, despise him so much today that if I give orders for his execution they will kill him instantaneously".

The Prophet Marries Juwayriyah

The Prophet married the daughter of Harith, the leader of the insurgents. Different versions of this marriage are given in various books on the Prophet's biography. However, the result of this marriage was that an unbreakable relationship was established between the Prophet and this community and most of the women of this tribe who had been captured by the Muslims were released unconditionally as a gesture of respect for the relationship between them and the Prophet. This marriage was a blessed one because it resulted in the freedom of one hundred women.5

1. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 260.
2. Comments on Seerah Ibn Hisham by Suhayli.
3. A study of the biography of the second Caliph proves the fact that he never displayed his strength in the battlefields and was always in the rear rows. However, whenever an enemy was captured he was the first person to request the Prophet for permission to execute him Here are some of the examples: (i) One of such occasions was that he wanted to kill Abdullah, the hypocrite. (ii) Just before Makkah was conquered he requested the Prophet to grant him permission to cut off the head of Hatib bin Abi Balti'ah, who had been spying for the idolaters. (iii) When Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet brought Abu Sufyan to the camping-place of the Muslims he (the second Caliph) requested the Prophet to permit him to kill him (i.e. Abu Sufyan) immediately.
4. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, pp. 261-262 and Majma'ul Bayan, vol. X, pp. 292-295.
5. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol II, page 264

The sixth year of migration was terminating with all its bitter and sweet events when suddenly the Prophet dreamt a pleasant dream that the Muslims were performing ceremonies of Haj in Masjidul Haram. He related this dream to his companions and took it to be a good omen for the Muslims as they would achieve their heart's desire soon.1

The Prophet ordered the Muslims to get ready to perform the journey for Haj and also invited the neighbouring tribes, who were still polytheists, to accompany the Muslims in that journey. He also made it known at all places in Arabia that the Muslims would be proceeding to Makkah in the month of Zi Qa'd.

This spiritual journey, besides possessing spiritual benefits, also carried a number of social and political advantages. It bettered the position of Muslims in the Peninsula and became the means of spreading Islam amongst the Arabs on account of the following facts:

1. The polytheist Arab tribes were under the impression that the Prophet was opposed to all their national and religious beliefs and ceremonies including Haj and 'Umrah which were memorials of their ancestors and for this reason they feared the Prophet and his religion. The participation of the Prophet and his companions in the ceremonies of Haj and 'Umrah on this occasion could diminish the fear and disturbance of mind of some polytheist tribes and make it clear in a practical manner that the Prophet was not only not opposed to the pilgrimage of the House of Allah and the Haj ceremonies which is one of their religious rites and national observances but considered them to be an obligatory act.

Furthermore, that he was also endeavouring, like their grand-parent Isma'il for the revival and preservation of these ceremonies. By this means he could attract to himself those tribes who considered Islam to be totally opposed to their national and religious observances and could diminish their fears.

2. If the Muslims succeeded in performing Haj and carried out their religious obligations freely in Masjidul Haram before the very eyes of polytheist Arabs, this act would itself be a great source of the propagation of Islam, because during Haj season the polytheists and the Arabs from all parts of the Peninsula would come together at Makkah and would, on return to their places, carry with them the news about the Muslims. In this manner the message of Islam would reach all those places where the Prophet could not send missionaries, and would have its effect there.

3. The Prophet reminded the people in Madina of the sacred months and said: "We are going for the pilgrimage of the House of Allah". He also ordered the Muslims not to carry any arms with them, except a sword which a traveller usually carries while performing a journey. These actions of his made many non-Muslims inclined towards Islam, because, as opposed to the propaganda which Quraysh had been carrying on against Islam, they observed that, like others, the Prophet also considered fighting in these months to be unlawful and was in favour of treating them as sacred months of peace.

The Prophet thought that if the Muslims were successful at that time they would be achieving one of their ardent desires (i.e. performing the ceremonies of 'Umrah and Haj) and those who had been away from their homes would be able to meet their relatives and friends.

And in case of obstruction Quraysh would lose their position in the Arab World, because the representatives of neutral tribes would see as to how they behaved towards the Muslims, who wished to perform 'Umrah and Haj and were not carrying any weapons except the weapons of a traveller, although Masjidul Haram and the ceremonies of Haj are common for all Arabs, and Quraysh are only the custodians of the sanctuary.

Hence the righteousness of the Muslims and the oppression by Quraysh would become evident, and it would not be possible for Quraysh to join other tribes against Islam and form an alliance, because they would have prevented the Muslims before thousands of pilgrims from enjoying their lawful right.

The Prophet considered the pros and cons of the matter and ordered the people to move. He put on ehram at a place named Zul-Hulayfah along with 1400[2] or 1600[3] or 1800[4] persons and specified seventy marked camels for slaughtering and thus made the purpose of this journey clear.

The intelligence organization of the Prophet proceeded in advance so that if they encountered the enemy on the way they should immediately inform the Prophet.

At a place near Asfan a Khuza'i, who was a member of the intelligence organization of the Prophet, came to him and reported thus: "Quraysh have become aware of your journey. They have collected their forces and have sworn by Lat and Uzza that they will obstruct your arrival in Makkah. The elders and

influential persons of Quraysh have gathered in Zi Tuwa (a place near Makkah) and in order to thwart the advance of the Muslims they have sent their brave commander Khalid bin Walid to Kira'ul Ghamim (a desert eight miles away from Asfan) along with two hundred horse-soldiers and have encamped there,5 either to stop the Muslims from entering (Makkah) or will lay down their lives for the achievement of this purpose".

After hearing the report the Prophet said: "Woe be to Quraysh! War has wasted them! I wish they had left me to deal with other idolatrous tribes. In case they (i.e. other tribes) had been victorious over me, Quraysh would have achieved their purpose, and if I had gained victory over those tribes, they (Quraysh) could fight with me with their reserve forces. By Allah! I shall continue my endeavours for the propagation of monotheism either until Allah makes that religion victorious or I lay down my life for the achievement of this purpose".

Then he asked for a guide who might take them (i.e. the Prophet and his companions) by a route on which they did not encounter Khalid. A person belonging to the tribe named Aslam undertook to guide the caravan and made them pass through rough valleys and made them land at a place called Hudaybiyah.

The Prophet's camel knelt down at that spot and he said: "This animal has stopped at this spot under the order of Allah so that our duty may become manifest". Then he ordered all of them to dismount and pitch their tents.

The horsemen of Quraysh became aware of the itinerary of the Prophet and made themselves reach near the Muslims. If the Prophet had wished to continue his journey it would have been necessary for him to split the rows of the horsemen of Quraysh and shed their blood. But all were under the impression that he had no other motive except to perform pilgrimage of the Holy Ka'bah.

At this place conflict and bloodshed would have dealt a blow to the position and claim of peaceful intentions of the Holy Prophet. Moreover, even killing of these horsemen would not have removed the obstacles in the way because reinforcements were being sent by Quraysh continuously and the matter was not coming to an end.

Besides this, the Muslims did not possess any weapon other than the weapons of travellers and it was not advisable to resort to fighting in such conditions. Rather it was expedient to solve the problem by means of discussions.

For these reasons the Prophet turned, after dismounting, to his companions and said: "If Quraysh demand from me today something which strengthens the ties of kinship I shall give it to them and shall adopt a conciliatory attitude".6

The words of the Prophet reached the ears of the people and the enemies also became aware of them. Quraysh, therefore, sent some persons to the Prophet to collect the correct information

The Representatives Of Quraysh Come And Meet The Holy Prophet

Quraysh sent many representatives to the Prophet to find out the object of his undertaking this journey. Budayl Khuza'i and some members of the tribe of Khuza'ah contacted the Prophet as representatives of Quraysh. He said to them: "I have not come to fight. I have come to perform pilgrimage of the Ka'bah". They returned and informed Quraysh about the position. However, the incredulous Quraysh did not accept their version and said: "By God! Even if he has come for the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah, we shall not let him enter Makkah".

Then Mikraz as a representative of Quraysh met the Prophet. He also returned and confirmed what Budayl had said, but Quraysh did not believe in the report submitted by him.

In order to put an end to the conflict they sent to the Prophet, Hulays bin 'Alqamah, who was the chief archer of Arabia.7 He was still at a distance when the Prophet got sight of him and said: "This man belongs to a pure and pious tribe. Sacrifice the camels before him, so that he may know that we have not come to fight and have no aim except performing the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah".

Hulays saw seventy camels which were so hungry that they were eating the wool of one another. He returned from the same spot and did not meet the Prophet. He addressed Quraysh with great vehemence and said: "We have not at all concluded a pact with you to prevent the pilgrims of the Ka'bah from performing pilgrimage. Muhammad has no aim except performing pilgrimage. By the Almighty, who controls my life! If you prevent Muhammad from entering (Makkah) I along with all men of my tribe who are mostly archers shall fall upon you and cut you to pieces".

The words of Hulays were not liked by Quraysh. However, fearing his opposition, they deliberated over the matter and said to him: "Rest assured. We ourselves shall find solution which will be acceptable to you".

At the fourth stage, however, they sent to the Prophet 'Urwah bin Mas'ud Saqafi in whose wisdom, intelligence and honesty they had full confidence. In the beginning he declined to represent Quraysh as he could very well see how they had behaved with their former representatives, but they assured him that his position in their eyes was fully established and they would not accuse him of breach of trust.

'Urwah bin Mas'ud came to the Holy Prophet and said: "O Muhammad! You have gathered different groups around you and have now decided to attack your birth-place (Makkah). Nevertheless, Quraysh will prevent your advance with full force and will not allow you to enter Makkah. I am, however, afraid that tomorrow these groups will leave you in the lurch".

When he had said this Abu Bakr, who was standing behind the Prophet, turned to 'Urwah and said: "You are mistaken. In no circumstances will the Prophet's friends desert him".

'Urwah used all the arts of diplomacy in his speech and tried to prove the strength of Quraysh and weaken the morale of the Prophet; and with a view to degrading the position of the Prophet he touched his beard while talking. Mughayrah bin Sh'obah repeatedly struck his hand and said: "Be respectful and don't misbehave towards the Prophet". 'Urwah asked the Prophet: "Who is he?" (It appears that the persons, who were around the Prophet, had concealed their faces).

The Prophet said: "He is your nephew Mughayrah bin Sh'obah". 'Urwah was displeased and said: "O cunning person! I purchased your honour yesterday. You killed thirteen persons of the tribe of Saqif a short time before embracing Islam and I paid the blood-money from my own pocket to prevent the flames of war flaring up amongst the families of Saqif".

The Prophet interrupted 'Urwah and explained to him the purpose of his journey as he had already explained to the former representatives of Quraysh. However, in order to give a knockdown reply to the threats held out by 'Urwah, he got up and performed wuzu (ablution). 'Urwah saw with his own eyes that the companions of the Prophet did not allow even a drop of the water of his wuzu to fall on the ground.

'Urwah got up and arrived in the assembly of Quraysh. He informed the chiefs of Quraysh, who had assembled at Zi Tuwa, about his meeting with the Prophet and the latter's aim. He also added: "I have seen great kings. I have observed great powers like the power of the Emperor of Iran, Kaiser of the Roman Empire and the King of Ethiopia but have not seen the position of anyone of them amongst their nations as high as enjoyed by Muhammad amongst his followers.

I have seen with my own eyes that they didn't let even a drop of the water of his wuzu fall on the ground and divided it amongst themselves as ***tabarruk*** (i.e. a sacred gift which brings blessings). If one of his hair falls they pick it up immediately. Hence the chiefs of Quraysh should ponder over this dangerous situation".8

The Prophet Of Islam Sends His Representative

The contacts which the representatives of Quraysh had with the great leader of Islam did not produce any result. The Prophet could very well imagine that the representatives of Quraysh could not convey the facts to the elders of Quraysh or did not do so clearly fearing reproach. He, therefore, decided to send his own representative who should clarify to them the real object of his undertaking the journey, which was nothing except the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah.

Khirash, a clever man of the tribe of Khuza'ah, was selected for the purpose and the Prophet placed a camel at his disposal. He met the groups of Quraysh and discharged his duty. However, contrary to expectations as well as the custom of the nations of the world that an ambassador is always immune from any harm, they (i.e. Quraysh) cut off the feet of his camel and were about to kill him, but his life was saved through the archers of Arabia. This foul act proved that the Quraysh had no intention to settle the matter peacefully and were bent upon fighting.

Soon after this incident fifty experienced men of Quraysh were deputed to go round the area where Muslims had encamped and, if possible, to pillage their property and take some of them captives. However, this plan of theirs was frustrated and on the other contrary they were arrested and brought before the Prophet. Although they had shot arrows and hurled stones at the Muslims, the Prophet directed all of them to be set free. Hence, he once again proved his bonafides and made it clear that he had no intention to fight.9

The Holy Prophet Sends Another Representative

In spite of all this the Prophet did not lose hope for peace and sincerely wished that he might be able to solve the problem through discussions and by changing the thinking of Quraysh. This time he wanted to send a representative who had not shed the blood of Quraysh.

Hence Ali, Zubayr and other champions of Islam, who had combated with the heroes of Quraysh and Arabs and had killed some of them, were not qualified to act as representatives. Eventually he decided to depute Umar bin Khattab for the purpose, because till that day he had not shed even a drop of blood of the idolaters.

Umar, however, excused himself from assuming that responsibility and said: "I am afraid of Quraysh as I am in fear of my life, and in Makkah there is no one of my family who might lend me support. However, I suggest Uthman bin Affan who is closely related to Abu Sufyan and can convey your message to the chiefs of Quraysh.

Uthman was however entrusted with this task and he proceeded to Makkah. While on his way he met Aban bin Sa'id bin As and entered the city under his protection. Aban promised that none would interfere with him, until he had conveyed the message of the Prophet in clear terms.

However, Quraysh replied to the message of the Prophet that they had decided on oath that they would not permit Muhammad to enter Makkah forcibly and on account of this oath any discussion with regard to the entry of Muslims in Makkah is out of the question. Then they permitted Uthman to perform tawaf of the Ka'bah, but he refrained from doing so, as a mark of respect to the Prophet. What Quraysh did with regard to Uthman was that they prevented him from returning and possibly their idea was that in the meantime they would find out a solution of the problem.10

The Rizwan Pledge

The Muslims got extremely perturbed on account of Uthman's delay in getting back. It was then rumoured that Uthman had been killed. Hearing this the Muslims were flared up and wanted to take revenge. In order to strengthen their determination the Prophet said: "I shall not leave this place until I have settled the affair".

At this moment, when danger was so near and the Muslims were not equipped with arms, the Prophet decided to take the oath of allegiance from the Muslims de novo and sat under a tree for this purpose. All his companions shook his hand as a mark of fealty and swore that they would defend the sacred religion of Islam till the end of their lives. It is the very pledge of Rizwan, which has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in these words:

Allah is pleased with the believers for their pledging obedience to you under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, thus he granted them confidence, and rewarded them with an immediate victory. (**Surah al-Fath, 48:18**)

After they had taken the oath of allegiance the duty of the Muslims became clear –either Quraysh should allow them to proceed to Makkah and perform the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah or they should oppose the obstinacy of Quraysh at the cost of their lives. The Prophet was thinking about this when Uthman appeared from a distance and this in itself was the vanguard of the peace which the Prophet desired so much. Uthman came to the Prophet and said: "The difficulty in the way of Quraysh is the vow which they have taken and a representative of Quraysh will have a talk with you regarding the solution of this difficulty ".

Suhayl Bin 'Amr Contacts The Prophet

Suhayl bin 'Amr was deputed by Quraysh with special instructions to put an end to the dispute through a pact about which we shall read later. When the eyes of the Prophet fell on Suhayl he said: "Suhayl has come to conclude a peace pact between us and Quraysh". Suhayl came and sat down. He said all sorts of things and, like a skilled diplomat, aroused the sentiments of the Prophet for the accomplishment of certain things.

He said: "O Abul Qasim! Makkah is Haram and the seat of our dignity. The Arab World knows that you have fought against us. If you enter Makkah in the present state, which is coupled with force and strength, you will make our weakness and helplessness known to the entire Arab World. Tomorrow all the Arab tribes will think of occupying our land. I appeal to you in the name of God to regard the kinship which you share with us, and also remind you of the respect which Makkah enjoys and which is also your birth-place".

When Suhayl said this the Prophet interrupted him and said: "What are you aiming at?" He replied: "The chiefs of Quraysh are of the view that you should return to Madina this year and postpone the pilgrimage till the next year. Next year the Muslims may perform Haj like all other tribes of Arabia, subject to the condition that they should not stay in Makkah for more than three days and should not bring with them any weapons except those which are usually carried by a traveller".

As a result of the discussions between the Prophet and Suhayl it was decided that a general and extensive pact should be concluded between the Muslims and Quraysh. Suhayl was displaying

extraordinary severity regarding the conditions and particulars of the pact and at times it appeared that the peace negotiations would break down. However, as both the parties desired peace and reconciliation the thread of discussion was picked up once again.

In spite of all the severity on the part of Suhayl the negotiation came to an end and it was decided that its text should be drawn up in duplicate and the same should be signed by both the parties.

As written by most of the historians, the Prophet directed Ali to write the Peace Pact; and said: "Write: In the name of Allah, the Rahman (Beneficent) the Rahim (Merciful)" and Ali wrote it.

Suhayl said: "I am not acquainted with this sentence. Write: "In Your name O' Allah!" The Prophet agreed that the sentence as uttered by Suhayl might be written. Ali wrote it accordingly. Then the Prophet asked Ali to write: 'This is the pact which Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, has concluded with Suhayl, the representative of Quraysh'.

Suhayl said: "We don't formally recognize your Prophethood and if we had recognized you as a Prophet we wouldn't have waged war against you. You should write your own name and that of your father and should omit this title from the pact".

Some of the Muslims were not agreeable that the Prophet should surrender to Suhayl to this extent. However, the Prophet agreed even to this by keeping in view some higher interests, which will be explained later and asked Ali to delete the phrase 'Messenger of Allah'. At this stage Ali submitted with due reverence:

"It is not possible for me to take the liberty of deleting your title of 'Messenger' and 'Prophet' from beside your sacred name". The Prophet asked Ali to put his (the Prophet's) finger on the word so that he might delete it personally. Ali put the Prophet's finger on the word and he deleted the title 'Messenger of Allah'.[11]

The indulgence and temperament which the Prophet displayed in drawing up this pact is unparalleled in the world. As he was not influenced by material thoughts and egotistic sentiments and knew that realities do not change by writing something or deleting it, he, in order to ensure peace, adopted a conciliatory attitude and accepted the suggestions of the opponent in spite of all his severity.

History Repeats Itself

The first distinguished pupil of the school of the Prophet of Islam was also faced with the same embarrassment and on this account, Ali, the perfect model of the Prophet became, for various reasons, an embodiment of his personality and they conformed with each other at many stages. When the Commander of the Faithful excused himself from deleting the words 'Messenger of Allah' the Prophet turned towards him and informed him about his future, which fully resembled his own, in these words: "The descendants of this band will invite you to a similar act and you will give in under extreme

oppression".[12]

Ali remembered this thing till the Battle of Siffin took place and the simple-minded followers of Imam Ali were impressed by the deceptive demonstrations of the soldiers of Syria who were fighting under the patronage of Mu'awiyah and 'Amr As and persuaded him to agree to make peace.

A meeting was held to write the Peace Pact. The secretary of the Commander of the Faithful named Ubaydullah bin Abi Rafe' was directed by him to write the Peace Pact on these lines: "This is what has been settled upon by Ali, the Commander of the Faithful."

At this moment 'Amr bin As (who was the official representative of Mu'awiyah and the Syrian army) turned to the secretary of Ali and said: "Write the name of Ali and his father, because if we had formally recognized him to be the Commander of the Faithful, we would not have fought with him at all." The discussions on this point were prolonged.

The Commander of the Faithful was not ready to provide any excuse to his simpleminded friends. A part of the day was spent in dispute by the parties till, on the insistence of one of his own officers, he allowed that the phrase 'Commander of the Faithful' might be deleted. Then he said: "Allah is Great! This is the observance of the tradition of the Prophet". Thereafter he repeated before the people the event of Hudaybiyah and what the Prophet had said to him at that time.[13]

Text Of The Hudaybiyah Pact

1. Quraysh and the Muslims agree that they will not fight or commit aggression against each other for a period of ten years so that social security and general peace may be established at various places in Arabia.

2. If a person from amongst Quraysh leaves Makkah without the permission of his elder and embraces Islam and joins the Muslims, Muhammad must return him to Quraysh. However, if one of the Muslims goes away to Quraysh they will be under no obligation to surrender him to the Muslims.

3. The Muslims and Quraysh will be at liberty to conclude pacts with any tribes they like.

4. This year Muhammad and his companions will return to Madina from this very spot. However, in the coming years they will be at liberty to visit Makkah and perform the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah, subject to the condition that they will not stay in Makkah for more than three days and will not carry with them any weapon other than that usually carried by a traveller.[14]

5. According to this pact the Muslims residing in Makkah are free to perform their religious rites and Quraysh will not be entitled to torture them or compel them to abjure their religion or to ridicule their religion.[15]

6. The signatories to the pact agree to respect the property of each other and to abandon deceit and artifice against each other and to keep their hearts free from mutual grudge.

7. The life and property of the Muslims who arrive in Makkah from Madina will be respected.[16]

This is the text of the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah, which has been collected from different sources. The pact was drawn up in duplicate. Some persons from amongst Quraysh and the Muslims witnessed the pact whereafter one copy was given to Suhayl and the other to the Prophet.[17]

Glad Tidings Of Freedom

Glad tidings of freedom as contained in this pact reached every person. Although every clause of this pact deserves discussion, the delicate point which demands very serious consideration is the second clause which aroused the indignation of some persons on that day.

Notwithstanding the fact that the companions of the Prophet felt very uneasy on account of this discrimination and uttered words which should not have been uttered regarding the decision taken by a leader like the Prophet of Islam, this clause still brilliant, shows the way of thinking of the Prophet in the matter of the propagation of Islam. It fully shows the great respect which that great leader accorded to the principles of freedom.

In reply to the objection raised by some of the companions of the Prophet as to why they should surrender the refugees from Quraysh whereas Quraysh should be under no obligation to surrender their men, he replied:

"If a Muslim who adopts polytheism and runs away from the standard of Islam, and prefers the environments of idolatry and anti-human religion to the environments of Islam and monotheism, it shows that he has not embraced Islam wholeheartedly and his faith has not acquired the proper base which should satisfy his nature and such a Muslim is of no use to us. And if we surrender the refugees from Quraysh it is on this account that we are satisfied that Allah will provide the means of their deliverance".[18]

The future proved that the prediction of the Prophet about this matter (that Allah will provide the means of their deliverance) was absolutely correct, because soon afterwards Quraysh themselves requested the cancellation of this clause on account of the various unpleasant events which they had to face owing to this clause.

This clause is a silencing reply to the partiality of most of the orientalists who insist that the cause of the advancement of Islam was the use of sword. They cannot afford to see that the glory of Islam lies in the fact that within a very short time it spread in many regions of the world. On account of personal motives and with a view to poison the minds, therefore, they are obliged to say that the cause of the advancement of Islam was material force.

This Peace Pact was concluded in the early days of Islam in the presence of the great leader of Islam, as it fully reflects the spirit of Islam and the sublime teachings and human principles which are contained in all its laws, it is quite unfair that we should say that Islam has been spread with the force of the sword.

In the light of the third clause, the tribe of Khuza'ah concluded a defence pact with the Muslims and the tribe of Bani Kananah, who were old enemies of Bani Khuza'ah, declared their alliance with Quraysh.

Last Effort For The Preservation Of Peace

The preliminaries of the Peace Pact and its text show clearly that a large part of it had an educational aspect, and the reason for the Prophet accepting this pact, and agreeing to the deletion of the phrase 'Messenger of Allah' and to its commencing with the words "In your name, O' Allah" (as it was in vogue during the Days of Ignorance) was that be was desirous of maintaining peace in Arabia. And when he agreed that the Muslim refugees from amongst Quraysh might be surrendered to the authorities of the idolatrous government, it was due to the acute obstinacy of Suhayl.

In case, therefore, the Prophet had not agreed with Suhayl on this point with a view to protect the rights of this group (i.e. the Muslim refugees from amongst Quraysh) and had respected the general thinking which was opposed to discrimination in the matter of surrender of refugees, the general peace would certainly have fallen in jeopardy and this great blessing would have been lost.

Hence, with a view to achieve a higher and nobler object, the Prophet bore up against all these pressures and requests so that the great opportunity of ensuring peace, in the face of which all these inconveniences were insignificant, might not be lost. And if he had shown regard for the general opinion and the rights of the said group, Suhayl, on account of his being very obstinate, would have sparked off war and the following incident is a clear proof of this fact:

Negotiations with regards to the contents of the Peace Pact ended and Ali was busy writing it when suddenly Abu Jandal bin Suhayl, the representative of Quraysh, for the conclusion of the Peace Pact, appeared on the scene with chains in his feet. Ali wondered on his arrival, for he had been imprisoned and chained by his father since long. He was an innocent prisoner and his only offence was that he had embraced Islam and was considered to be one of the devotees of the Prophet.

Abu Jandal had learned from the conversation which took place around his prison that the Muslims had arrived in Hudaybiyah.[19] He therefore, managed to escape from the prison by some special contrivance and arrived in the midst of the Muslims by adopting a deviated path through the mountains.

When the eyes of Suhayl fell on his son he was so much displeased that, filled with acute anger, he gave him a hard slap in the face. Then he turned to the Prophet and said: "This is the first person who should return to Makkah in accordance with the second clause of the pact". He meant to say that Abu Jandal being a Quraysh who had fled Makkah should be surrendered to them.

There is no denying the fact that the demand of Suhayl was unjustified and baseless, because the pact had not yet been finally recorded and signed by the parties. How could a party rely on a pact which had not yet passed through its final stages? For this reason the Prophet said to Suhayl: "Our pact hasn't been signed yet".

Suhayl replied: "In that case I ignore all these proceedings and render them null and void". He was so stubborn in the matter that Mikraz and Huwaytab, two big personalities of Quraysh were very much displeased with his severity. They at once extracting Abu Jandal from his father, made him enter a tent and said to the Prophet: "O Muhammad! Abu Jandal is now under your protection".

They wanted to settle the dispute in this manner but Suhayl's insistence frustrated their plan. He stuck to his words and said: "From the point of view of negotiations the pact has been concluded".

The Prophet was obliged to make the last effort for the preservation of the basis of peace which was extremely valuable for the propagation of Islam. He, therefore, agreed to the return of Abu Jandal to Makkah along with his father.

To console the chained Muslim who was to be surrendered to the infidels in the presence of hundreds of brave Muslims he said: "O Abu Jandal! Be patient. We wished that your father should hand you over to us by way of love and affection. Now that he hasn't agreed to do so you should be patient and forbearing and should know that Allah will open a path of relief for you as well as for others who are under arrest".

The meeting came to an end. The copies of the pact were signed. Suhayl and his friends left for Makkah and Abu Jandal, too, proceeded to Makkah under the protection of Mikraz and Huwaytab. With a view to put an end to the state of ehram the Prophet slaughtered his camel and got his head shaved and others also followed suit.[20]

Evaluation Of The Peace Pact Of Hudaybiyah

The Peace Pact was concluded between the Prophet of Islam and the leaders of polytheism and after staying at Hudaybiyah for nineteen days, the Muslims returned to Madina and the idolaters went back to Makkah.

Differences and disputes cropped up between the companions of the Prophet at the time of writing the pact as well as after that. One group of them considered it to be beneficial for Islam and another group, whose members could be counted on fingers, assessed it to be against its interests. Now that fourteen centuries have passed since the conclusion of this pact we proposed to evaluate it in an unbiased and realistic manner and shall conclude this chapter after alluding to the differences mentioned above.

We are of the view that this Peace Pact proved to be perfectly beneficial to Islam and made its victory final. Here are the arguments which we should like to offer:

1. The continuous battles and attacks of Quraysh and their internal and external instigations which have been mentioned briefly in connection with the accounts of the Battles of Uhud and Ahzab did not leave any time at the disposal of the Prophet to resort to propagation of Islam amongst the various tribes, as well as in areas beyond Arabia, and his valuable time was mostly spent in defence and in neutralizing the dangerous plots of the enemy. After the conclusion of the Peace Pact, however, the Muslims and their great leader were relieved of the danger from the south, and ground was prepared for the propagation of Islam in other areas.

The effects of the peace came to light after two years, because when the Hudaybiyah pact was concluded the Prophet was accompanied by 1400 persons, but, two years later, when he proceeded formally to conquer Makkah, as many as ten thousand persons marched along with him under the shadow of the standard of Islam and this clear contrast in the number of persons accompanying him was the direct consequence of the Hudaybiyah pact.

It was due to the fact that previously many people did not join the Muslims owing to fear of Quraysh, but when Quraysh themselves formally recognized the presence of Islam and left the tribes free to associate themselves with it, the fear in the minds of most of the tribe disappeared and the Muslims became in a position to propagate Islam freely.

2. The second thing which the Muslims achieved from the pact was that the iron-curtain which the idolaters had placed between the common man and the religion of Islam was removed and consequently the traffic to Madina became free. The people had more contacts with the Muslims during their journeys to Madina and they became acquainted with the sublime teachings of Islam.

They were wonder struck when they saw the discipline and order amongst the Muslims and their sincere devotion and obedience to the Prophet of Islam. The cleanliness of the Muslims and their performing wuzu at the time of prayers, their organized rows, the effective and enthusiastic sermons of the Prophet and the sweet verses of the Holy Qur'an, with their simplicity and eloquence, attracted them automatically towards Islam.

The Muslims, who travelled to Makkah and its suburbs for different purposes, after the conclusion of the pact, came in contact with their relatives and old friends, propagated Islam amongst them and informed them of the merits, laws and regulations, and the permissible and unpermissible things of this religion. And this thing in itself became the cause of a large number of the leaders of polytheism like Khalid bin Walid and 'Amr bin As joining the Muslims before the conquest of Makkah.

In fact this sort of acquaintance of the people with Islam laid the foundation of the conquest of Makkah and became the cause of this great base of the world of idolatry coming under the control of the Muslims. Consequently the people embraced Islam in large numbers. This great victory was the result of close contacts, removal of fear from the hearts and propagation of Islam among the idolaters without any let or hinderance.

3. Close contact with the Prophet at the time of the conclusion of the pact removed many misunderstandings from the minds of the leaders of polytheism, because the sublime morality of the Prophet and his softness and forbearance as against the stubbornness of the other party proved him to be the fountain of greatest human virtues.

Notwithstanding the fact that he had suffered a great deal at the hands of Quraysh, his heart was still full of sentiments of human love. Quraysh witnessed that in concluding the pact and accepting its forced clauses, he differed with the views of a large number of his own companions and preferred the honour of the Haram and the Ka'bah, and of his own birth-place (Makkah) to the inclinations of a group of his.

This behaviour neutralized the adverse propaganda which had been carried on about the temperament of the Prophet and proved that he was a friend of humanity and a peaceable person, who would not show grudge and enmity to his enemies, even if he happened to gain control over Arabia one day. There is no denying the fact, however, that if the Prophet had engaged himself in battle on that day he would have been victorious and as stated by the Holy Qur'an his enemies would have fled:

Had the disbelievers fought against you they would run away from the battle and would have found no friend or helper. **(Surah al-Fath, 48:22)**

However, he displayed kind sentiments and love for humanity by his mildness and neutralized the adverse propaganda against him.

The readers should realize, in the light of these arguments, the grandeur of the remark of Imam Ja'far Sadiq about this Peace Pact. He says: "No event during the life of the Prophet of Islam was more useful than the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah".

The future events proved that the objections raised by a few companions of the Prophet (whose ring leader was Umar bin Khattab) to this pact and its contents were totally baseless. The historians have given complete particulars of the remarks of the objectors.21

The value of the pact becomes evident from the fact that the Prophet had not yet reached Madina when Surah al-Fath, which gave good tidings to the Muslims, was revealed and it treated this act (conclusion of the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah) to be a victory in jihad. It says:

"Surely, we have granted you (O' Muhammad!) a manifest victory".

Quraysh Insist Upon Cancellation Of One Of The Clauses Of The Pact

Soon after that, however, bitter events obliged Quraysh to request the Prophet to cancel the second clause of the Peace Pact. It was the same clause, which had annoyed the companions of the Prophet and which he had accepted on account of unusual stubbornness on the part of Suhayl. It says:

"If a person from amongst Quraysh leaves Makkah without the permission of his elder and embraces Islam and joins the Muslims, Muhammad must return him to Quraysh. However, if one of the Muslims goes away to Quraysh they will be under no obligation to surrender him to the Muslims". This clause roused the indignation of some persons on that day, but the Prophet accepted it from his heart and said: "Allah will open a path for the relief of the weak Muslims who are prisoners in the hands of Quraysh"

The path of such relief and the reasons for the cancellation of this clause were as follows:

A Muslim named Abu Basir who had been imprisoned by the idolaters for a long time somehow managed to escape to Madina. Two big personalities named Azhar and Akhnas wrote to the Prophet and reminded him that according to the second clause of the pact Abu Basir should be returned to them. They gave their letter to a man belonging to the tribe of Bani 'Amir, who was accompanied by a slave of theirs, and asked him to deliver it to the Prophet.

In accordance with the pact concluded by the Prophet he said to Abu Basir: "You should return to your people and it is not at all proper that we should practise cunning against them. I am sure that the Almighty Allah will provide means of relief to you as well as to others". Abu Basir said: "Are you handing me over to the idolaters so that they may make me abjure the religion of Allah?" The Prophet, however, repeated the said sentence and handed him over to the representatives of Quraysh. The three men then left for Makkah. When they reached Zil Hulayfah22

Abu Basir leant on a wall on account of fatigue. He then asked the man belonging to Bani 'Amir in a friendly way to give him his sword so that he might have a look at it. When the sword came in his hand he immediately killed the 'Amiri. The slave ran away on account of fear. He came to Madina and said to the Prophet: "Abu Basir has killed my companion". Soon thereafter Abu Basir also came up and related his story and said: "O Prophet of Allah! You have acted according to the agreement made by you. However, I am not prepared to join the people who ridicule my religion".

Having said these words he proceeded to the coast of the sea which was the route of the caravans of Quraysh and settled at a place named 'Eis. The Muslims of Makkah came to know about the story of Abu Basir and about seventy of them somehow got rid of Quraysh and joined him. These seventy Muslims, whose lives had been made miserable by Quraysh, decided to loot the trade caravans of Quraysh or to kill anyone on whom they could lay their hands.

They carried out their programme so skilfully that Quraysh were put out of patience by harassment. So much so that they wrote to the Prophet to cancel the clause in question by mutual agreement and to call back Abu Basir and his companions to Madina.

The Prophet cancelled the said clause by mutual agreement and directed the fugitives who had settled in 'Eis to return to Madina.23 This provided a great relief to the people at large and Quraysh realized that a true believer could not be kept in captivity for ever and it was more dangerous to keep such a person as a captive, because whenever he escaped he would resort to taking revenge.

The Muslim Women Were Not Surrendered To Quraysh

Hudaybiyah pact was signed. Umme Kulsum, daughter of 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ayt, came to Madina from Makkah. Her brothers named 'Ammarah and Walid requested the Prophet to return her to them in accordance with the second clause of the pact. The Prophet replied to them: "Women are not covered by the said clause as that clause applies to men only".24 And Surah al-Mumtahinah made the position clear with regard to women. It says:

Believers, when believing immigrant women come to you as fugitives, test them. Allah knows best about their faith. If you know that they are believers, do not return them to the disbelievers. They are not lawful for the disbelievers, nor are the disbelievers lawful for them. And give the disbelievers whatever they have spent (***upon them as dowry***). (**Surah al-Mumtahinah, 60:10**)

This was the story of Hudaybiyah. As a consequence of the peace provided by this pact, the Prophet was in a position to correspond with the kings and rulers of the world and to extend his call and Prophethood to the humanity at large.

1. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. IX, page 126.
2. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 309.
3. Rawdah-I-Kafi, page 322
4. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. II, page 488
5. Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 330
6. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, pp. 270-272.
7. As quoted by Tabari, (vol. II, page 276) he came to see the Holy Prophet after Urwah Saqafi had seen him.
8. Seerahi Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 314; Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, pp. 274-275.
9. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 278.
10. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, pp. 278-279
11. Irshad Mufid, page 6; A'lamul Wara', page 106; Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 368; but Tabari erred on this point and has stated that the Prophet himself wrote his name.
12. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 138; Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 353.
13. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. III, page 162.
14. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 24; and other sources.
15. Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 353; and other sources.
16. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. IX, page 117.
17. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, pp. 25-26.
18. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, p.12 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, p. 312.
19. Hudaybiyah is at a distance of six to nine miles from Makkah and most of its lands are a part of the Haram.
20. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 281; Biharul Anwar, vol. II, page 353 and Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 318.
21. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 316.
22. It is a place six or seven miles away from Madina. People put on ehram there while going to Makkah.
23. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. II, p. 624; Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, p. 284.
24. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 323.

The Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah relieved the Prophet of worries from the southern part of Makkah and

hence a group from amongst the chiefs of Arabia got attracted towards Islam. In the meantime the Prophet seized the opportunity and started correspondence with the rulers of the time, the chiefs of the tribes and the religious leaders of the Christians and presented his religion to the nations living during that period.

It was a religion which had by that time gone a step forward from a merely simple belief and had assumed the shape of a universal faith and could bring entire humanity under the banner of monotheism and sublime social and ethical teachings.

This was the first step which the Prophet took after nineteen years' conflict with the obstinate Quraysh. And if the internal enemies had not kept him busy in bloody battles he would have invited the distant nations to Islam much earlier. However, the cowardly attacks of the Arabs obliged him to spend a major part of his time in the defence of Islam.

The letters which the Prophet wrote to the princes, kings. chiefs of the tribes and distinguished spiritual and political personalities shed a light on the method of his invitation. At present the texts of 185 letters which the Prophet wrote for the propagation of or invitation to Islam or by way of agreements and pacts are available with us and the traditionalists and historians have preserved them in their records.1

All these letters show that the method of invitation to, and propagation of Islam, adopted by the Prophet was that of logic and not that of war and sword. When the Prophet felt secure from the attacks of Quraysh he made his voice reach the inhabitants of the world by sending letters and missionaries.

The Universality Of The Prophethood

Some indiscreet persons view the universal prophethood of the Prophet of Islam with suspicion and doubt and imitate the melody sung by some hired writers whose leader is an orientalist named Sir William Muir, who says: "the idea of the universality of the message of Muhammad came into existence later and from the time of the commencement of his prophetic mission till his death Muhammad invited only Arabs to Islam and he was not acquainted with any place other than Arabia".

This British writer has followed the method peculiar to his own race. Notwithstanding numerous verses which testify that the Prophet invited the entire humanity to monotheism and to his own prophethood, he (Sir William Muir) conceals facts and says that the Prophet's invitation was extended to the Arabs only. We quote below some verses of the Holy Qur'an which go to show that the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam is meant for the entire mankind:

● ***Muhammad, tell them: O' mankind! Certainly I have come to you all as the Messenger of Allah.*** (Surah al-A,raf, 7:158) (It should be noted that the people addressed are not only the Arabs but the entire mankind).

● ***We have sent you as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner to the entire mankind, but most***

people do not know. **(Surah Saba, 34:28)**

● ***The Qur'an is nothing but a reminder from Allah to mankind.*** **(Surah al-Qalam, 68:28)**

● ***No religion other than Islam will be accepted from anyone. Whoever follows a religion other than Islam will be loser in the Hereafter*** **(Surah Ale Imran, 3:85).** This verse supersedes all religions except Islam and makes it obligatory for the entire mankind to follow only Islam.

● ***The Qur'an has been revealed, to warn to those who are living and the words of Allah may be fulfilled against the unbelievers.*** **(Surah Yasin, 36:70)**

It is Allah Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and a true religion that will prevail over all other religions, though the polytheists may be averse. **(Surah Tawbah, 9: 33)**

Now we ask the British writer as to how he says, in spite of the universal invitation manifested in these verses, that the idea of the universality of Islam came into existence later? Is one justified in doubting the universality of the prophethood in spite of these and other verses and the messengers sent to far-off places and the texts of the letters of the Prophet which are recorded in the pages of history? (Some of the original letters sent by him to different persons at far-off places are extant and adorn various museums of the world).

The British writer says with shameless impudence that Prophet Muhammad was not acquainted with any place other than Arabia (the Hijaz) although he went to Syria along with his uncle when he was sixteen years of age and during his manhood he traded on behalf of Khadijah and used to accompany the trade caravans.

No doubt, as and when we read in history books that Alexander the Macedonian wished to become the ruler of the world, or Napoleon was anxious to build up a world-empire, we are not at all surprised, but when the orientalists hear that the Prophet of Islam invited under the command of Allah, two great emperors of the world (with whose subjects the Arabs had trade relations) to embrace Islam, they, with all their obstinacy and baseless doubts, declare this to be something impossible.

The Message Of Prophethood Is Sent To Far Off Places

Like all other important matters the question of inviting the rulers of various countries to Islam was also placed by the Prophet before a big consultative council for discussion. One day he said to his companions: "All of you should be present tomorrow morning so that I may consult you about a very important matter".

On the following day he addressed his companions, after morning prayers, as follows: "Exhort the servants of Allah to do good. Allah has disallowed Paradise to one, who becomes the guardian of the affairs of the people, but does not endeavour to guide them and show them the right path. You should

rise and convey the message of Islam to far-off regions and should make mankind hear the voice of monotheism. However, you should not oppose me in the manner in which the disciples of Prophet 'Isa opposed him".

The Prophet was asked as to how the disciples of Prophet 'Isa opposed him. He replied: "Like me, he also deputed some pesons to act as his messengers in different areas. From amongst them those who had to cover a short distance obeyed his command but those who had to travel a long distance disobeyed him".

Thereafter the Prophet of Islam sent six most proficient persons to different places along with letters in which his universal prophethood was reflected. These ambassadors of guidance proceeded to Iran, Byzantium, Ethiopia, Egypt, Yamamah, Bahrain and Hira (Jordan) on the same day.

When the letters of the Prophet had been written by special scribes people who were acquainted with the etiquette of the royal courts of those times, submitted to the Prophet that he should seal the letters, because the various rulers did not condescend to read unsigned letters (and in those days signatures were subscribed by means of a seal). In view of this a silver seal-ring was prepared, as ordered by the Prophet himself, and the sentence *Muhammad Rasulullah* (Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah) was engraved upon it. The engraving was in this order that the word 'Allah' was at the top, 'Rasul' in the middle and 'Muhammad' at the bottom.

This order and subtlety was resorted to prevent imitation and forgery. The reader was required to commence reading the signatures from the bottom till he reached the word 'Allah' (Muhammad Rasul Allah). He did not content himself with even this and having stuck down the envelope of the letter with a special wax (instead of the 'lac' of the present times) affixed the seal on it.2

Conditions Of The World At The Time Of The Communication Of Universal Invitation

In those days the power of the world was in the hands of two big empires and the rivalry and wars between them had continued since long. War between Iran and Rome started in the days of Achaemenians and continued till the period of Sasanians. East was then ruled by the Iranian Emperor and Iraq, Yemen and a part of Asia Minor were treated to be satellites and colonies of Iran.

The Roman State was then divided into two blocs (viz. Eastern and Western) because in 395 A.D. Theodosius the Great, the Roman Emperor, divided his empire between his two sons and thus brought into existence two countries with the names of the Eastern Roman Empire and the Western Roman Empire. The Western Empire was overthrown in 476 A.D. at the hands of the savages and barbarians of Northern Europe.

However, the Eastern Roman Empire which had its capital at Constantinople and which also controlled

Syria and Egypt held the reins of world politics in its hands at the time of the advent of Islam. It continued to exist till 1453 A.D. when Constantinople was conquered by Sultan Muhammad II Fateh (i.e. the Conqueror). Its existence then came to an end and it was completely shattered.

Arabia was surrounded by these two super powers. However, as its land was not fertile and its inhabitants were nomads and were scattered, neither of the two empires showed inclination to conquer it.

Their pride, tyranny and mutual wars also prevented them from becoming aware of the revolutions and political changes in this region and they could not at all visualize that a nation far away from civilization would put an end to their empires with the strength of its faith, and the areas which had fallen into darkness on account of their tyranny would be illuminated with the bright dawn of Islam. If they had gained knowledge about the existence of this shining light they would have extinguished it at the very first stage.

The Messenger Of Islam In The Roman Territory

Kaiser, the Roman King, had vowed to God that if he was victorious in the war against Iran he would, as a mark of thanksgiving for this great victory, go from his capital (Constantinople) to Jerusalem on foot to perform pilgrimage of the Holy place. After gaining victory he acted according to his vow and proceeded to Jerusalem on foot.

Dihyah bin Kalbi was deputed by the Prophet to carry his letter to Kaiser. He had performed many journeys to Syria and was fully acquainted with the various places of that region. His impressive appearance, and sublime morals made him fully eligible for carrying out this important duty. Before leaving Syria for Constantinople he came to know at one of the towns of Syria called Busra3 that Kaiser had proceeded to Jerusalem. He, therefore, immediately contacted Harith bin Abi Shamir, the Governor of Busra and informed him of his important assignment.

The author of Tabaqat-i Kubra writes:4"The Prophet had ordered Dihyah to give the letter to the Ruler of Busra so that he might deliver it to Kaiser. Possibly this order was given in view of the fact that the Prophet was personally aware of the journey of Kaiser or because the conditions and possibilities of Dihyah were limited and his journey to Constantinople was not free from difficulties and hardships. However the ambassador of the Prophet of Islam contacted the Ruler of Busra. The governor called for Addi bin Hatim and ordered him to accompany the ambassador of the Prophet to Jerusalem and deliver the letter of the Prophet to Kaiser.

The ambassador was to see Kaiser in the city of Hams. He sought an audience with Kaiser and requested that a time might be fixed for it. The officers concerned said to him: "You will have to prostrate before Kaiser thrice, because otherwise he will not attend to you and will not accept your letter".

Dihyah, the wise ambassador of the Prophet of Islam said: "I have taken all this trouble in coming here to put an end to these wrong customs. I have been directed by the Prophet of Islam to tell Kaiser that the worship of man should cease and none except the Almighty Allah should be worshipped. How can I, with this assignment and belief, accept your viewpoint and prostrate before anyone except Allah?"

The firmness, steadfastness and strong logic of the ambassador was admired very much by the employees of the royal court. A benevolent courtier said to Dihyah: "You should leave the letter on the special table of the Emperor and return. None except Kaiser touches the letters lying on that table. As and when Kaiser reads the letter he will call you". Dihyah thanked that man for the guidance, left the letter on that table, and returned.

Kaiser opened the letter. The opening words of the letter, *Bismillah* (In the name of Allah) attracted his attention and he said: "I have not so far seen such a letter except that of Solomon. Then he called his interpreter so that he might read the letter and translate it for him. He translated the Prophet's letter as under:

"(This is a letter) from Muhammad bin Abdullah to the great Hercules of Rome. Peace be upon the followers of guidance. I invite you to the religion of Islam. Embrace Islam so that you may be safe. Allah will give you two rewards (reward for your own faith as well as reward for the faith of those who are your subordinates). In case, however, you turn away your face from Islam you will be responsible for the sins of the Arisiyans5 as well. O people of the Scriptures! We invite you to a common basis i.e.: we should not worship anyone except Allah. We should not treat anyone to be His partner. Some of us too should not accept others as their gods. And (O Muhammad! As and when) they recalcitrate against the true religion say: "Be witness to the fact that we are Muslims".

Kaiser Makes Investigations About The Holy Prophet

The wise Roman Ruler considered it probable that the writer of the letter was the same Promised Prophet Muhammad, as referred to in the Evangel and the Taurat. Hence, he decided to collect detailed information about him. He, therefore, called for the head of administrative department and said to him:

"Make a thorough search throughout Syria. It is possible that you may be able to find out some relatives or kinsmen of Muhammad or some other persons who may be aware of his antecedents so that I may get some information from them. By chance, in those very days Abu Sufyan and some other persons from amongst Quraysh had come to Syria for trade. The representative of Kaiser contacted them and took all of them to Jerusalem. They were received in audience by Kaiser who said to them: "Is there anyone amongst you who may be related with Muhammad?"

Abu Sufyan pointed to himself and said: "He and I belong to the same tribe and our fourth grand-parent (Abd-i Munaf) was common. Kaiser ordered that Abu Sufyan should stand facing him and others should stand behind his back so that if he was partial in his replies they should at once point out his mistake or

falsehood. Having made these arrangements Kaiser asked Abu Sufyan the following questions to which the latter gave replies seriatim:

Kaiser: What do you know about the descent of Muhammad?

Abu Sufyan: He belongs to a noble family.

Kaiser: Was there any one amongst his ancestors who ruled over the people?

Abu Sufyan replied in the negative.

Kaiser: Did he refrain from falsehood or not, before claiming to be a prophet?

Abu Sufyan: No doubt Muhammad was a truthful person.

Kaiser: Which class of people supports him and believes in him?

Abu Sufyan: The nobility is against him and the common and middle class people are his earnest supporters.

Kaiser: Are his followers increasing?

Abu Sufyan: Yes.

Kaiser: Has anyone of his followers turned apostate so far?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Kaiser: Has he been victorious while fighting or has he been defeated?

Abu Sufyan: On some occasions he has been victorious and on others he has been defeated.

Kaiser asked the interpreter to tell Abu Sufyan and his companions that if this account was correct he (Muhammad was definitely the last Promised Prophet. Then he added: "I have information that such a Prophet would appear, but I didn't think that he would belong to the tribe of Quraysh. However, I am ready to pay homage to him and to wash his feet as a mark of respect and in the near future his power and glory will capture the Roman territories".

Kaiser's nephew said: "In the letter Muhammad has written his own name above yours, but he has not been punished for this sedition". Kaiser angrily said: "It is appropriate that the name of the person on whom the Archangel Gabriel descends should precede mine".

Abu Sufyan says: "Kaiser's keen partiality for Muhammad created a murmur in the court and I felt very uneasy on account of this development lest the position of Muhammad should become so high that the Roman nation should be afraid of him. Although, when questioning commenced, I tried to belittle

Muhammad in the eyes of Kaiser and told him that Muhammad was smaller as compared with what he had heard about him, but Kaiser did not pay any heed to my derogatory remarks and said: "Only give replies to the questions which I ask you."6

The Prophet's Letter Impresses Kaiser

Kaiser did not content himself with the information gained from Abu Sufyan but he wrote a letter about the matter to one of the sages of Rome. The sage wrote in reply: "He is the very Prophet who is awaited by the world". Kaiser arranged for a big gathering in one of the monasteries to find out the way of thinking of the Roman chiefs and, after reading out the Prophet's letter before them, said: "Do you agree that I should accept his religion?"

Immediately a great convulsion took place in the meeting, so much so that the opposition of the people frightened Kaiser out of his life. He at once rose from his place which was at an elevated point and spoke to the people thus: By making this proposal I wished to test you. Your firmness and steadfastness in the religion of Prophet 'Isa has aroused my admiration and appreciation for you".

Kaiser called Dihyah and honoured him. He wrote a reply to the Prophet's letter and also sent some presents through Dihyah. In his letter he showed his faith and devotion to him.7

The Ambassador Of The Prophet Arrives In Iran

When the Ambassador of the Prophet left for the Iranian court the ruler of that vast territory was Khusro Perviz. He was the second ruler after Anushirwan who ascended the throne thirty two years before the migration of the Prophet and had to face many bitter and pleasant incidents during this period. During his reign the strength of Iran was completely in a state of vacillation. At one time Iran penetrated into Asia Minor and extended its authority up to the proximity of Constantinople and the Cross of Prophet 'Isa, which was the most sacred thing amongst the Christians, was taken away by him to his capital Taisfun (Mada'in). The Roman Emperor requested for peace and sent an ambassador to the Iranian court to conclude a peace treaty. Now the frontiers of Iran coincided with the frontiers of the territories of the Achaemenians.

Then, however, Iran came on the brink of downfall on account of wrong policies, immense pride and lavish living of the ruler. The conquered territories went out of control one after the other and the enemy's forces reached the very heart of Iran (viz. Dastgard near Taisfun). Consequently Khusro Perviz was obliged to flee on account of the fear of Romans. This shameful act on his part roused the wrath of the nation and eventually he was killed at the hands of his own son Shirviyah.

The historians consider the decline of Iran to be the consequence of the pride, egotism and luxurious life of the ruler. If he had accepted the message brought by the ambassador of peace, the splendour of Iran would have remained safe and peaceful.

If the Prophet's letter did not make the desired impression on the mind of Khusro Perviz it was not due to anything wrong with the letter or because the person who brought it was at fault. In fact his peculiar mentality and excessive egotism did not permit him to ponder over the invitation of the Prophet even for a few moments. Consequently when the interpreter had not yet finished the letter he shouted and having snatched the letter tore it into pieces. Here are the details of the incident:

In the beginning of the seventh year of migration[8] the Prophet appointed one of his brave officers named Abdullah Huzafah Sahmi Qarashi to carry his letter to Khusro Perviz inviting him to Islam. The letter of the Prophet is given below:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

From Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to the great Kisra of Iran. Peace be upon him, who seeks truth and expresses belief in Allah and in His Prophet and testifies that there is no god but Allah and that He has no partner, and who believes that Muhammad is His servant and Prophet. Under the Command of Allah, I invite you to Him. He has sent me for the guidance of all people so that I may warn them all of His wrath and may present the unbelievers with an ultimatum. Embrace Islam so that you may remain safe. And if you refuse to accept Islam, you will be responsible for the sins of the Magi".[9]

The ambassador of the Prophet arrived in the Iranian court. Khusro Perviz ordered the letter to be taken from him. But the ambassador, said that it was necessary that he should deliver the letter to the king himself, and then he handed it over to him. Khusro Perviz called for an interpreter and he translated it thus:

"This is a letter from Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to the great Kisra of Iran",

The interpreter had not yet finished reading the letter when the Ruler of Iran got very much agitated, shouted loudly, took the letter from his hand, tore it into pieces and cried: "Look at this man! He has written his own name before mine". He ordered at once that Abdullah should be turned out of the palace. Abdullah came out of the palace, mounted his horse and left for Madina. On reaching there he reported the matter to the Prophet. The Prophet was displeased to learn about the disrespect shown by Khusro and signs of anger appeared on his face. He cursed him in these words: "O Lord! Break his kingdom into pieces."[10]

Ya'qubi's False View

As opposed to the fact generally accepted by historians Ya'qubi says in his history: "Khusro Perviz read the Prophet's letter and sent him some musk and silk through his ambassador as a mark of respect to him. The Prophet distributed the perfume and said that silk was not fit for men. He also said: "The power of Islam will enter his territories and the Divine decree will be enforced soon".[11]

However, none of the historians agrees with him, except Ahmad bin Hanbal, who writes that Khusro

Perviz sent a present for the Prophet.12

Khusro Perviz Contacts The Ruler Of Yemen

The fertile territory of Yemen is situated towards the south of Makkah and its rulers had always ruled as satellites of the Sasanian Kings. The Ruler of Yemen in those days was Bazan and the Sasanian King wrote in a proud and self conceited tone: "It has been reported to me that a person from amongst Quraysh in Makkah claims to be a Prophet. Send two of your brave officers to him to him so that they may arrest him and bring him to me".13

Ibn Hajar has quoted in al-Isabah that Khusro Parviz ordered Bazan that these two officers should persuade the Prophet to revert to the religion of his ancestors and if he declined to do so his head should be cut off and sent to him.

This letter clearly shows the ignorance of the ruler of the time. He did not even know that the claimant of prophethood had migrated from Makkah to Madina six years earlier. He also did not realize that it was not possible to arrest, by sending two officers, or at least to summon to Yemen, a person who claimed to be a Prophet in a region whose influence had extended so much that he was sending ambassadors to the courts of the rulers of the world.

As ordered by the centre, the Ruler of Yemen sent to the Hijaz two brave and strong officers name Firoz and Kharkhusrah. They first contacted a Qurayshite in Ta'if. He guided them and said: "The person whom you wish to contact is in Madina these days".

They then went to Madina and presented themselves before the Prophet. They delivered Bazan's letter to him and said: "According to the orders received from the capital, we have been deputed to take you to Yemen and we think that Bazan will correspond about you with Khusro Perviz and will do what he says, otherwise, however, war will start between you and us and the Sasanian power will destroy your houses and kill your men".

The Prophet heard their words with perfect calmness. Before giving them a reply he invited them to embrace Islam. He did not like their appearances as they had grown long moustaches, and said to them: "My Lord has ordered me that I may grow my beard and shorten my moustaches".14 They were so much overawed by the greatness, formidableness and calmness of the Prophet that when he invited them to Islam, they were trembling. Then he said to them: "You may go today. I will let you know my decision tomorrow".

In the meantime revelation came and the Archangel Jibreel informed the Prophet about the assassination of Khusro Perviz. On the following day, when the Yemenite officers came to the Prophet, he said: "The Nourisher of the world has informed me that when seven hours of the last night had passed Khusro Perviz was assassinated by his son (Shirviyah) who has now ascended the throne. The

night which the Prophet specified was the night of Tuesday, the 10th of Jumadi I, 7 A.H.[15]

The representatives of Bazan were very much astonished on hearing this and said: "Responsibility for what you have said is greater by far than the claim of prophethood which annoyed the Sasanian King. We have no alternative but to inform Bazan about it. He will send a report in this behalf to Khusro Perviz".

The Prophet said: "I shall be glad if you inform him about the matter and also tell him that my religion and power will reach those regions where fast steeds reach and if he embraces Islam I will leave to him the territories which are under his control at present".

Then, in order to encourage the two persons deputed by Bazan, the Prophet gave them a costly belt which was ornamented with gold and silver and had been presented to him by some chiefs of the tribes. Both of them were perfectly satisfied and took leave of him and proceeded to Yemen. On reaching there they conveyed to Bazan the message of the Prophet.

Bazan said: "If this news is correct he is certainly a Prophet of Allah and should be obeyed". In the meantime he received a letter from Shirviyah with these contents: Be it known to you that I have killed Khusro Perviz. The wrath of the nation prompted me to kill him because he killed the nobles (of Persia) and dispersed the elders. As soon as you receive my letter you should obtain oath of allegiance for me from the people, and until you receive further orders from me don't be harsh to the man, who claims to be a Prophet and against whom orders had been issued by my father".

Thc letter of Shirviyah provided means for the embracement of Islam by Bazan and the government employees, all of whom were Iranians. Bazan corresponded with the Prophet and informed him about his own conversion to Islam as well as that of the employees of his government.

Arrival Of The Messenger Of Islam In Egypt

Egypt was the origin of old civilization, the centre of the Kingdom of the Pharaohs and the seat of Government of the Copts. Since the advent of Islam in the Hijaz, Egypt lost its power and independence. The Maqauqis had accepted the governor-generalship of Egypt from the Roman Emperor against payment of 19 million Dinars per annum.

Hatib bin Abi Balta'ah was a brave and skilled rider and was associated with a famous event in the history of Islam. He was one of the six persons who were deputed to carry the missionary letters of the Prophet to the rulers of the world. The Prophet ordered him to carry the following letter to the Maqauqis, the Ruler of Egypt:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

This is a letter from Muhammad bin Abdullah to the Maqauqis, the head of the Copts. Peace be upon

the followers of truth. I invite you to the religion of Islam. Embrace Islam so that you may remain safe (from the wrath of Allah). Embrace Islam so that the AImighty may grant you two rewards. And if you turn away your face from Islam you will be responsible for the sins of the Copts as well.

"O people of the Scriptures! We invite you to a common basis i.e. we should not worship anyone except Allah. We should not treat anyone to be His partner. Some of us also should not accept others as their gods. O Muhammad! (As and when) they recalcitrate against the true religion say: "Be witness to the fact that we are Muslims."16

The ambassador of the Prophet of Islam proceeded to Egypt and learnt that the ruler was then residing in a lofty palace in AIexandria, situated on the bank of the river. He then proceeded to Alexandria and entered the palace of the Maqauqis by boat. Hatib was received in audience by the king, who opened the letter, read it and pondered over its contents for some time.

Then he raised his head and addressed the ambassador of Islam in these words: "If Muhammad is really a Prophet of Allah, why were his opponents able to turn him out of his birth-place and why was he obliged to settle in Madina? Why did he not curse them so that they might have been destroyed by Allah "

The intelligent and judicious ambassador of Islam replied: "Prophet 'Isa was a Prophet of Allah and you too acknowledge him to be so. Why did he not curse the Children of Israel when they plotted to kill him so that Allah might have destroyed them?"

The ruler, who did not expect such a prompt reply, yielded to the strong logic of the ambassador and praised him saying, "Bravo! You are a wise man and you have brought a message from a wise and a fully accomplished person".17

The ambassador was emboldened by the cordial reception accorded to him by the Ruler of Egypt and spoke thus with a view to invite him to embrace Islam: "before you a person (the Pharaoh) ruled over this country; he oppressed the people for a long time. Allah destroyed him so that his life might be a lesson for you. However, you should endeavour that your life like his may not serve as a lesson for others.

Our Prophet invited people to a pure religion. Quraysh campaigned against him and the Jews also opposed him with peculiar grudge. The people nearest to him are the Christians. I swear by my life that just as Prophet Musa bin Imran gave good tidings to the people about Prophet 'Isa, the latter also has given good tidings about the Prophethood of Muhammad.

I invite you to the religion of Islam and our Heavenly Book (the Qur'an) in the same manner in which you have invited the people of the Taurah to the Evangel. Every nation which hears the call of a Prophet should follow him. And now that I have made the call of this Prophet reach your land it is only proper that you and the Egyptian nation should follow his religion. I do not at all restrain you from believing in the religion of 'Isa. I should rather tell you that you should follow his religion but must know that the complete

form of the religion of 'Isa is Islam itself."[18]

The meeting of the ambassador with the Ruler of Egypt came to an end, but the Maqauqis did not give him a final reply.

It was therefore, necessary that Hatib should stay on for some time more so that he could obtain a reply and carry it to the Prophet of Islam. One day the Maqauqis called him and had a meeting with him in the palace in seclusion, and enquired from him about the programme and religion of the Prophet.

The ambassador replied: "He invites people to worship only Allah. He orders that people should offer prayers five times during day and night and should also fast during the month of Ramadan. They should also perform pilgrimage of the House of Allah and must keep their promises. They should refrain from eating dead bodies and drinking blood ....." Hatib ended his words with explaining the sublime qualities of the Prophet.

The Ruler of Egypt said to him: "These are the signs of prophethood. I knew that the last Prophet had not yet come. However, I was under the impression that he would appear, not in the Hijaz but in Syria, which has been the centre for the appearance of the Prophets. But O Ambassador of Muhammad! You should know that if I embrace Islam the Copts will not cooperate with me. I hope that the power of this Prophet will extend to Egypt and his companions will come to our land and gain victory over the local forces and over the false beliefs. And I desire you to keep this conversation secret and none of the Copts should know about it".[19]

The Maqauqis Writes A Letter To The Prophet

The Ruler of Egypt called his Arabic scribe and ordered him to write a letter to the Prophet as follows:

"This is a letter to Muhammad bin Abdullah from the Maqauqis, chief of the Copts. Peace be upon you! I have read your letter, understood its contents and realized the truthfulness of your call. I knew that a Prophet would appear but thought that he would rise from Syria. I have welcomed the arrival of your ambassador."

Then he mentioned in his letter the presents which he was sending to the Prophet and ended it with the words: "Peace be upon you".[20]

The respect which the Maqauqis showed to the Prophet in his letter and his writing the name of Muhammad first, as well as the precious gifts which he sent to the Prophet and the welcome which he accorded to his ambassador, show that he had secretly accepted the invitation of the Prophet, but his interest in his position as a ruler prevented him from making his faith public.

From Egypt Hatib came to Syria under the protection of a group of persons appointed by the Maqauqis. There he allowed those persons to return and proceeded to Madina along with a caravan. He delivered

the letter of the Maqauqis to the Prophet and also conveyed his message. The Prophet said: "He has not accepted Islam on account of fear for his rulership, but his rule and authority will come to an end soon.

Envoy Of Islam Enters Ethiopia

Ethiopia is situated at the far end of Eastern Africa. Its area is 18,000 sq. kilometres and its present capital is the city of Addis Ababa.

The orientals were acquainted with this country for more than a century before Islam. The acquaintance commenced with the attack of the Iranian army during the Rule of Anushirwan and was matured with the migration of Muslims from Makkah to Ethiopia.

When the Prophet decided to send six distinguished and brave delegates to far-off places as envoys for making his universal prophethood known to the people of the world he appointed 'Amr bin Umayyah to proceed to Ethiopia with his letter and to convey his message to the Negus, the just ruler of that country. This was not the first letter which the Prophet wrote to the Ruler of Ethiopia.

He had written a letter earlier also about the Muhajirs asking the Negus to be kind to them. The text of that letter is recorded in history.21 Some times confusion takes place between the two letters (i.e. between the one making recommendations for the Muhajirs, and the other written to communicate the Prophet's universal prophethood) and the text of both of them is mixed up.

When the Prophet sent his envoy to Ethiopia with a letter some Muslim Muhajirs were still residing there whereas others had come over to Madina and had praised the justice of the great ruler of that country and his kindness to his subjects. In case, therefore, we find a sort of inclination, kindness and softness in the tone of the letter written by the Prophet to that ruler, it is, because he was aware of the mentality of the Negus.

In letters addressed to other rulers he warned them of the time of Divine wrath and told them that if they did not express their faith in Islam the sins of those who refrained from embracing Islam owing to fear would also be recorded in their account. However, no such thing has been said in the following letter to the Negus:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

This is a letter from Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah to the Negus, the King of Ethiopia. Peace be upon you! I praise Allah except Whom there is no god. He is Allah who is free from all defects and faults; and His obedient servants are safe from His wrath. He sees and witnesses the conditions of His servants.

I testify that Prophet 'Isa bin Maryam is a spirit of Allah and a 'word' (of Allah) which settled in the womb of pious Maryam. Allah created him in the womb of his mother without a father with the same Power with which He created Adam without parents.

I invite you to the One Allah Who has no partner, and require you to obey Him and to follow my religion. Profess faith in Allah Who has appointed me to the prophetic mission.

The King of Ethiopia should know that I am the Prophet of Allah. I invite you and all your soldiers to the Almighty Allah and I have, by sending this letter and my envoy, discharged the onerous responsibility which devolved upon me and have given you advice. Peace be upon those who follow guidance".22

The Prophet commenced his letter with the Islamic salutation of *Salamun Alayk* and sent personal greetings to the King of Ethiopia. In other letters (sent to the Kisra, the Kaiser and the Maqauqis, the Rulers of Iran, Rome and Egypt respectively), however he began with a general salutation (Peace be upon the followers of guidance). In this letter he sent personal greetings to the Ruler of Ethiopia and thus accorded him superiority over other contemporary rulers of the world.

In this letter a reference has been made to a number of salient attributes of the Almighty, which indicate His Oneness and Greatness. Thereafter the Prophet propounded the question of 'Divinity' (Prophet 'Isa being god) which is the creation of decayed thinking of the Church and refuted it by arguments inferred from the Holy Qur'an. As regards Prophet 'Isa being born without a father he explained this event by making a comparison with the birth of Adam and proved that if birth without father be an argument for one's being the son of God the same argument should apply to Adam, whereas the Christians hold no such belief about him.

At the close of the letter he offered advice to him and thus manifested his own status.

Conversation Of The Envoy With The Negus

When the necessary formalities ended the ambassador of Islam was received in audience by the Ruler of Ethiopia. He spoke to the ruler thus: "It is my duty to convey the message of the Prophet to you, and your pure nature also demands that you should kindly listen to my submission.

O Just Ruler of Ethiopia! Your sympathy for the Muslim migrants cannot be forgotten and these sentiments of yours have pleased us so much that we consider you as one of us and have a great confidence in you, as if we were your friends. Your Heavenly Scripture is a firm and indisputable witness.

This Book is the best judge which doesn't do injustice and this just judge clearly testifies to the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam. If you follow this universal Messenger and the Last Prophet of Allah you will acquire great blessings; otherwise you will be like the Jews who did not accept the religion of Prophet 'Isa which superseded the religion of Prophet Musa and continued to follow the superseded religion. And the religion of Islam supersedes earlier religions like the religion of 'Isa and in a sense completes them".

The Ruler of Ethiopia replied to the envoy of the Prophet of Islam in these words: "I testify that he is the

same Prophet who is awaited by the people of the Scriptures and believe that just as Prophet Musa informed the people about the prophethood of 'Isa, the latter also specified the signs of the Last Prophet. I am prepared to proclaim his prophethood before the public.

However, as the environment is not yet ready for such a proclamation and my strength is also insufficient, it is necessary that the requisite ground should be prepared so that the hearts of the people might be attracted towards Islam. If it had been possible for me I would have hastened to reach your Prophet at once".23 Then he wrote a letter in reply to the Prophet.

The Negus Writes To The Holy Prophet

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

It is a letter to Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah from the Negus. The blessings of One except Whom there is no god and the greetings of One Who guided me towards Islam be upon you. I have read your letter pertaining to the prophethood and human attributes of 'Isa. I swear by the Lord of the heavens and the earth that whatever you have said is absolutely correct and I do not have the least difference with this belief. I have also become acquainted with the reality of your religion and have rendered such services to the Muslim migrants as were expedient.

I testify by means of this letter that you are the Messenger of Allah and a truthful person whose prophethood has been confirmed by the Heavenly Scriptures. I have performed the ceremonies of embracement of Islam and allegiance to you in the presence of your cousin (Ja'far bin Abu Talib).

I am sending my son, Rarha, to your sacred presence to communicate my message and embracement of Islam. And I state clearly that I am not responsible for anyone except myself. In case, therefore, you order me I shall present myself to your august presence. Peace be upon you O Prophet of Allah.24

The Negus sent special presents to the Prophet and later two more letters were also sent to him by the Prophet.

Letters Of The Holy Prophet To The Rulers Of Syria And Yamamah

It is possible that the extension of universal invitation by the Prophet of Islam to the various rulers might have appeared to some of the politicians of that age to be something beyond moderateness. However, the passage of time proved that the Prophet had no other alternative.

Firstly deputation of six envoys to different parts of the world and that too with firm and convincing letters closed the path of doubt for the opponents in the future. After the performance of this great act by the Prophet none can entertain any doubt today about the universal nature of his invitation. Moreover,

besides the verses revealed on the subject, sending of envoys is in itself the greatest proof of the universality of Islam.

Secondly, the rulers of the time, excepting Khusro Perviz, who was a proud and despotic person, were generally impressed by the invitation and the letters. They showed great respect to the representatives of the Prophet and the appearance of the Arabian Prophet became the subject of discussion in religious circles.

These letters awakened those who were asleep, gave a severe jolt to the heedless persons and stirred the sense of the civilized nations so that they might once again undertake discussion and investigation about the Promised Prophet of the Taurat and the Evangel, and the religious personalities of the time might come in contact with the new religion in different ways. For this reason most of the leaders of different religions of those days came to Madina, during the last days of the life of the Prophet and even after his death and studied his religion from near.

In the foregoing chapters we have mentioned in detail the impression which the letters of the Prophet made on the Rulers of Rome, Iran and Egypt. Now we should see what was the result of his letter to the Negus.

After delivering presents to the representative of the Prophet of Islam, the Negus, in order to acquaint the religious organization of Ethiopia with the truthfulness of Islam, sent thirty proficient priests to Madina, so that they might study the simple and pious life of the Prophet of Islam from near, and might not think that he too possessed an organization like the monarchs of the time.

The persons deputed by the King of Ethiopia were received in audience by the Prophet and they enquired from him about his belief with regard to Prophet 'Isa. The Prophet informed them of his belief about 'Isa by reciting this verse:

When Allah said, "Jesus, son of Mary, recall My favours to you and your mother. Recall how I supported you by the Holy spirit, made you speak to people from your cradle and when you grew up, taught you the Book, gave you wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel. Recall when, by My will, you made a sculpture of a bird out of clay, blew into it and it turned into a real bird. Recall how, by My will, you healed the deaf, the lepers and raised the dead. Recall when you came to the Israelites in the house with clear miracles and I saved you from their mischief, even though the disbelievers among them said, "This is obviously magic". **(Surah al-Ma'ida, 5:110)**

The contents of the above verse moved them so much that tears began to flow down involuntarily from their eyes.

Those deputed by the Negus returned to Ethiopia after a minute study of the invitation of the Prophet and narrated their experiences to the king. His eyes were also filled with tears like those of the priests."[25]

Ibn Athir has narrated the story of the priests sent by the Negus in a different manner. He says: "All of them were drowned in the sea and the Prophet sent a letter of condolences to the king". However, the text of the letter to which he has referred does not at all show that the Negus had faced any such calamity".26

The Holy Prophet's Letters To The Prince Of The Ghassanians

Ghassanians were a family of the Qahtani tribe named Azd who had been living in Yemen for a long time, and their lands were irrigated by means of Ma'rib Dam. When the dam was destroyed they were compelled to leave that place and come to Syria. Their power and influence eclipsed that of the natives and eventually they established a State named Ghassaniyah. They ruled in that area under the suzerainty of the Roman Emperors and when Islam disbanded their organization, thirty two persons out of them had ruled over Golan, Yarmuk and Damascus.

Out of the six envoys who were sent to big countries to communicate the message of universal prophethood, the fifth was Shuja' bin Wahab, who proceeded to the State of Ghassaniyah to deliver the Prophet's letter to their ruler, Harith bin Abi Shamir at Ba'uzah. When the envoy reached the territory of Harith he came to know that the ruler was busy making preparations to receive Kaiser who was coming from Constantinople to Jerusalem on foot as a mark of thanksgiving for his gaining victory over his enemy, Iran.

In the circumstances Shuja' bin Wahab had to wait for some time before his meeting with the ruler could be fixed. In the meantime he developed friendship with the Hajib (the chief of ceremonies) and informed him of the attributes of the Prophet as well as about Islam.

The impressive and penetrating words of the envoy brought about a peculiar change in the Hajib's thoughts, so much so that tears began to flow from his eyes and he said: "I have studied the Evangel very minutely and have read in it the attributes of the Prophet and I hereby express my faith in him. However, I am afraid of Harith lest he should kill me. And Harith, too, is afraid of the Kaiser and even if he believes your words, he will not be able to proclaim his faith, because he as well as the ancestors of this family have been the satellites of the Kaiser.

When Shuja' was received in audience by the ruler. he saw him sitting on a throne and wearing a crown. He delivered the Prophet's letter to him. It was as follows:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

This is a letter from Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah to Harith bin Abi Shamir. Peace be upon the followers of truth and the guides and the true believers. O Harith! I invite you to the One Allah Who has no partner. If you embrace Islam your kingdom will continue to exist".

The words at the end of the letter which threatened the destruction of his kingdom in the event of his

failing to express faith (in Allah and the Prophet) annoyed Harith and he said:

"None can deprive me of my power. I must arrest this newly-risen Prophet". Then, in order to impress the envoy, he ordered that the army should march past before him so that the envoy of the Prophet might see his military power from near. By way of rendering supererogatory service he also wrote a letter to the Kaiser and informed him of his decision to arrest the Prophet of Islam.

By chance, his letter was received by Kaiser at the time when Dihyah Kalbi, another envoy of the Prophet, was present in the court of Kaiser and the Roman Emperor was thinking about Islam. The Kaiser was displeased with the excessive zeal of the Ghassani Ruler and wrote to him in reply: "Give up your idea and see me in the city of Ailya."

However, in accordance with the maxim: "People follow the path of their rulers", the reply of Kaiser altered the attitude of Harith and hence he gave the envoy of the Prophet a robe of honour and, before he left for Madina, said to him: "Convey my greetings to the Prophet of Islam and tell him that I am one of his real followers". However, the Prophet did not attach any importance to his diplomatic reply and said: "In the near future his power will collapse". Harith died in the 8 A.H. i.e. one year after this event.27

The Sixth Envoy Of The Prophet Proceeds To Yamamah

The last envoy of the Prophet proceeded to Yamamah, a territory situated between Najd and Bahrain, and delivered his letter to the ruler of that place named Hawzah bin Ali Hanafi. The text of the Prophet's letter is as follows:

"In the name of Allah. Peace be upon the followers of guidance. You should know that my religion will spread in the east and the west up to the remotest corners of the earth. Embrace Islam so that you may remain safe and your power and kingdom may continue to exist".

As the Ruler of Yamamah was a Christian the envoy, chosen for that place, was a man, who had resided in Ethiopia for a long time and was fully conversant with the logic and ceremonies of Christianity. This man was Salit bin 'Amr who had migrated to Ethiopia under the orders of the Prophet at the time when the Muslims were severely oppressed by the idolaters of Makkah.

The sublime teachings of Islam and his contacts with different classes of people during his journeys had made him so brave and strong that he impressed the Ruler of Yamamah by his words and said to him:

"Honoured is he, who is blessed with faith and piety. The people who under your leadership will never be unsuccessful. I invite you to the best thing and restrain you from the worst acts. I invite you to worship Allah and prevent you from obeying Satan and following temptations and lusts The result of worshipping Allah is Paradise and that of following Satan is fire (Hell). If you do against what I have said, you should wait till reality dawns upon you".

The face of the Ruler of Yamamah showed that the words of the envoy had made a good impression on him. He asked for time to ponder over the prophethood of the Prophet. By chance one of the Archbishops of Rome happened to arrive in Yamamah at that time and the Ruler of Yamamah placed the matter before him.

The bishop said: "Why did you abstain from acknowledging him?" He replied: "I fear for my kingdom and my authority". The bishop said: "It is proper for you to follow him. He is the same Arabian Prophet whose appearance has been foretold by Jesus and it is written in the Evangel that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah".

The advice tendered by the bishop encouraged the ruler. He called the envoy to deliver a letter from him to the Prophet. The letter reads as follows:

"You have invited me to the best religion. I am the poet, orator and spokesman of my community and enjoy a position amongst the Arabs which is recognized by all. I am prepared to follow your religion, subject to the condition that you allow me to share some high religious status".

He did not content himself with this only. He sent a delegation to Madina headed by Muja'ah bin Murarah so that they might convey his message to the Prophet and tell him that if this religious distinction was to devolve upon him after the Prophet's death he was prepared to embrace Islam and to assist him, but otherwise he would wage war.

Members of this delegation presented themselves before the Prophet and embraced Islam without any preconditions. As regards the Ruler of Yamamah the Prophet said in reply to his message: "If his faith is conditional he is not fit for rulership and succession and Allah will protect me from his mischief ".28

Other Letters Of The Prophet Of Islam

The letters written by the Prophet inviting the princes, kings, rulers and religious personalities (to Islam) are more in number than those mentioned above and even now the research scholars have reproduced in their books twenty nine letters of invitation sent by him. For brevity's sake, however, we content ourselves with those mentioned above.

1. The great scholars of Islam have collected the letters of the Prophet as far as they could. The following two books are most valuable in this regard: (i) al-Wasa'iqus Siyasah by Prof. Muhammad Hamidullah Hyderabadi, Professor of Paris University. (ii) Makatibur Rasul by the contemporary scholar Ali Ahmadi.
2. Tabaqat-i Kubra, vol. I, page 258; Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 271.
3. Busra was the capital of the governor of Horan Province. This province was treated to be a colony of Kaiser and Harith bin Abi Shimar and generally the rulers of the family of Ghassan ruled it as satellites of Kaiser.
4. Tabaqat-i Kubra, vol. I, page 259.
5. There is a difference of opinion between the scholars about the meaning of this word. Ibn Athir writes in Nihayah, vol. I, page 31: "It means the employees of the court". Others say that it means the farmers, because in those days the majority of the people were farmers. This view is supported by the fact that in some copies (Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 145) the word

Akarin has been used instead of the above word and Akar means a farmer. It is also considered probable that Aris was the name of a community which resided in the Roman Empire.

6. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, p. 290; Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, pp. 378 – 380.
7. Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. I, page 259; Seerah–i Halabi, vol. II, page 277; Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 44 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 379.
8. According to Ibn Sa'd, (Tabaqat, vol. I, page 258) the Prophet sent the envoys in the month of Muharram, 7 A.H.
9. Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. I, page 360; Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, pp. 295 & 296; Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 81 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 389.
10. Tarikh–i Kubra, vol. I, page 260.
11. Tarikh–i Ya'qubi, vol. II, page 62.
12. Musnad–i Ahmad, vol. I, page 96.
13. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 278.
14. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 106.
15. Tabaqat–i Kubra. Vol. I, page 260 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 382.
16. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 280; Durr–i Manthur, vol. I, page 40 and A'ayan–i Shi'ah, vol. I, page 142.
17. Usudul Ghaba, vol. 1, page 362
18. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 28.
19. Seerah–i Zayni Dehlan, vol. III, page 73.
20. Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. I, page 260.
21. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II, page 294.
22. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 279 and Tabaqat, vol. I, page 259.
23. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, p. 279; Tabaqat–i Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, p. 259.
24. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. I and Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 392.
25. A'alamul Wara, page 31.
26. Usudul Ghaba, vol. II, page 62.
27. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, p. 286; Tabaqat–i Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, p. 261.
28. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 83; Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. I, page 262.

From the day Islam was preached in Madina the Jews became more inimical towards the Prophet and the Muslims than even Quraysh, and rose with all their intrigues and strength to destroy this religion.

The Jews who lived in Madina itself or in its suburbs met the fate they deserved on account of their noxious activities. A group of theirs was put to death, and others like the tribes of Bani Qaynuqa' and Bani Nuzayr were expelled from Madina, and they settled in Khayber and Wadiul Qura'.

The extensive fertile plain situated in the north of Madina at a distance of thirty two leagues is called the Valley of Khayber and before the appointment of the prophetic mission the Jews had constructed seven strong forts in that area for their residence and safety.

As this area was very suitable for agricultural purposes its residents were fully conversant with matters relating to farming, accumulation of wealth, procurement of arms and principles of defence. Its population exceeded twenty thousand and many brave and warlike persons could be seen amongst them.1

The greatest crime committed by the Jews of Khaybar was that they instigated all the Arab tribes to

destroy the State of Islam, and with their financial support the army of polytheism marched from different places in Arabia and reached the very walls of Madina. As a result of this the Battle of Ahzab took place (details of which have been given earlier).

The measures taken by the Prophet and the self-sacrifice of his companions made the attacking army, including the Jews of Khayber, return to their homes after staying on the other side of the ditch for one month and peace and tranquility was restored in the Capital of Islam.

Foul play by the Jews, who were previously respected by the Muslims, made the Prophet decide to destroy this central place of danger and to disarm all of them, because it was not improbable that these obstinate and adventurous people might once again spend large sums to instigate the idolatrous Arabs to rise against the Muslims, and the story of the Battle of Ahzab might be repeated, as their intolerance in the matter of religion far exceeded the love of Quraysh for idolatry and it was on account of this blind faith that while thousands of polytheists had embraced Islam, not even one Jew showed his readiness to forsake his religion.

Another factor which prompted the Prophet to destroy the power of the Jews of Khayber, to disarm them, and to appoint his own officers to watch their movements, was that he had corresponded with the princes, kings and rulers of different countries of the world and had invited all of them in a decisive tone to embrace Islam, and in the circumstances it was not improbable that the Jews might become tools in the hands of Kisra and Kaiser and might decide to take revenge on the Muslims with the help of these two emperors and destroy the spiritual movement of Islam or instigate these emperors to rise against Islam, just as they had instigated the idolaters earlier, as in those days the Jews had sided with one emperor or the other during the wars between Iran and Rome and so the Prophet considered it necessary to nip this evil in the bud.

This was the best time for carrying out this step, because after having concluded the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah the Prophet was free from all embarrassment from the southern side (Quraysh) and knew that if he lays his hands on the organization of the Jews they would not receive any help from Quraysh. As regards prevention of other tribes in the north (like the families of Ghatfan who were the allies and friends of the people of Khayber during the Battle of Ahzab) from helping the Jews, he had a plan in mind about which we will speak later.

Prompted by these factors, the Prophet ordered the Muslims to get ready to conquer the last centres of the Jews in Arabia. He added that only those persons, who were present at the time of conclusion of the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah, could participate in this battle. As regards to others they could join as volunteers but were not entitled to any share in the booty.

The Prophet appointed Ghayla Laythi to be his representative in Madina. He gave a white standard in the hands of Ali and ordered the Muslims to march. And in order that the caravan might reach the destination as early as possible he permitted his camel-driver, 'Amir bin Akwa' to recite verses while

driving the camels. He, therefore, recited these verses: *By Allah! If we had not been blessed by Him, we would have been misguided; we would neither have given alms nor offered prayers. We are such a nation that if a nation oppresses us or creates mischief against us, we would not tolerate it. O Allah! Grant us perseverance and keep us steadfast in this path.*

The subject-matter of these verses clarifies the motive and causes of this battle. It means that, as the Jews have oppressed us and started mischief at the very threshold of our house, we have undertaken this journey to stop this danger.

The contents of the verses pleased the Prophet so much that he prayed for 'Amir. It so happened that 'Amir achieved martyrdom in this battle.

The Army Of Islam Moves To An Unknown Destination

The Prophet was very much interested in camouflage2 in the movement of troops. He wished that none should know his destination so that he might come upon the enemies unawares and besiege their environs before they could take any necessary decision.

It was also his idea that everyone of the allied enemies should think that he was the Prophet's target and they should, therefore, remain confined to their houses as a measure of precaution and should not join one another.

Some people thought that possibly the Prophet had undertaken this journey towards north to suppress the tribes of Ghatfan and Fazarah who were the allies of the Jews in the Battle of Ahzab. However, after reaching the desert of Raji', he directed the forces to move towards Khayber and thus cut off liaison between these two allies, and prevented the said tribes from coming to the help of the Jews of Khayber. The result was that, although the siege of Khayber continued for one month, the said tribes could not render any assistance to their allies.3

The great leader of Islam advanced towards Khayber with 1600 warriors who included two hundred mounted soldiers.4 When they came near the region of Khayber the Prophet made the following invocation which is a proof of his pure intentions: "O Allah, Who are the Lord of the heavens and of whatever is below them, and the Lord of the earth and of whatever has thrown weight on it!.....

I seek from You the goodness of this habitation and the goodness of its inhabitants and of whatever is in it and seek refuge in You from its evil and from the evil of its inhabitants and from the evil of whatever is placed in it".5

This invocation, made as an entreaty and that too in the presence of 1600 brave soldiers, is an evidence of the fact that he had not come to this land for conquest i.e. to expand his territory, or to take revenge. On the contrary he had come to destroy this centre of danger which could possibly become a base for the idolaters, and his object was that the Islamic movement should not be threatened from this quarter.

And, as the respected reader will observe, the Prophet, after conquering the fort and disarming the Jews, made over their farms to them and contented himself with providing them full protection and exempted them from paying *jizyah* (tribute).

Important Places Are Occupied At Night

The seven forts of Khayber had a particular name as: Na'im, Qamus, Katibah, Nastat, Shiq, Watih and Sulalim. Out of these forts some were at times associated with the names of the chiefs of the particular forts. For example, one of them was called the Fort of Marhab. In order to protect the forts and to remain informed of the external state of affairs, watch towers had been constructed at the corners of all the forts so that the sentries posted there might report the external events to the inmates. The towers and the forts were constructed in such a manner that their inhabitants were in full control of the area outside the forts and could stone the enemies by means of catapults etc.6

This population of twenty thousand included two thousand brave and warlike persons who were perfectly well-off from the point of view of water and food reserves. These forts were so strong that it was not possible to drive a hole in them and those who attempted to approach them were wounded or killed by the stones flung from within. These forts were considered to be strong fortifications for the Jewish warriors.

It was necessary for the Muslims who were faced with a well-equipped and powerful enemy to make maximum use of military skill and war tactics to conquer these forts. The first thing which was done was that all the important points and paths and gates were occupied by the soldiers of Islam overnight. This job was performed so secretly and so quickly that even the sentries of the watch towers did not become aware of it.

In the morning, when the farmers, having no knowledge of the developments, came out of all the forts of Khayber with agricultural implements, their eyes fell on the brave soldiers of Islam, who had, with the strength of faith and strong hands and sharp weapons, closed all paths for them; so much so that if they had come one step forward they would have been arrested.

This scene frightened them so much that they took to their heels at once and all of them began saying: "Muhammad is here with his soldiers". They immediately fastened the gates of the forts tightly and held war councils inside.

When the eyes of the Prophet fell on the destructive equipment like spades and picks, he considered it to be a good omen and said these words for strengthening the morale of the soldiers of Islam: "Allah is Great! Ruined be Khayber. When we descend upon a nation what a bad time it will be for those who have been warned!"

The Jews decided, after discussions among them, that the women and children should be

accommodated in one fort and the stores of foodstuffs should be shifted to another. Then the brave and warlike persons of every fort should defend themselves from above by means of stones and arrows.

On some particular occasions the champions of every fort should come out of it and fight with the Muslims. The Jewish warriors did not abandon this plan till the end of hostilities and were consequently able to withstand the strong army of Islam for a month. At times it took ten days making efforts to conquer a fort but the purpose was not achieved.

The Fortifications Of The Jews Tumble Down

The place chosen by the officers of Islam as the headquarters of the army in this Islamic jihad was not very important from the military point of view. The Jewish army had complete control over it and there was no obstacle or impediment to their taking aims upon the headquarters of the army of Islam. In view of this one of the experienced warriors of Islam named Hubab bin Munzir came to the Prophet and said: "If you have encamped at this spot under the orders of the Almighty, I don't have the least objection to it, because the commandments of Allah are above all our opinions and precautions.

However, if it is a usual matter on which the officers can express their opinions, I am obliged to say that this point is within the view of the enemies and is situated near the Fort of Natah and as there are no trees or houses here the archers of the fort can very easily take aim at the centre of our army".

The Prophet, acting on one of the most important principles of Islam (viz. the principle of consultation and of according respect to the views of others), spoke thus: "If you mention a better place I shall shift my camp there".

After examining the land of Khayber, Hubab suggested a place which was situated behind the date-palm trees and the army staff and headquarters were accordingly transferred there. Thereafter, till the conquest of Khayber, the officers and the Prophet of Islam came to the forts everyday from that place and returned to their camping place at night.7

No decisive view can be expressed with regard to the details of the war of Khayber. However, it is learnt from all the books on history and biography of the Prophet that the soldiers of Islam besieged the forts one by one and endeavoured to cut off communication of the besieged fort from other forts and resorted to besiege another fort after conquering the former one.

The conquest was delayed of those forts which were connected with one another by underground passages or whose warriors put up a stubborn resistance, whereas those forts, whose commanders were over-awed or whose connection with other forts was completely cut off were conquered easily. In such cases much lesser bloodshed took place and matters were settled expeditiously.

According to some historians the first fort of Khayber which surrendered to the Islamic forces after great effort and sufferings was the Fort of Na'im. The conquest of this fort cost the martyrdom of Mahmud bin

Maslamah Ansari, one of the greatest commanders of Islam. In this battle fifty soldiers of Islam were wounded. Mahmud bin Maslamah was struck by a stone which was flung from above and died instantly.

However, according to Ibn Athir,[8] he died after three days. As regards the fifty soldiers who were wounded they were carried to a place in the camping place which was meant for dressing of wounds.[9] A group of the women of Bani Ghifar tribe came to Khayber with the permission of the Prophet to assist the Muslims, to dress their wounds and to render all other services permissible for women in the army encampments. They rendered these services whole-heartedly and sincerely.[10]

The war council decided that after conquering the Fort of Na'im, the Muslim soldiers should attack the Fort of Qamus. Its chief was Ibn Abil Haqiq. As a consequence of the self-sacrifice of the soldiers of Islam, this fort was also conquered and Safiyah, daughter of Hay bin Akhtab, who later became the wife of the Prophet, was arrested.

These two great conquests strengthened the morale of the soldiers of Islam and awe and fear prevailed over the Jews. However, the Muslims were in a great fix on account of foodstuffs, so much so that they were obliged to eat the meat of some animals, whose meat is abominable (though not unlawful). The fort which contained abundant foodstuffs had not yet come into the hands of the Muslims.

Piety In The Very Face Of Hardships

At a time when the Muslims were faced with extreme hunger and satisfied it by using the meat of animals, whose meat is disapproved, there came before the Prophet a black faced shepherd who served as a cattle-man of the Jews and requested that the reality of Islam might be explained to him. On hearing the impressive and penetrating words of the Prophet, he embraced Islam at once and said: "All these sheep have been entrusted to me (by the Jews). What am I to do with them now when my contact with their masters has been cut off?"

The Prophet said to him in clear terms in the presence of hundreds of hungry soldiers: "In my religion breach of trust is one of the greatest crimes. It is necessary that you should take all the sheep to the gate of the fort and hand them over to their masters". He complied with the Prophet's orders and then participated in the battle immediately and met martyrdom in the path of Islam.[11]

No doubt, the Prophet who had acquired the title of *Amin* (righteous) during his early age continued to be righteous and honest in all circumstances The traffic of the herds was free in the morning as well as in the afternoon throughout the period of siege and not even one Muslim thought of taking away the sheep of the enemy, because Muslims too had become righteous and honest under the sublime teachings of their great leader.

Only on one day, when all of them were fully overpowered by hunger, he permitted them to catch only two sheep from the herd and let the others enter the fort. This too would not have been done if acute

hunger had not obliged them to do so. Hence, as and when the soldiers complained of hunger the Prophet raised his hands in prayer and said: "O Lord! Make the soldiers conquer the fort in which foodstuffs are stocked". He did not, however, allow them to acquire the property of the people until victory had been achieved.[12]

By taking these facts in view the baselessness of the statements of some biased contemporary orientalists become patent, because, in order to belittle the sublime aims of Islam, they endeavour to prove that the battles fought by the Muslims were aimed at plundering and collecting booty, and the rules of justice at the time of fighting battles were not observed by them.

However, the incident mentioned above as well as other similar incidents recorded in history prove the falsehood of these statements, because the Prophet did not permit, even in the most difficult circumstances (e.g. when his self-sacrificing soldiers were faced with hunger and death), that the shepherd should commit breach of trust with his Jewish employers, although he could confiscate all the sheep at that time.

The Forts Are Conquered One After The Other

After the conquest of the said forts the besieging forces turned their attention to the Forts of Watih and Sulalim.[13] However, the attacks by the Muslims were strongly resisted by the Jews outside the fort and the warriors of Islam could not gain victory in spite of their dauntless courage. The figures of the heavy losses sustained by them have been recorded by the great biographer of Islam, Ibn Hisham, under a special column. They fought with the Jews for ten days but returned to the camping-place everyday without achieving any success.

On one of these ten days Abu Bakr was nominated to fight for victory. He came up to the edge of the fort carrying a white standard and the brave soldiers of Islam moved under his command. However, after some time they returned without achieving any result and the commander and the army held each other responsible for failure and fleeing the battlefield.

On the following day the command of the army was entrusted to Umar. He also repeated the story of his friend and, according to Tabari,[14] frightened the companions of the Prophet by praising the chief of the fort, Marhab, for his extraordinary valour and bravery. The Prophet and the commanders of Islam were very much displeased at this.[15]

In the meantime the Prophet called the officers and warriors of the army together and uttered the following stirring sentences which are recorded in the history: "Tomorrow I shall give this standard to a person who loves Allah and the Prophet and who is loved by Allah and the Prophet and Allah will accomplish conquest of this fort at his hands. He is a man who has never turned his back towards the enemy and does not flee the battlefield".

And as quoted by Tabarsi and Halabi he used the words *'Karrar Ghayr-i Farrar'* which mean one who attacks the enemy and does not run away[16] (i.e. he is quite the opposite of the aforesaid two commanders).

This sentence, which is an evidence of the superiority, spiritual excellence and valour of the commander, who was destined to be the victor, created a clamour of joy coupled with agitation of mind amongst the soldiers and commanders of the army, and everyone of them was desirous[17] that this great military medal might fall to his share.

The darkness of night spread everywhere. The soldiers of Islam went to sleep and, the sentries took their positions at elevated places to watch the movements of the enemy. At last the day dawned. The commanders came round the Prophet. The two defeated commanders also attended with protracted necks and were anxious to know as early as possible as to whom the glorious standard was going to be given.[18]

The silence of the anxiously waiting persons was broken by the Prophet's words "Where is Ali?" He was informed that he was suffering from an ailment of the eyes and was resting in a corner. The Prophet said: "Bring him". Tabari says: "Ali was mounted on a camel and was made to alight before the tent of the Prophet".

This sentence shows that the ailment of the eye was so severe that it had made the commander incapable of movement. The Prophet drew his own hand on his eyes and prayed for him. This action and this prayer had an effect like the breath of Prophet 'Isa, for thereafter the eyes of Ali, the great commander of Islam, had no complaint throughout his life.

The Prophet ordered Ali to advance. He reminded him in this connection that before resorting to fighting he should send his representatives to the chiefs of the fort and should invite them to embrace Islam. In case, however, they declined to do so he should inform them of their obligations under the banner of the Government of Islam viz. that they should disarm themselves and lead a free life under the protection of Islam on payment of *jizyah.*[19]

In case, however, they refused to accept any of these proposals he should resort to fighting. And the last sentence which the Prophet uttered as a guideline to Ali was this: "If the Almighty Allah guides even one person through you it is better than that you should be possessing red-haired camels and should spend them in the path of Allah".[20]

There is no doubt that the Prophet thought of showing the right path to the human beings even during the battle and this in itself shows that these battles were fought for the guidance of the people.

The Great Victory At Khayber

The historians and biographers of Islam have written in detail, on the conquest of Khayber and one learns a number of facts by studying these writings. We mention here what has been written by the biographers of the Prophet by way of narration of events, and shall undertake its scrutiny later.

The texts and pages of the history of Islam relating to this battle show that, without the bravery and self-sacrifice of the Commander of the Faithful, it would not have been possible to conquer the dangerous forts of the Jews of Khayber. Though some writers have tampered with facts and replaced them by myths, yet a considerable number of research scholars have paid due tributes to Ali in the matter. A summarized version of this historical event as collected from various history books is given below:

When Ali was appointed by the Prophet to conquer the Forts of Watih and Sulalim (the same forts which the two earlier commanders had failed to conquer and had dealt an irreparable blow to the prestige of the army of Islam by showing a clean pair of heels) he put on a strong coat of mail and fastened his sword, *Zulfiqar,* to his belt. He then proceeded to the fort with the special courage which behoves the champions in the field and installed the standard of Islam, which the Prophet had given him, at a place near Khayber.

In the meantime the Gate of Khayber was opened and the brave men of the Jews came out. First of all Marhab's brother came forward. His formidable mien and yelling voice was so terrifying that the soldiers, who were behind Ali, stepped back involuntarily. However, Ali stuck to his place like a mountain. Soon after Ali struck Harith down, his wounded body lay on the ground, and he breathed his last.

The death of Harith made Marhab very sad. He came forward to avenge his brother's death in such a state that he was armed to teeth.He had put on a Yemen coat of mail on his body and was wearing a cap made of a particular stone on his head which he had covered with a helmet. According to the custom of the champions of Arabia he recited the following epic verses:

"The doors and walls of Khayber testify that I am Marhab. I am an experienced warrior and am equipped with weapons of war.

If time is victorious I too am victorious. Warriors who face me in the battlefield are coloured with their blood".

Ali also recited epic verses in reply and cast his own position as a soldier, and the strength of his arms, and said:

"I am the same person whom his mother called Haydar (lion). I am a valiant person and a lion of the jungles (of bravery). I have powerful hands and a strong neck. In the battlefield I strike the people with awe like a lion".

The epic verses from both the sides came to an end. The thunderous sound of the blows of swords and spears of the two warriors created a peculiar awe in the minds of the on-lookers. Suddenly the sharp and knocking sword of the hero of Islam struck the head of Marhab and cut his shield, helmet, stone-cap and head up to teeth into two parts. This blow was so severe that some Jewish soldiers, who were standing behind Marhab, ran away and took refuge in the fort, and some others who did not flee fought hand to hand with Ali and were killed. Ali pursued the fleeing Jews up to the gate of the fort.

During this struggle one of the Jewish soldiers struck the shield of Ali with his sword and it (i.e. the shield) fell down from his hand. Ali immediately turned to the fort, pulled off its gate and used it as a shield till the end of the fight. And when he threw it on the ground ten strong soldiers of Islam including Abu Raf'e tried to turn it upside down but failed to do so.21 As a result of this the fort, for the conquest of which the Muslims had been waiting for ten days, was conquered in a short time.

Ya'qubi says:22 "The gate of the fort was made of stone and was four zara'23 long and two zara' wide.

Shaykh Mufid quotes the story of pulling off the Gate of Khayber from the Commander of the Faithful on the authority of a special source in these words: "I pulled off the gate of Khayber and used it as a shield. After the end of the combat I placed it like a bridge on a ditch which had been dug by the Jews. Then I pitched it into the ditch". A person asked him: "Did you feel it heavy?" Ali replied: "I felt it to be as heavy as my shield".24

The historians have quoted very surprising things about the gate of the fort of Khayber and its peculiarities and the valour which Ali displayed in conquering this fort. The fact is that such feats cannot be performed with the usual human strength.

However, Ali has explained the matter himself and has thus removed all doubts and suspicions. For, in reply to an enquiry made by a person, he said: "I didn't pull off that gate with human strength. I did it with the strength granted me by Allah, and on account of my firm faith in the Day of Judgement".25

Tampering With Facts

Justice demands that we should admit that Ibn Hisham and Abu Ja'far Tabari have given a comprehensive account of the fighting of Ali in Khayber and have narrated the minutest details of the event. However, in the end, they have mentioned the imaginary possibility of Marhab having been killed at the hands of Muhammad bin Maslamah and say: "Some believe that Marhab was killed at the hands of Muhammad bin Maslamah, because he was appointed for the purpose by the Prophet so that he might avenge the killing of his brother by the Jews at the time of the conquest of the Fort of 'Na'im and he might have succeeded in accomplishing this task".

This possibility is so unfounded that it cannot at all compare with the authentic and successively narrated history of Islam. Moreover, a number of difficulties are inherent in this fiction as we mention below:

1. Tabari and Ibn Hisham have quoted this fiction from a distinguished companion of the Prophet viz. Jabir bin Abdullah and the narrator of this story has quoted this anomalous matter from that great man, when the fact is that Jabir had the honour of accompanying the Prophet in all the battles, but he could not participate in this battle.

2. Muhammad bin Maslamah was not so brave that he could have become the Conqueror of Khayber and he did not show any proof of bravery in his life. In the second year of migration he was appointed by the Prophet to kill the Jew, Katb bin Ashraf, who was inciting the idolaters to rise against Islam, after the Battle of Badr, and to fight with the Muslims once again.

He was, however, so much frightened that he did not eat or drink anything for three nights and days and the Prophet criticized him on account of this fear. He said in reply: "I don't know whether or not I shall succeed in this task". On observing this state of affairs the Prophet sent four persons with him so that they might put an end to the mischief of Katb bin Ashraf, who was trying for the renewal of hostilities between the idolaters and the Muslims.

They chalked out a special plan for the purpose and killed the enemy of Allah at midnight. However, on account of excessive fear and dread, Muhammad wounded one of his own companions.26 Certainly a person with such a morale could not push back the warriors of Khayber.

3. The Conqueror of Khayber did not only combat with Marhab and kill him, but after Marhab was killed some persons fled and some others came in the battlefield one by one and engaged with him in single combat. The Jewish warriors who fought with Ali after Marhab had been killed were (i) Dawud bin Qubus (ii) Rabi' bin Abil Haqiq (iii) Abul Ba'ith (iv) Marrah bin Marwan (v) Yasir Khayberi (vi) Zajih Khayberi.

These six persons were the champions of the Jews outside Khayber and were considered to be the greatest obstacle in the way of the conquest of the forts of Khayber. And all of them, while singing epic verses and challenging the opponent for a fight were killed at the hands of the Commander of the Faithful. In the circumstances it should be judged as to who could be the Conqueror of Khayber and the killer of Marhab.

Because, if Muhammad bin Maslamah were the killer of Marhab he could not have returned to the camping-place of Islam after killing Marhab and ignored the warriors at the back of Marhab, because he should have fought with those persons as well, whereas all historians are unanimous that these persons fought with Ali and were killed at his hands.

4. This myth of history is opposed to repeated traditions quoted from the Prophet, because he said about Ali: "I shall give this standard to a man at whose hands victory will be accomplished", and on the following day he gave the standard of victory in his hand. And one of the greatest impediments in the way of victory was Marhab of Khayber, whose bravery had made two commanders of Islam flee the field. Now if the killer of Marhab had been Muhammad bin Maslamah it was only appropriate that the Prophet should have uttered the aforesaid sentence about him and not about Ali.

The famous historian Halabi says: "There is no doubt about the fact that Marhab was killed at the hands of Ali".27 Ibn Athir says that the biographers and traditionalists consider Ali to be the killer of Marhab and repeated narrations have been quoted confirming this fact.

Tabari and Ibn Hisham have been somewhat disturbed and have mentioned the event of the defeat and return of the two commanders, who were appointed to conquer the fort before Ali, in such a manner that it does not conform with the purport of the sentence which the Prophet uttered about Ali.

For the Prophet had said about Ali: "Who does not run away" i.e. he is a commander who does not run away, whereas the two earlier commanders had actually run away and had vacated the entrenchments. The aforesaid two writers have not, however, mentioned this point and have narrated the event in such a way as if they performed their duty fully but could not succeed in conquering the fort.

Three Bright Points In The Life Of Ali

We bring the topic to an end here after mentioning three virtues of the Conqueror of Khayber.

One day Mu'awiyah criticized Sa'd Waqqas for not cursing Ali. He said in reply: "Whenever I am reminded of three virtues of Ali, I earnestly desire that I might have possessed at least one of them:

1. On the day on which the Prophet appointed him as his representative in Madina and himself departed for the Battle of Tabuk, he said to Ali: "You enjoy the same relationship with me which Harun enjoyed with Musa except that no prophet will come after me.

2. On the Day of Khayber the Prophet said: "Tomorrow I will give the standard to a person who is loved by Allah and the Prophet." All the great officers and commanders of Islam were anxious to acquire this honour. On the following day, however, the Prophet called Ali and gave him the standard and Allah granted us a great victory which was solely due to the self-sacrifice of Ali.

3. When it was decided that the Prophet should engage in Mubahilah (cursing) with the leaders of Najran, he held the hands of Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn, and said: "O Allah! These are the members of my family".28

The Factors Pertaining To Victory

The gates of the forts of Khayber were opened and the Jews surrendered before the army of Islam under certain special conditions. However, it should be seen as to what were the factors responsible for this victory and they are of course the distinguished points of this episode. This remarkable victory of Muslims was the consequence of the following facts:

1. Military plan and tactics.

2. Procurement of information and becoming aware of the secrets of the enemy.

3. Perfect bravery and self-sacrifice of Ali, the Commander of the Faithful.

1. Military Plan And Tactics

The army of Islam encamped at a place from where it cut off contacts between the Jews and their friends (the tribes of Ghatfan). Generally speaking there were a large number of swordsmen and dauntless persons in the families of Ghatfan and if they had come to the help of the Jews and had fought side by side with them, the conquest of the Forts of Khayber would have been impossible. When the tribesmen of Ghatfan came to know about the march of the army of Islam they moved immediately with sufficient equipment to assist their allies.

However, while they were on their way it was rumoured amongst them that the companions of Muhammad were proceeding to their own territory from a deviated path. This rumour gained so much strength that they returned from half-way and did not move from their place till Khayber was conquered by the Muslims .

The historians consider this rumour to be the result of an occult voice. However, it is not improbable that this rumour might have been spread by the Muslims of the tribe of Ghatfan and the inventors of this rumour were the persons who were actually Muslims and were living amongst their tribesmen in the garb of unbelievers and were so expert in designing this plan that they prevented the forces of Ghatfan from proceeding to help their allies.

And this action had a precedent in the Battle of Ahzab, because as a consequence of the espionage of a Ghatfani Muslim named Na'im bin Mas'ud, the army of the infidels had scattered and had withheld their assistance from the Jews.

2. Procurement Of Information

The Prophet attached great importance to the procurement of information in connection with the wars. Before besieging Khayber, therefore, he sent twenty persons to that place as fore-runners under the command of 'Abbad bin Bashir. They met one of the residents of Khayber near that locality. After conversing with him 'Abbad realized that he was one of the well-informed persons of the Jews.

He, therefore, ordered his immediate arrest and sent him to the Prophet. When he was threatened with death he divulged all the secrets of the Jews. It was learnt from him that the Jews had become very nervous after receipt of report from the chief of the hypocrites (i.e. Abdullah bin Sallul) and they had also not yet received any assistance from the Ghatfan tribe.

During the sixth night of the battle the sentries of Islam arrested a Jew and brought him before the Prophet, who enquired from him about the conditions and affairs of the Jews. He said: "I will tell that

provided my life is guaranteed".

When he got an assurance, he said: "This night the soldiers of Khayber will shift from the Fort of Nastat to the Fort of Shiq to defend themselves from there. O Abul Qasim! You will conquer the Fort of Nastat tomorrow. The Prophet said: 'If Allah wills'. In that fort you will find hidden underground large quantities of catapults, military vehicles, coats of mail and swords, and with these weapons you can stone the Fort of Shiq.29

The great leader of Islam did not utilize these destructive weapons, but the information furnished by the captured person was important since he made it clear as to which fort was to be attacked on the following day, and it became known that the conquest of the Fort of Nastat would not require a large force and a greater care was needed for the conquest of the Fort of Shiq.

After the conquest of one of the forts was delayed for three days a Jew came to the Prophet, possibly to save his own life, and said: "Even if you stay at this place for one month you will not be able to over-power them. However, I can point out the source of supply of water to this fort and if you desire you may cut off their water supply". The Prophet did not agree to this proposal and said: "We don't cut off the supply of water to anyone lest he should die of thirst". However, in order to weaken the morale of the enemy he ordered that supply of water to them to be suspended temporarily. This thing frightened them so much that soon after a brief fighting, they surrendered to the army of Islam.30

3. Self-Sacrifice Of All

We have briefly mentioned earlier the self-sacrifice made by Ali and now we quote here his own remark: "We were stationed opposite a bigger force and the strong forts of the Jews. Their warriors came out of the forts and challenged their adversaries to fight and killed some persons every day. In the meantime the Prophet ordered me to get up and proceed towards the fort.

I faced their champions and killed some of them and pushed back others. They took refuge in the fort and shut its gate. I pulled off the gate and entered the fort alone. None opposed me and in this matter there was none who assisted me except Allah".31

Kind Sentiments In The Battlefield

When the Fort of Qamus was conquered Safiyah daughter of Hay bin Akhtab and another woman were made captives. Bilal let these two women pass by the dead bodies of the Jews, who had been killed in the battle, and brought them before the Prophet. When the Prophet learnt about the matter he got up, placed a cloak on Safiyah's head, showed her respect and provided for her a special place for rest in the encampment.

Then he said to Bilal harshly: "Are you completely devoid of kind feelings, that you made these women pass by the dead bodies of their dear ones?" He did nor content himself with this only but selected

Safiyah for himself and formally adopted her as his wife and thus compensated for her broken heart. Good treatment meted out to her by the Prophet and his kind sentiments had such a good effect on her that she was later considered to be one of his most affectionate and faithful wives, and she wept more than others when he was about to die.32

Kananah Bin Rabi' Is Killed

Ever since the Jews of the tribe of Bani Nuzayr had been expelled from Madina and had settled in Khayber they had formed a common chest for public matters and war expenses and for the payment of blood-money on account of those, who were killed at the hands of Bani Nuzayr. The reports received by the Prophet showed that this money was under the control of Kananah, husband of Safiyah. The Prophet summoned Kananah and enquired from him about the details of the chest. He, however, denied having any knowledge about it.

Orders were, therefore, given that he might be kept in custody and more information about the chest might be collected. Those appointed for locating the money commenced investigation. Eventually a person said, "I think that this treasure is hidden at such and such place (a ruined place), because I have seen Kananah visiting that place very often during the battle and thereafter.

The Prophet called Kananah once again and said: "It is said that the chest is at such and such place. If the treasure is found from there you will be killed". He again pleaded ignorance. As ordered by the Prophet the place in question was dug and the treasure of Bani Nuzayr fell in the hands of the soldiers of Islam. It now became necessary to punish Kananah for his deeds.

Besides concealing this fact (i.e. the location of treasure) he had also assassinated one of the of officers of Islam in a dastardly manner (i.e. he had suddenly thrown a big stone at the head of Mahmud bin Maslamah, who died instantly). In order to take revenge and also to chastise the Jews, so that they might not practise deceit and falsehood on the Government of Islam in future, the Prophet handed over Kananah to the deceased's brother, who killed him as a measure of revenge.33 Kananah was the last person to be put to death for assassinating a distinguished officer of Islam.

War Booty Is Divided

After the conquest of the enemy forts, and general disarmament and collection of the booty, the Prophet ordered the entire booty to be brought at a particular place. As directed by the Prophet a man proclaimed loudly amongst the soldiers of Islam: "It is incumbent upon every Muslim to return to the public treasury whatever booty has come into his hands even though it may be a thread and a needle, because breach of trust is a matter of shame and will prove to be a fire for his soul on the Day of Judgement".

The real leaders of Islam have been very strict in the matter of trusteeship; so much so that they have

considered the return of deposits to be one of the signs of faith, and breach of trust to be one of the signs of hypocrisy.34

Hence, when stolen property was found in the property left behind by a soldier the Prophet did not offer his funeral prayers. The details of this incident are as follows:

On the day of departure from Khayber an unexpected arrow hit a slave who was responsible for fastening the camel-litters for the Prophet and he died instantly. Persons appointed for the purpose made investigations but no result was achieved. All said: "May he be blessed with Paradise".

However, the Prophet said: "I don't concur with you in the matter, because the cloak on his body is a part of war booty and he committed a breach of trust, and it will encircle him in the shape of fire on the Day of Judgement" In the meantime one of the companions of the Prophet said: "I have taken two shoe-laces out of the booty without permission". The Prophet said: "Return them; otherwise they will be fastened to your feet on the Day of Judgement in the shape of fire".35

It is here that the ulterior motives of the biased orientalists become evident, because they describe the battles of Islam as plundering, but shut their eyes from their spiritual aims, as this type of discipline cannot be expected from a plundering group. It is not possible for the leader of a plundering community to treat honesty as the sign of faith and to train his soldiers in such a manner that he should be able to restrain them from taking even a shoe-lace from the public property.

A Caravan From Ethiopia The Memorable Land

Before proceeding to Khayber the Prophet sent 'Amr bin Umayyah to the court of the Negus. The purpose of sending his envoy to the Ethiopian court was that he should convey a message of the Prophet to the King of Ethiopia and ask him to provide facilities for the departure of all the Muslims residing in Ethiopia. The Negus arranged two boats for them. The boats of the Muhajirs cast the anchor on the coast near Madina.

The Muslims came to know that the Prophet had proceeded to Khayber and they also arrived in Khayber without any delay. The travellers of Ethiopia arrived at the time when all the forts had been conquered. The Prophet took sixteen steps forward to receive Ja'far bin Abu Talib, kissed his forehead and said: "I don't know for which thing I should be more happy-whether for that I have met you after so many years or for that Allah has opened the forts of the Jews for us through your brother Ali" .

Then he added: "Today I wish to give you a gift". People thought that the gift would be just like other material gifts consisting of gold or silver. Suddenly, however, the Prophet broke the silence and taught him a prayer which later became known as the 'Prayer of Ja'far Tayyar.'36

Figures Of Casualties

The casualties of the Muslims in this battle did not exceed twenty. The casualties of the Jews were ninety three as recorded in the history books.37

Forgiveness At The Time Of Victory

When great and pious persons are victorious they show love and kindness to their vanquished and helpless enemies. As soon as the enemy surrenders they show indulgence to him and refrain from taking revenge and from nursing a grudge against him.

After the conquest of Khayber the great leader of the Muslims showed kind sentiments to the people of that place (notwithstanding the fact that they had spent large sums of money to instigate the idolatrous Arabs to rise against him and had subjected Madina to attack and possible fall) and conceded their demand that they might stay on in Khayber and continue to possess the lands and trees of that area subject to the condition that they would pay half of the produce to the Muslims.38

Not only this according to Ibn Hisham's own quotation39 the Prophet made the above suggestion himself and thereby accorded freedom to the Jews to remain engaged in agriculture and to plant and bring up trees.

The Prophet could put all of them to sword or expel them from Khayber or compel them to embrace Islam. However, as opposed to the thinking of the biased orientalists and the hirelings and theoretical soldiers of colonialism who imagine that Islam has been spread at the point of sword, he the Prophet did not do any such thing, but granted them complete asylum, and allowed them to follow the principles, rules, regulations and ceremonies of their religion.

If the Prophet waged war against the Jews of Khayber it was on account of the fact that Khayber and its residents were the centre of danger for Islam and always collaborated with the idolaters to topple down the newly established Government of the Muslims.

The Prophet, was, therefore, obliged to fight with them and to disarm them so that they might engage themselves freely in agriculture and might perform their religious functions under the suzerainty of the Islamic Government. Otherwise life would have become very difficult for the Muslims and advancement of Islam would have come to a halt.

If he took jizyah from them it was for the reason that they enjoyed security under the Islamic Government and it was obligatory upon the Muslims to protect their lives and property. And according to minute calculations the taxes which every Muslim was obliged to pay the Islamic Government, exceeded the jizyah which the Jews and the Christians were required to pay.

The Muslims had to pay zakat and khums and at times they had also to make payments out of their net

property to meet the needs of the Islamic Government. As compared with this the Jews and the Christians, who lived under the banner of Islam and enjoyed collective and individual rights, had to make payments, like the Muslims, by way of jizyah, for the security of this banner. The imposition of Islamic jizyah is something different from taking tribute.

The representative of the Prophet, who was nominated every year to assess and divide (into two halves) the produce of Khayber, was a virtuous and just person, who commanded admiration of the Jews for his impartiality and justice. This person was Abdullah Rawaha, who was later killed in the Battle of Mota.

He used to assess the share of the Muslims out of the produce of Khayber and at times the Jews thought that he had been mistaken in his assessment and had ear-marked (the share of the Muslims) in excess (of what it ought to have been). He used to say in reply: "I am prepared to hand over the fixed portion to you and the rest should be the property of the Muslims."

The Jews praised his justice by saying, "The skies and the earth are stable under the shadow of such equity and justice".40

When the war booty was collected a fragment of the Taurat fell in the hands of the Muslims. The Jews requested the Prophet that the same might be given to them. The Prophet directed the person holding charge of the public treasury to return it (to the, Jews).

Stubborn Behaviour Of The Jews

Notwithstanding these highly kind sentiments, the Jews did not give up their obstinacy and treachery. They sat in ambush for the Prophet and his companions and made plots against them. Here we quote two examples of their perfidies:

1. Some persons instigated a woman named Zaynab, who was the wife of one of the nobles of the Jews, to poison the Prophet's food. The woman sent someone to one of the companions of the Prophet and asked him as to which part of a sheep the Prophet liked most.

He replied that the arm of a sheep was his favourite food. Zaynab roasted a sheep and poisoned the entire meat, but put more poison in the arm. Then she sent it to the Prophet as a present. When the Prophet put the first morsel in his mouth he felt that it was poisoned. He, therefore, threw it out of his mouth immediately.

However, Bishr bin Bara' Ma'rur, who was sharing the meals with him, ate some more morsels unconsciously and passed away after some time. The Prophet ordered that Zaynab should be summoned in his presence, and, on her arrival, asked her as to why she had tried to play with his life.

She put up a childish excuse and said: "You have upset the conditions of our tribe. I thought that if you were the ruler you would die of the poison and if you were a Prophet of Allah you would certainly

become aware of it and would refrain from eating the meat". The Prophet forgave her and did not also prosecute the people, who had incited her to commit that crime. However, if such a thing had happened to some other ruler, who had not been a Prophet, he would have mercilessly put the culprits to death or would have sentenced them to long imprisonment.41

On account of such evil intentions of a Jewish woman most of the companions of the Prophet also did not trust in the Jewess Safiyah, who had now become his wife, and considered it probable that she might make an attempt on his life during night. Hence, Abu Ayub Ansari took responsibility to guard the tent of the Prophet at Khayber as well as on way back to Madina, although the Prophet was not aware of the sympathy on his part.

Hence, when the Prophet came out of his tent in the morning he saw Abu Ayub pacing it with a drawn sword in his hand. On the Prophet inquiring about the reason for this he replied: "Traces of fanaticism and infidelity have not yet been effaced from the heart of this woman (Safiyah) who is now one of your wives and I put little confidence in her intentions. Hence I have been pacing your tent from night till morning so as to protect your life". The Prophet was thankful for the kind feelings of his old friend and prayed for him.42

2. Once Abdullah bin Sahl was appointed by the Prophet to transfer the proceeds of Khayber to Madina. While he was performing his duty he was attacked by an unidentified group of Jews. As a result of this attack his neck was seriously injured. He fell down on the ground with a broken neck and breathed his last. The attacking group threw his body in a pool.

The elders of the Jews sent some persons to the Prophet to inform him of the mysterious death of his representative. The brother of the murdered person named Abdur Rahman bin Sahl came to the Prophet along with his cousins and informed him of the incident. T

he brother of the murdered person wished to initiate conversation on the subject, but as he was the youngest amongst all those present, the Prophet alluded to one of the social manners of Islam and said, *"Kabir, Kabir"* i.e. he should let the older persons speak first. Eventually the Prophet said: "If you can identify the murderer of Abdullah and swear that he is the murderer, I shall arrest him and place him at your disposal".

They, however, displayed piety and righteousness and, notwithstanding their anger, did not conceal the truth and said: "We can't identify the murderer". The Prophet then said: "Do you agree that the Jews should state on oath that they have not killed him and should, on the basis of such oath, be acquitted of the murder of Abdullah?"

They, however, replied that the agreements and oaths of the Jews could not be relied upon. In the circumstances the Prophet ordered a letter to be written to the elders of the Jews telling them that the dead body of a Muslim had been found in their land and they should, therefore, pay blood–money on this account.

In their reply the Jews swore that they had not at all killed Abdullah and were also not aware about the murderer. The Prophet realized that the matter had reached a stage of deadlock. In order, therefore, to obviate renewed bloodshed he personally paid the blood-money for Abdullah.43

By this act he once again showed the Jews that he was not a warmonger and in case he had been an ordinary statesman he would have made the incident of Abdullah like the shirt of Uthman and put a number of the Jews to death. However, as the Holy Qur'an introduces him, he was a messenger of blessings and a manifestation of the kindness of Allah and did not unsheathe his sword unless he was compelled to do so.

The Jews Are Expelled From Khayber

The excesses of the Jews were not confined to these incidents and they harassed the Muslims every now and then with their different schemes. Eventually, during the Caliphate of Umar, his son Abdullah, who had gone to Khayber along with some other persons to conclude an agreement was tortured by the Jews. The Caliph came to know about the incident and thought of solving the problem.

Then, relying on a tradition of the Prophet which had been quoted by some persons, he said to the companions of the Prophet: "Whoever has to realize a debt from the people of Khayber should realize it, for I am going to give orders that they should leave this place". Soon afterwards the Jews of Khayber were banished from there on account of repeated excesses committed by them and they left the Peninsula.44

Lie Justified By Its Motive

A merchant named Hajjaj bin 'Ilat was present in Khayber. He had trade dealings with the people of Makkah. The grandeur of Islam and the affection and kindness shown by the Prophet to this obstinate nation (i.e. the Jews) enlightened his heart and he came to the Prophet and embraced Islam. Then he drew up a plan to realize his dues from the people of Makkah. He entered the city of Makkah through a gate and saw that the chiefs of Quraysh were awaiting news and were very much anxious about the developments at Khayber. All of them encircled his camel and enquired impatiently about the condition of Muhammad.

He replied: "Muhammad has suffered an unparalleled defeat and his companions have been killed or captured. He himself has been captured and the chiefs of the Jews have decided to bring him to Makkah and to execute him before the very eyes of Quraysh". This false report pleased them immensely.

Then he turned to the people and said: "In view of this good news I request you to pay me my dues as early as possible so that I may go to Khayber earlier than other merchants and may purchase the slaves". The duped people paid him his dues in a very short time.

The circulation of this news extremely upset Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet, and he desired to meet Hajjaj. He, however, winked at Abbas which meant that he would let him know the real facts later . A short time before his departure he met the Prophet's uncle secretly and said:

"I have embraced Islam and I chalked out this plan only to realize my dues. The correct news is that on the day on which I left Khayber all the forts had been conquered by the Muslims and the daughter of their leader named Hay bin Akhtab (Safiyah) had been captured and had become a wife of the Prophet. Please make these facts known to the people after three days of my departure".

After three days Abbas put on his best dress, scented himself with the costliest perfume and entered the mosque with a staff in his hand and began to go round the Ka'bah. Quraysh were surprised to see the dress of Abbas which displayed his joy and happiness, because they thought that, in view of the calamity which had befallen his nephew, he should have worn a dress of mourning.

He, however, relieved them of their surprise by saying: "The report which Hajjaj furnished you was a clever device to realize his dues. He has embraced Islam and he had left Khayber when Muhammad had gained the greatest victory, and the Jews had been disarmed and some of them had been killed and others had been made captives".

The chiefs of Quraysh became very sad on hearing this news and soon afterwards they heard the same thing (from other sources as well).45

1. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 36 and Tarikh–i Ya'qubi, vol. II, page 46.
2. At times it is said that in spite of this perfect camouflage the chief of the hypocrites (Abdullah Sallul) informed the Jews of Khayber of the plan and advised them that besides defending themselves from above the forts they should also fight with the Muslims outside the forts.
3. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 330.
4. Amali Tusi, page 164.
5. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 147.
6. Seerah–i Halabi, page 38.
7. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 39.
8. Usudul Ghabah, vol. IV, page 334.
9. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 40.
10. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. III, page 342.
11. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. III, page 344.
12. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 335.
13. Some historians believe that the said forts were occupied peacefully through negotiations and the events now being narrated, relate to the Forts of Qamus or Nastat.
14. Tarikh–i Tabari, vol. II. page 300.
15. Majma'ul Bayan, vol IX, p. 120 and Seerah–i Halabi, vol. II, p. 43.
16. The story of the fleeing of the two commanders touched Ibn Abil Hadid, the great historian of Islam, extremely. He says in his famous Qasidah (poem): "Even if I forget everything I cannot forget the story of these two great commanders of Islam, because they proceeded towards the enemy with swords in their hands, but turned their backs towards the enemy and ran away although they knew that it is unlawful to run away from jihad. They took the great standard of Islam towards the enemy, although, in fact, their lot was humiliation and degradation. A swift man from amongst the descendants of

Prophet Musa was turning them away. He was a tall man who was mounted on a swift-running horse".

17. When Ali heard these words of the Prophet in the tent he said with a strong desire in his mind: "O Lord! If you reward somebody, nobody can deprive him; and if you deprive somebody, nobody can reward him". (Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 41).
18. The words used in Tarikh-i Tabari in this behalf are: Fa tatawala Abu Bakr wa Umar.
19. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 28.
20. Sahih Muslim, vol. V, page 195; Sahih Bukhari, vol. V, pp. 22-23,
21. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 94.
22. Tarikh-i Ya'qubi, vol. II, page 46.
23. One zara' is about 15 inches.
24. al-Irshad, page 59.
25. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 21.
26. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II. page 65.
27. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 44.
28. Sahih Muslim, vol. VII, page 120.
29. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 41.
30. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 47 .
31. Khisal, vol. II. Page 16
32. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol III, page 302.
33. Seerah-i ibn Hisham, vol III. page 337 and Bihar, vol. XXI, page 33.
34. Wasa'ilush Shi'ah, chapter on Jihad bin Nafs, tradition No. 4.
35. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. III, page 339.
36. Khisal, vol. II, page 86 and Furu'-i Kafi, vol. I, page 129.
37. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 32.
38. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 327.
39. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 356.
40. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 354 and Furu'-i Kafi, vol. I, p. 405.
41. It is well-known that on the occasion of the illness of the Prophet which resulted in his death he said: "This ailment is due to the effects of the poisoned food which that Jewess had brought for me after the conquest (of Khayber)". Although the Prophet threw out the very first morsel, the dangerous poison got mixed with his saliva to some extent and affected his health.
42. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, pp. 399 - 340; Bihar, vol. XX, page 6.
43. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol II, page 356.
44. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. III, page 356.
45. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 34.

A developed and fertile territory which was situated near Khayber and at a distance of 140 kilometres from Madina and was considered to be the stronghold of the Jews of the Hijaz, after the forts of Khayber, was called the village of Fadak. After destroying the strength of the Jews of Khayber, Wadi'ul Qura' and Tayma' and filling up, with the military force of Islam, the vacuum which was felt in the north of Madina, the Prophet thought of destroying the strength of the Jews of this area who were considered to be a danger to Islam and the Muslims.

He therefore sent an envoy named Muhit to the elders of Fadak. Yush'a bin Noon, who was the chief of the village, preferred peace and surrender to fighting, and the residents of that place agreed to place at

the disposal of the Prophet half of the produce every year and to live under the protection of Islam and not to conspire against the Muslims. The Government of Islam, in its turn, guaranteed the security of their territory.

According to Islam the areas which are conquered through war and military power are the property of all the Muslims and their administration rests with the ruler of Islam. However, lands which fall into the hands of the Muslims, without any military operations pertain to the person of the Prophet and after he to the Imam.

He (i.e. the Prophet or Imam) exercises full authority over such lands and is entitled to gift them away or give them to lease. And one of the purposes for which he can utilize this property is that he may meet the lawful needs of his near ones out of this property in a respectable manner.1

On this basis the Prophet made a gift of Fadak to his dear daughter Lady Fatimah Zahrah. As the later circumstances go to show the Prophet had two things in view while making a gift of this property:

1. As expressly mentioned by the Prophet time and again the rulership of the Muslims was to rest, after his death, with Ali, the Commander of the Faithful and occupation of such a position necessitated incurring of heavy expenditure. Ali could, therefore, make maximum use of the income from Fadak to safeguard this position. It would appear that the organization of the caliphate had become aware of this precautionary measure and they, therefore, divested the Prophet's family of Fadak during the very early days of their assumption of authority.

2. It was necessary that after the death of the Prophet his family, consisting of his dear daughter Fatimah Zahrah and her sons Hasan and Husayn, should lead a respectable life and the dignity of the Prophet should remain secure. The Prophet made a gift of Fadak to his daughter to achieve this very end.

The Shi'ah traditionalists and exegets and some Sunni scholars write: "When the verse:

Give the kinsmen his due, and the needy, and the wayfarer..... (***Surah Isra, 17:26***)

was revealed the Prophet called his daughter Fatimah and made over Fadak to her".2 And the narrator of this incident is Abu Sa'id Khadri who was one of the distinguished companions of the Prophet.

All the Shi'ah and the Sunni exegetes are agreed that this verse was revealed for the near relatives of the Prophet and the words 'the near ones' (kinsmen) are best applicable to his daughter. So much so that when a Syrian asked Imam Sajjad to introduce himself the Imam recited the aforesaid verse to make himself known to that man.

And this fact was so well known to the Muslims that the Syrian, while shaking his head in confirmation, said to the Imam: "On account of the special relationship which you enjoy with the Prophet, he was ordered by Allah to pay you your due".3

In short, all the scholars of Islam believe that this verse was revealed with respect to Fatimah Zahrah and her children. However, as regards the fact whether, at the time of revelation of this verse, the Prophet made over Fadak to his daughter, all the Shi'ah scholars are unanimous that he actually did so, and some Sunni scholars also agree with them.

When Mamun desired to return Fadak to the descendants of Zahrah he wrote a letter to one of the famous traditionalists (Abdullah bin Musa) to enlighten him on the subject. He wrote the above-mentioned hadith (which in fact tells about the occasion of the revelation of the verse) and sent it to him and consequently he (i.e. Mamun) returned Fadak to the descendants of Fatimah4 and wrote to his governor in Madina: "The Prophet of Islam made a gift of Fadak to his daughter Fatimah. This is an admitted fact and there is no difference about it amongst the descendants of Fatimah.5

When Mamun occupied a special chair to hear complaints and grievances the first application which came into his hand was one in which the writer had introduced himself as the defender of Lady Fatimah. Mamun read the application, wept a little, and said: "Who is her defender?" An old man stood up and introduced himself as her defender. The court of justice was then converted into a session of debate between the man and Mamun.

Eventually Mamun realized that he had lost the case. He, therefore, ordered the chief justice to write a deed with the heading: "Return of Fadak to the descendants of Zahrah". The deed was written and received the assent of Mamun. At this moment Da'bal Khuza'i who was present at the time of debate stood up and recited some verses.6

In order to prove that Fadak was the absolute property of Lady Fatimah Zahrah, Shi'ah do not stand in need of evidence produced above, because the most truthful person of Islam, Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, has clearly mentioned this fact in a letter written by him to Uthman bin Hunayf, the Governor of Basra. He writes: "Yes! Out of that which is under the sky, the only appreciable property available with us was Fadak. Some people felt jealous. Some great persons connived at this on account of some interests. And Allah is the best Judge".

Is it possible to entertain any doubt about the matter after this clear statement?

The Story Of Fadak After The Prophet

After the demise of the Prophet his dear daughter was deprived of her ownership of Fadak on account of political motives and the functionaries and employees of the State expelled her from the court of the Caliph, where she had gone to lay claim to Fadak. She, therefore, decided to take back her right from the Caliph by legal means.

In the first place the village of Fadak was in her possession and this very possession was the sign of her ownership. However, in opposition to all standards of Islamic justice, the Caliph asked her to produce

witnesses when we know that the one, who is in possession of some property, is never asked to produce witnesses.

She was, therefore, obliged to take before the Caliph as witnesses a person like Ali and a woman named Umme Ayman (about whom the Prophet had testified that she would go to Paradise) and, (as quoted by Bilazari vide Futuhul Buldan, page 43), Rabah, a freed slave of the Prophet. However, on account of some motives the Caliph did not accept their testimony and the Prophet's daughter was finally deprived of the property which her father had bestowed as gift to her.

According to the verse of purification (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:33) Zahrah, Ali and their children are free from all kinds of impurity and if this verse is taken to cover the wives of the Prophet also its applicability to his daughter is absolutely certain. Unfortunately, however, this aspect of the matter was also ignored and the Caliph of the time did not accept her claim.

Nevertheless, the Shi'ah scholars believe that eventually the Caliph accepted the view of the Prophet's daughter and wrote a certificate to the effect that Fadak was owned by her absolutely and gave it to her. But while she was on her way the old friend of the Caliph chanced to meet her and came to know about the contents of the certificate. He took the certificate from her and brought it to the Caliph and said to him: "As Ali is a beneficiary in this case, his evidence is not acceptable and Umme Ayman being a woman, her testimony too has no value" Then he tore up the certificate in the presence of the Caliph.7

Halabi, the well-known Sunni biographer, gives another version of the incident and says: "The Caliph accepted the ownership of Fatimah. Suddenly Umar arrived and asked: "What is this certificate about? The Caliph replied: "I have confirmed Fatimah's ownership (of Fadak) in this deed". Umar said "You stand in need of income derived from Fadak. If tomorrow the idolaters of Arabia rise against the Muslims, from where will you meet the expenses of war?" Then he held the certificate in his hand and tore it up".8

It is here that one acknowledges the reality mentioned by a Shi'ah theologian, who narrates that Ibn Abil Hadid said: "I said to a Shi'ah theologian named Ali bin Naqi: The village of fadak was not very extensive and such a small place which did not contain more than a few date-palm trees was not so important that the opponents of Fatimah should have coveted it".

He said in reply: "You are mistaken here. The number of the date-palm trees of that place was not lesser than that of trees available in Kufa at present. Admittedly the family of the Prophet was deprived of this fertile land, lest Ali, the Commander of the Faithful should have utilized its income to campaign against the Caliph.

Hence they not only deprived Fatimah of Fadak but also deprived the entire family of Bani Hashim and the descendants of Abdul Muttalib of their legal rights (khums i.e. 1/5th of war booty), because people who have to lead their lives in difficult financial circumstances do not think of changing the prevailing conditions".9

And then the same writer quotes the sentence mentioned below, from one of the distinguished teachers of Madressa–i Gharbi Baghdad, named Ali bin Faruqi. He says: "I said to him:

'Was the daughter of the Prophet truthful in making the claim?' He said: 'Yes'. I said: 'Did the Caliph know that she was a truthful woman?' He said: 'Yes'. I said: 'Why did the Caliph not give her that to which she was admittedly entitled?' At this moment the teacher smiled and said with great dignity: 'If he had accepted her word on that day and had returned Fadak to her on account of her being a truthful woman and without asking for any witnesses she could very well avail of this position for the benefit of her husband on the following day and say:

'My husband Ali is entitled to the caliphate' and then the Caliph would have been obliged to surrender the caliphate to Ali on account of his having acknowledged her to be a truthful woman. However, in order to obviate any such claim or dispute he deprived her of her admitted right".10

The foundation of the deprivation of the descendants of Fatimah's claim of Fadak was laid in the time of the First Caliph. After the martyrdom of Ali, Mu'awiyah assumed the reins of government and divided Fadak amongst three persons (Marwan, 'Amr bin Uthman and his own son Yazid). During the period of the Caliphate of Marwan all the three shares were assumed by him and he gifted them to his son, Abdul Aziz. He in turn gave the same to his son, Umar.

On account of the fact that Umar bin Abdul Aziz was an upright person from amongst Bani Umayyah the first heresy which he removed was that he returned Fadak to the descendants of Fatimah. After his death, however, the succeeding Umayyad Caliphs again took away Fadak from Bani Hashim and it continued to remain in their possession till their rule came to an end.

During the Caliphate of Bani Abbas the question of Fadak vacillated in a strange manner. For example, Saffah gave it to Abdullah bin Hasan and after him Mansur Dawaniqi took it back, but his son Mahdi returned it to the descendants of Zahrah. After him Musa and Harun took it away from them on account of some political considerations.

When Mamun assumed the office of caliph he handed it over formally to its owner. After his death the conditions of Fadak vacillated once again and it was returned at one time to the descendants of Fatimah and then taken away again from them.

During the periods of the Caliphate of Bani Umayyah and Bani Abbas, Fadak assumed largely a political aspect as compared with its pecuniary aspect. And even if the First Caliphs were in need of income from Fadak the later caliphs and nobles were so rich that they did not stand in any need of income from it.

Hence, when Umar bin Abdul Aziz handed over Fadak to the descendants of Fatimah, Bani. Umayyah reproached him and said: "By this act of yours you have found fault with the two venerable men" (viz. Abu Bakr and Umar)". They, therefore, persuaded him to distribute the income from Fadak among the descendants of Fatimah, but to keep its ownership with himself.11

1. Surah al-Hashr, 59:6,8; and in the books of jurisprudence (Fiqh) this matter has been discussed in the chapter on jihad under the heading Fay.
2. Majma'ul Bayan, vol.III, p. 411; Sharh-i Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XVI, p.248.
3. Durr-i Manthur, vol.IV, page 176.
4. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. II, page 211; Futuhul Buldan, page 45.
5. Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XV, page 217.
6. Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XVI.
7. Sharh-i Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XVI, page 274.
8. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 400.
9. Sharh-i Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XVI, page 236.
10. Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid, page 284.
11. Sharh-i Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XVI, page 278.

When the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah was signed, the Muslims were entitled to visit Makkah after a year from the date of the conclusion of the pact and were to leave Makkah after staying there for three days and performing 'Umrah.1 During these days they could not carry with them any weapon other than the weapon of a traveller (viz. a sword).

A year passed from the date of the conclusion of the pact and the time thus arrived when the Muslims could avail of the facility provided for in the pact, and the Muslim migrants who had abandoned their homes seven years ago for the sake of Islam and had chosen their abode in a foreign land could proceed to Makkah once again to visit pilgrimage of the Ka'bah and also to see their kith and kin.

As such, when the Prophet declared that those persons, who had been deprived of visiting the Ka'bah a year earlier, should get ready for proceeding to Makkah, an unprecedented enthusiasm appeared amongst them and tears of delight trickled down their cheeks. If a year earlier the Prophet had travelled along with 1300 persons the number of those, who accompanied him a year later reached two thousand.

Great personalities from amongst the migrants and the Ansar could be seen among those who got ready to proceed on the journey. They followed the Prophet at all places and took along with them eighty camels which bore marks of sacrifice round their necks. The Prophet put on ehram in the mosque and others also followed him.

Thus two thousand persons clad in ehram and with the word *Labbayk* (here am I) on their lips proceeded to Makkah. This caravan possessed so much grandeur and dignity, and was so attractive for the Muslims as well as for the idolaters, that it made many idolaters inclined towards the spirituality and reality of Islam.

If we say that this journey was a missionary journey and these persons were in fact an army of Islam we shall not be exaggerating. The spiritual results of this journey appeared soon and the sworn enemies of Islam like Khalid bin Walid, the hero of the Battle of Uhud, and Amr bin As, the politician of Arabia, became inclined towards Islam on observing this grandeur, and soon afterwards embraced this religion.

The Prophet had no confidence in Quraysh on account of their deceit and jealousy. It was probable that they might attack the Prophet and his companions unawares in the region of Makkah and shed the blood of some of them, especially when they (the Muslims) were not carrying any arms other than the weapons of a traveller, because, according to the terms of the pact they could not enter Makkah armed.

To obviate every kind of anxiety the Prophet appointed one of his officers named Muhammad bin Maslamah along with two hundred men who were armed with necessary weapons like coats of mail and lances and had one hundred swift horses with them to move before the caravan and to encamp in the Valley of Marruz Zahran (which is situated near the area of Haram) and to wait there for the arrival of the Prophet. The spies of Quraysh who were watching the activities of the Prophet, reported the matter to the chiefs of Quraysh.

Mikraz bin Hafs met the Prophet in the capacity of the representative of Quraysh and conveyed their objection to him. The Prophet said in reply: "I or my companions will not do any thing contrary to the pact and all of us shall enter the Haram unarmed. As regards this officer and the two hundred men who are equipped with arms they will stay at this point".

By this sentence the Prophet made the representative of Quraysh realize that if they made a surprise attack at night and took undue advantage of the Muslims being unarmed this auxiliary forces which was stationed at the very edge of Haram along with equipment, would rush to their help immediately and would place the arms at their disposal.

Quraysh became aware of the foresight of the Prophet and opened the gates of the city for the Muslims. The leaders of idolaters and their subordinates vacated the city and moved to the nearby mounds and hills, so that they might not face the Prophet and his companions and might observe all their activities from a distance.

The Prophet Enters Makkah

The Prophet entered Makkah mounted on his special camel, along with two thousand persons who had encircled him and the sound of their saying, *Allah humma labbayk* (*Here am I. O Lord! Here am I*) was resounding throughout the city. The voice of this select gathering was so attractive that all the people of Makkah were impressed by it, and they began to entertain special interest and sentiments for the Muslims in their hearts.

At the same time the unity of the Muslims created a peculiar fear in the hearts of the idolaters. As and when the resounding of the word *Labbayk* uttered by the Muslims broke of, Abdullah Rawahid who was holding the rein of the Prophet's camel in his hands recited these verses with a sonorous and imposing voice: "O children of blasphemy and idolatry! Vacate the path for the Prophet of Allah. You should know that he is the source of prosperity and goodness. O Lord! I believe in his words and am aware of Your order regarding the acknowledgment of his prophethood".2

The Prophet performed tawaf of the Ka'bah while mounted on his camel. At this stage he ordered that Abdullah bin Rawahid should recite the following special invocation and others should also join him: "There is no god but Allah He is One and matchless. He has acted according to His promise (He had promised that the Muslims would visit the Ka'bah soon). He helped His servant. He made the army of monotheism exalted, and condemned the armies of blasphemy and polytheism to loneliness".

On that day all the centres of pilgrimage and the places where ceremonies of 'Umrah are performed, including the mosque, the Ka'bah, the Safa' and the Marwah were under the control of the Muslims. Ardent and enthusiastic rites at a place, which had been the centre of idolatry and polytheism for a very long period, dealt such a strong mental blow to the leaders of polytheism and their followers that the victory of Prophet Muhammad stood proved throughout Arabia.

Time for noon prayers arrived. It was now necessary that the Muslims should carry out this divine obligation congregationally in the mosque and their mu'azzin (announcer) should loudly pronounce the call to prayers (*azan*).

As ordered by the Prophet, Bilal, the Ethiopian slave, who had been tortured in this city for a long time on account of his having embraced Islam ascended the roof of the Ka'bah, and, placing his hands on his ears, pronounced in his special tone the sentences, well known to all of us, at a place where declaration of the oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muhammad, had once been the greatest crime according to the infidels of Quraysh.

His voice and the acknowledgments which Muslims repeated after hearing every part of *azan* reached the ears of the idolaters and the enemies of monotheism, and disturbed them so much that Safwan bin Umayyah and Khalid bin Usayd said: "Praised be god that our ancestors died and did not hear the voice of this Ethiopian slave".

On hearing Bilal pronounce *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is Great), Suhayl bin 'Amr hid his face with a handkerchief. They did not only feel very uneasy on account of the voice of Bilal, but felt mental torture because of the various parts of *azan,* which were totally opposed to their hereditary beliefs.

The Prophet began performing *sa'i* between the hills of Safa and Marwah. As the hypocrites and the idolaters had spread the rumour that the unwholesome climate of Madina had made the Muslims feeble, he resorted to *harwalah*3 in a part of *sa'i* and the Muslims also imitated him. After performing *sa'i* the Muslims sacrificed the camels and ceased to be in the state of ehram and had their hair cut.

The Prophet then ordered that two hundred persons should proceed to Marruz Zahran to look after the weapons and other military equipment so that the persons, previously entrusted this duty, might come to the Haram and perform the rites of 'Umrah.

The rites and ceremonies of 'Umrah came to an end. The Muhajirs went to their homes and met their relatives. They also invited some Ansar to their homes and thus made amends for the services which

the Ansar had rendered to the Muhajirs during the period of seven years.

The Prophet Leaves Makkah

The grandeur and glory of Islam and the Muslims made a deep impression on the minds of the people of Makkah, and they became more acquainted with the mentality of the Muslim community. The chiefs of Quraysh realized that the stay of the Prophet and his companions had weakened the morale of the people of Makkah with regard to their faith in idolatry and enmity with monotheism and had created love and attachment between the two parties.

Hence, when the last moment out of the three days had passed, a representative of Quraysh named Huwaytab came to the Prophet and said: "The period of three days stipulated in the pact for your stay in Makkah has expired and you should, therefore, leave our territory as early as possible".

Some of the companions felt uneasy on account of the bluntness of the representative of Quraysh. However, the Prophet was not a person who practiced delay in acting upon an agreement. The Muslims were, therefore, ordered to depart and they left the region of Haram immediately.

Maymunah (sister of Umme Fadl, wife of Abbas) was so much impressed by the fervour of the Muslims that she told her brother-in-law, Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet, that she was prepared to marry the Prophet and considered it an honour for her. The Prophet accepted her offer and thus strengthened his ties with Quraysh. Inclination of a woman towards a man, who was much older than her is in itself a sufficient proof of his spiritual influence.

The Prophet also asked the representative of Quraysh to give him time so that he might perform the wedding ceremonies in Makkah and might also invite all the chiefs of Makkah to participate in the Walimah (feast). However, the representative of Quraysh did not agree to this proposal and said: "We don't stand in need of your food".

The Prophet ordered that the Muslims should leave Makkah by mid-day. He directed only his slave Abu Rafe' to stay there till evening and bring his (the Prophet's) wife with him.4

After the departure of the Muslims, the enemies of the Prophet reproached Maymunah, but, as she had developed spiritual attachment with the Prophet and had, therefore, offered to marry him, their words did not have any effect on her.

Thus the promise, based on the true vision of the Prophet, which he had made with the Muslims a year earlier about the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah and the opening of the gates of Makkah to the Muslims was fulfilled, the following verse was revealed:

Allah made the dream of His Messenger come true for a genuine purpose. If Allah wills, you (believers) will enter the Sacred Mosque in security with your heads shaved, nails cut and

without any fear in your hearts. (**Surah al Fath, 48:27**)

1. 'Umrah consists of particular ceremonies which can be performed at any time during the year, as distinguished from, to Haj ceremonies, which can be performed during the month of Zil Hajjah only.
2. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 37.
3. A type of walking which is more brisk than usual but short of running.
4. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. Il, page 372.

The seventh year of migration came to an end and the Muslims were able, according to the terms of the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah, to perform collectively the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah and to observe lovely and moving rites for the benefit of monotheism in the very centre of idolaters, so as to attract towards Islam the hearts of some chiefs of Quraysh like Khalid bin Walid, 'Amr bin As,1 and Uthman bin Talhah. Soon afterwards these three chiefs came to Madina and expressed their attachment for Prophet Muhammad and his religion, and severed their connections with Quraysh of Makkah of which nothing more than a lifeless skeleton was left.2

Some biographers say that Khalid and 'Amr As embraced Islam during 5 A.H. It may, however, be stated for certain that adoption of Islam by them took place in 8 A.H., because Khalid was the commander of a unit of the army of Quraysh at the time of the conclusion of the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah and both of them embraced Islam simultaneously.

In the beginning of 8 A.H., security prevailed in most of the localities in the Hijaz and the call to monotheism had extended to many parts and the influence of the Jews in the north, and attacks by Quraysh from the south, did not threaten the Muslims any longer.

The Prophet now decided to extend his invitation to Syria and to open a spot for the penetration of Islam in the hearts of the people who were then living under the sovereignty of the Roman Emperor. For this purpose he sent Harith Umayr Azdi with a letter to the court of the Ruler of Syria. In those days Harith bin Abi Shamir Ghassani was the despotic ruler of Syria, who ruled in the capacity of a satellite of the Kaiser. The envoy of the Prophet reached the border towns of Syria and continued his journey.

However, Shurahbil, who was the governor of the border areas became aware of the arrival of the envoy. He imprisoned him in a village named Mota and made detailed enquiries from him. The envoy admitted that he was carrying a letter from the Prophet of Islam to Harith Ghassani, the absolute Ruler of Syria. Disregarding all human and universal principles, according to which the life and blood of an envoy is respected throughout the world, the governor ordered his hands and feet to be tied and that he should be put to death.

The Prophet became aware of the crime of Shurahbil. He was extremely disturbed on account of the murder of his envoy and informed the Muslims of the dastardly act of Shurahbil and asked them to take revenge on the wild governor who had killed the envoy without even obtaining permission from the

higher authorities.

A Still More Tragic Event

Simultaneously with this incident, a still more tragic event took place and further confirmed the determination of the Prophet to punish the Syrians who had curbed the freedom of the propagation by the missionaries of Islam and had murdered his envoy and the Muslim missionaries cruelly.

The event referred above was this that in the month of Rabi' of 8 A.H. Ka'b bin Umayr Ghifari was deputed, along with fifteen others, all of whom were proficient missionaries, to proceed to the region of Zat Atlah, situated on the other side of Wadiul Qura' and to invite the people of that place to embrace Islam. They arrived there and performed the duty entrusted to them.

Suddenly they met with severe opposition from those people and all of them were attacked. The missionary party found itself encircled by a large crowd. They defended themselves valiantly and preferred martyrdom to humility. Only one of them, who was wounded and was lying amongst the dead, got up at mid-night and proceeded to Madina. On reaching there he related the entire incident to the Prophet.

The massacre of the missionaries and the execution of so many innocent persons made the Prophet give orders for jihad. An army consisting of three thousand persons was, therefore dispatched to punish the rebels, and those, who obstructed the spread of Islam.3

Orders for jihad were given. Three thousand swordsmen gathered in the military station of Madina (Jurf). The Prophet came to the military station personally and addressed the soldiers saying: "You should go and invite those people again to embrace Islam. If they accept Islam you need not avenge the murder of the envoy, but otherwise you should seek help from Allah and fight against them.

Yes, O soldiers of Islam! Perform jihad in the name of Allah! Punish the enemies of Allah and your own enemies, who live in Syria. Don't interfere with the monks and nuns, who spend their time in monasteries, far removed from the tumult of the world. Destroy all satanic elements, with these very swords. Don't kill women, children and old people. Don't cut trees and don't destroy buildings".4

"Yes! O Mujahids! The commander of the army is my cousin Ja'far bin Abu Talib. If he sustains an injury, Zayd bin Harith will bear the standard and direct the army, and if he is killed Abdullah Rawahid will assume the command. And if he too meets an injury, you may choose the chief commander yourselves".

Then orders were given to march and the Prophet himself as well as some other Muslims accompanied the army up to the point of Thaniyatul wida'. There those who had escorted the soldiers bade them good-bye and said according to the old tradition: "May Allah help you return safe and sound and with war booty".

However, Abdullah Rawahid, who was the second assistant or third commander, recited in reply this verse: *I seek forgiveness from Allah and from the hard blows out of which the foams of blood gush out*.5

From this verse one can very well assess the strength of the faith and the love for martyrdom of this valiant commander. In the meantime people saw him weeping. When the reason for weeping was enquired from him he said: "I am not at all interested in the world, but I have heard the Prophet reciting this verse: "It is the inevitable decree of Allah that all of you should arrive in Hell" (and from there the pious persons should proceed to Paradise). My arrival in Hell is, therefore, certain but the end of this arrival is not clear and it is not known what will happen thereafter".6

Difference Of Opinion About The First Commander

Many biographers have written that the chief commander of the army was Zayd bin Harith, the adopted son of the Prophet and Ja'far and Abdullah were his second and third in command respectively.

However, as opposed to this idea, the Sh'iah research scholars treat Ja'far bin Abu Talib to be the chief commander of the army and the two other persons to be the second and third in command. The question now is as to which of these views is correct.

The real position may be ascertained in two ways:

1. From the point of view of social standing as well as piety and learning Zayd bin Harith did not equal Ja'far Tayyar. Ibn Athir says in Usudul Ghabah about Ja'far: "He resembled the Prophet in temperament and features, and declared his faith in the Prophet only a short time after Ali. One day Abu Talib saw Ali offering his prayers standing on the right side of the Prophet. He then said to his son Ja'far: "You too should go and offer prayers standing on the Prophet's left side".

He was the leader of the people, who abandoned their homes for the sake of their religion and faith and left Makkah, under the orders of the Prophet, to take refuge in Ethiopia. He, in the capacity of the spokesman of the group of migrants, attracted the King of Ethiopia towards Islam with his strong and penetrating logic and proved the falsehood of the representatives of Quraysh, who had come to Ethiopia to arrange the return of the refugees to the Hijaz.

By reciting the verses of the Qur'an relating to the Prophet 'Isa and his mother Maryam he secured the sympathy and protection of the Negus for the Muslims migrants in such a manner that he turned away the representatives of Quraysh from his court.7

Ja'far was the same person who returned from Ethiopia at the time of the conquest of Khayber and the Prophet, on hearing of his arrival, went twelve steps forward to receive him, put his hand round his neck, kissed his forehead, wept for joy and said: "I don't know for which event I should feel more happy–for your return from Ethiopia or for the conquest of Khayber, and that too at the hands of your brother, Ali".

Ja'far was the same distinguished person, who was remembered by the Commander of the Faithful after his death for his bravery and valour. When Ali came to know that 'Amr As had taken the oath of allegiance to Mu'awiyah and they had settled that if they gained victory over Ali the Governorship of Egypt would be given to 'Amr, he (the Commander of the Faithful) felt uncomfortable and remembered his uncle, Hamzah and brother, Ja'far and said: "If these two persons had been alive, our victory would have been ensured".8

Does it stand to reason that in spite of Ja'far's possessing the distinguished attributes, some of which have been mentioned above, the Prophet should have entrusted the command of the army to Zayd and should have made Ja'far his first assistant?

2. The verses, which the great poets of Islam recited, mourning the death of these commanders, show that the chief commander was Ja'far and the other two persons were his assistants. On hearing about the tragic death of these commanders, Hassan bin Thabit, the poet of the Prophet, recited an elegy which is recorded in the Seerah–i Ibn Hisham.

He says: "May the commanders who were killed one after the other in the Battle of Mota be blessed by Allah. They were Ja'far, Zayd and Abdullah who successively welcomed death. (The word *tanabi'u* used in these verses shows clearly that the three commanders were killed one after the other and the first to be killed was Ja'far).

The most explicit of the poems is the elegy written by Ka'b bin Malik Ansari to lament the death of those killed at Mota. In it he specifies that the first commander was Ja'far. This poet was himself a witness to the fact that the Prophet had entrusted the chief commandership to Ja'far. He says: "Remember the time when the soldiers of Islam were placed under the standard of the First Commander viz. Ja'far bin Abi Talib and proceeded to perform jihad".

These verses which were written in those very days and have remained safe from the vicissitudes of time are the most vital and authentic witnesses of the fact that whatever has been written by the Sunni writers on this point does not conform with historical facts and the narrators have forged that version because of some political considerations and the biographers have recorded it in their books without necessary verification. It is, however, surprising that notwithstanding the fact that Ibn Hisham9 has quoted these elegies and has treated Ja'far to be the second in command.

Array Of Roman And Islamic Troops

In those days Rome was faced with a strange chaos because of its continuous wars with Iran. Although the Romans were elated by their victories over Iran, they were also aware of the bravery and valour of the soldiers of Islam who had won laurels by means of their personal bravery and strength of faith.

Hence, when the Roman Government received reports about the preparations and movement of the

Muslim soldiers, Hercules and the Ruler of Syria set up a formidable force to face the three thousand strong army of Islam. Shurahbil alone collected one hundred thousand soldiers from different tribes of Syria and proceeded to the frontiers of the territory to stop the advance of the Muslim warriors.

Not being contented with this, the Kaiser moved, with advance information, from Bayzantium with one hundred thousand soldiers and encamped at Ma'ab which is one of the cities of Balqa'. They stayed there as reservists and auxiliary force.10

Collection of all this soldiery, to fight against an army which was comparatively much smaller, was on account of the reports which the Roman commanders had received about the conquests by the Muslims. Otherwise even one tenth of this force containing only three thousand soldiers, was sufficient to confront the enemies, however brave they might be.

The notable fact is that, when the strength of the two armies is compared, the army of Islam was many times weaker than the army of Rome in view of their numbers as well as knowledge of war strategy and tactics. On account of their having participated in protracted wars between Rome and Iran, the Roman officers had gained many secrets of military superiority and victory, whereas the knowledge of the young army of Islam in these matters was only elementary.

And then the Muslims were not also at par with the Romans in the matter of military equipment and means of transport. And the most important thing is that the Muslim forces were going to invade a foreign country whereas the Romans, possessing all facilities, were in their own country and had only to defend themselves. In such circumstances it is always necessary that the attacking army should be well–equipped and strong enough to surmount the unfavourable conditions.

Keeping these points in view we shall now see that the commanders of the Muslim army preferred steadfastness and fighting to flight from the battlefield, and thus added to their historical honours, notwithstanding the fact that they could see death at a distance of a few steps only.

After their arrival at the frontiers of Syria, the Muslims became aware of the preparations and the military strength of the enemy. They, therefore, immediately formed a military consultative council to decide the strategy of war. Some persons were of the view that the matter might be reported to the Prophet and further instructions obtained from him.

This view was likely to be confirmed, but in the meantime Abdullah Rawahid, who was the second in command and had sought martyrdom from Almighty Allah at the time of departure from Madina, rose up and delivered a fiery speech.

He said: "You have been dispatched to achieve an object which you don't like. You have left Madina to achieve martyrdom. In the battlefield, Muslims don't depend upon superiority in numbers. We are going to fight against these people in the path of Allah and Islam – the same Islam which has made us honourable and respectable. If we are victorious we shall have won laurels; and if we are martyred that,

too, is one of our wishes".

Abdullah's words changed the thinking of the officers and the members of the consultative council. Hence, it was decided that complying with the orders of the Prophet, fighting should be resorted to at the place specified by him.11

The two armies faced each other at a place called Sharaf. However, on account of some military considerations, a part of the Muslim army retreated and encamped in Mota. Ja'far bin Abu Talib, who was the chief commander of the army, divided it into three divisions and appointed a commander for each division. Single combats commenced. It was now necessary for Ja'far to hold the standard in his hand and guide his soldiers in making the attack and simultaneously being engaged in fighting and defence.

His bravery and steadfastness in the cause of his objective is quite apparent from the epic verses which he recited while attacking the enemy. He said: "I am happy that the promised Paradise has become nearer – the same pure Paradise which contains cold beverages. On the contrary the destruction of Rome is also near. It is the nation, which has been guilty of blasphemy according to the creed of monotheism and whose contacts and connections with us have been severed. I am determined to strike a blow on them as and when I face them".12

The chief commander of Islam put up a courageous fight against the enemies. However, when he found himself encircled by them and realized that his martyrdom was certain, he, in order that the enemies might not utilize his horse and also they might know that he had now severed his ties with the world, dismounted his horse and struck it a blow which made it incapable of movement, and then he continued to fight.

In the meantime his right hand was cut off. In order that the standard of the Prophet might not fall on the ground he held it in his left hand and when his left hand was also cut off he held it in his arms. Eventually, after having sustained eighty wounds he fell down and breathed his last.

Now the turn of Zayd bin Harith, the second in command arrived. He carried the standard on his shoulder and performed his duty with unparalleled valour and at last succumbed to his fatal wounds. Then Abdullah Rawahid the third in command took the standard in his hand. He mounted his horse and recited his epic verses.

During the course of fighting he felt very hungry. A morsel of food was given to him so that he might get some relief from hunger. He had not yet eaten anything out of it when he heard the noise of the torrent–like swarming of the enemy. He then threw away the morsel of food, advanced towards the enemy and continued fighting till he was martyred.

Army Of Islam In Distress

From then onwards the distress and perplexity of the army of Islam commenced. The chief commander and his two assistants had been killed. The Prophet had, however, visualized this situation beforehand and had authorized the soldiers that if things came to such a pass they might choose their commander themselves.

In the meantime, Thabit bin Aqram picked up the standard, turned towards the Muslim soldiers and said: "Choose a commander for yourselves". All of them said: "You should become our commander". He replied: "I am not at all prepared to assume this office. You should, therefore, select someone else". Then Thabit as well as other Muslims selected Khalid bin Walid, who had embraced Islam recently and was available in the army, to be their commander.

When Khalid was selected as the commander the situation was a very delicate one. Terror and awe prevailed over the Muslims The commander of the army resorted to military tactics which were unprecedented. He ordered that at mid-night when it was dark everywhere they should engage themselves in transfer and change-over and that too making a hue and cry.

The right wing should give its place to the left wing and vice versa and similarly the front column should come to the centre of the army and vice versa. This change-over continued till dawn. According to one narration he ordered that a unit of the Muslims should move to a distant place at mid-night and then return in the morning and join the army reciting *La ilaha illallah* (There is no god but Allah).

The object of the entire scheme was that the Roman army should think that an auxiliary force had arrived to join the Muslims. By chance it was on account of this impression that they did not attack the Muslims on the following day and said to themselves that when the Muslims had fought so valiantly in the absence of the auxiliary force they would fight more bravely after they had been joined by additional troops.

The calmness of the Roman army provided the Muslims an opportunity to return the way they had come. The greatest success which the Muslims achieved was that they fought against an organized and powerful army for one day or for three days. The military scheme adopted by the new commander was a good one, because it delivered the Muslims from death and made them come back to Madina safely. Hence, it deserves praise.[13]

The Soldiers Of Islam Return To Madina

Reports regarding the manner of fighting and retreat of the soldiers of Islam had already reached Madina before they arrived there. The Muslims, therefore, went to meet them as far as Juraf, the military station of Madina.

The action taken by the new commander was a wise tactics, but as it did not accord with the sentiments of the Muslims and with their natural and real bravery, reared up under the auspices of faith, they did not look upon the retreat of the soldiers favourably, and did not consider it to be something graceful.

They, therefore, received them with biting slogans like: "O fugitives! Why did you run away from Jihad?" and by throwing dust on their heads and faces. The behaviour of the Muslims with this group was so rude that some of the persons who had participated in the battle were obliged to remain confined to their houses for quite some time and they did not come within the public view. And, if they did come out, the people pointed to them with their fingers and said: "He is one of the those persons who ran away from jihad".14

Reaction of the Muslims to the wisely undertaken retreat by the soldiers of Islam is indicative of the spirit of bravery and heroism which the faith in Allah and in the Day of Judgement had created and perfected in them, and on account of which they preferred death in the path of Islam to the insignificant benefit derived from such retreat.

Myth Instead Of History

As the Commander of the Faithful, Ali bin Abi Talib is known amongst the Muslims with the title of Asadullah (Lion of Allah), some persons have thought it expedient to create, in comparison with him, a commander, who should carry the title of Sayfullah (Sword of Allah) and such a person should not be anyone except the brave commander of Islam, Khalid bin Walid. They, therefore, say that on his return from the Battle of Mota the Prophet gave him the title of Sayfullah.

No doubt if the Prophet had given him this title on some other occasion there could be no question about it, but the conditions and circumstances after the return of the Muslim army from the Battle of Mota did not necessitate that the Prophet should give him such a title. Is it justifiable that the Prophet should give a title like Sayfullah to a person who is at the head of those people, whom Muslims call fugitives and accord them reception by throwing dust on their heads and faces?

And even if he displayed the attribute of being 'the Sword of Allah' in other battles, his achievement in this battle was nothing more than a praiseworthy military scheme, for otherwise he and his subordinates would not have been given the title of fugitives.

Ibn Sa'd writes: "At the time of retreat of the soldiers of Islam, the Roman soldiers pursed them and killed some of them".15

The forgerers of the myth of 'Sayfullah' have also added this sentence to support their statement; "When Khalid became the commander, he ordered the soldiers to attack the enemy. He himself attacked bravely and nine swords broke in his hand, and only a shield remained with him".

However, the forgerers of this myth have forgotten one thing that is, if Khalid and his soldiers performed

such feats of bravery in the battlefield why did the people of Madina call them fugitives, and why did they receive them by throwing dust on their heads and faces when in that case (i.e. if they had fought as bravely as mentioned above) they should have received them honourably, for example, by slaughtering sheep and sprinkling scent and rosewater in their path?

The Prophet Wept Bitterly On The Death Of Ja'far

The Prophet burst into tears on the death and martyrdom of his cousin Ja'far. He went to the house of Ja'far direct to inform his wife, Asma' daughter of Umays, about the death of her husband and also to offer condolences to her. Addressing Asma', he said: "Where are my children?" She brought Ja'far's sons, Abdullah, Awn and Muhammad before the Prophet. On observing the Prophet's intense attachment for the children, she realized that her dear husband was dead.

She said: "It appears that my children have become orphans, because you are treating them as such". The Prophet wept bitterly at this moment. Then he asked his daughter, Fatimah, to prepare food and entertain the family of Ja'far for three days. Even after this the Prophet remained sad for Ja'far bin Abu Talib and Zayd bin Harith and as and when he entered his own house he wept bitterly for them.16

1. Waqidi has given another version of the stimulant for this chief's inclination towards Islam. (Mughazi, vol. II, pp. 743–745)
2. Tabaqat–i Ibn Sa'd, vol. VII, page 394.
3. Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. II, page 128.
4. Mughazi Waqidi, vol. II, page 757.
5. And then he immediately recited another verse: When others see my grave or my corpse, besmeared with blood, they may praise my bravery and self–sacrifice and pray for me. (Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 60 and Tabaqat, vol. II, page 128).
6. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 374.
7. Usudul Ghabah, vol. I, page 387.
8. Siffin–i Ibn Muzahim, page 49.
9. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II. pp. 384 – 387.
10. Mughazi Waqidi, vol. II. p. 760; Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 375.
11. Mughaz–i Waqidi , vol II. page 760; Seerah–i Halabi, vol. II, page 77.
12. Seerah i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 378.
13. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. II, page 763.
14. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, pp. 382 – 383; Seerah–i Halabi, vol. II, p. 79.
15. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 129.
16. Bihar, vol. XXI, pp. 54 – 55 and Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. II, page 766.

From the day the Prophet migrated to Madina and made that city the centre of Islam, he was always watchful of the conditions of the enemies and their enthusiasm and conspiracies, and attached great importance to the collection of information about their activities. He sent skillful and proficient persons to Makkah and to the different tribes of idolaters at various places so that they might inform him in time about the decisions and plots of the enemies.

On becoming aware of their conspiracies he often nipped their plots in the bud. In such cases the warriors of Islam attacked the enemies unawares under the command of the Prophet or some brave officer of Islam and dispersed them before they could even move from their place. As a result of this, Islam remained safe from the danger of the enemies, and much of the bloodshed was also avoided.

In the present times information of the strength and fitness of the enemy and of his secret plans is considered to be one of the greatest factors contributing to victory, and the superpowers of the world possess extensive organizations for the training of spies and their dispatch and utilization.

In Islam initiative in this direction was taken by the Prophet himself, and after him the caliphs of Islam and specially the Commander of the Faithful also entrusted different duties to a number of spies.

As and when he appointed someone as the governor of a locality he ordered some persons to watch his behaviour and activities and to submit reports to him (i.e. to Ali). He has alluded to this matter in a number of letters written to the governors in which they have been reprimanded. (vide letters Nos. 33 and 45 in Nahjul Balaghah)

In 2 A.H. the Prophet dispatched eighty persons from amongst the immigrants, under the command of Abdullah bin Jahsh, with instructions to encamp at a specified place and to inform him about the activities and schemes of Quraysh.

If the Prophet was not taken unawares at the time of the Battle of Uhud and concentrated his forces outside Madina before the arrival of the enemies and if, during the Battle of Ahzab, he dug a dreadful ditch in front of the enemies before they could reach there, it was entirely owing to the detailed reports which the Muslims, deputed for this purpose, submitted to him, and in this way performed their religious duty to save Islam from downfall.

This wise method adopted by the Prophet is a great example for the Muslims to follow, and on this basis it is necessary that the great leaders of Islam should be fully aware of all types of anti-Islamic conspiracies within the Islamic countries as well as in different parts of the world. By this means they should extinguish the sparks before they turn into flames and should achieve their object. However, during the present times this task cannot be accomplished without necessary equipment.

During the Battle of Zatus Salasil which is the subject of our present discussion, a great mischief was suppressed quite easily by gathering minute details about the plot of the enemy. And in case the Prophet had not resorted to this method (i.e. collecting information in advance) he would have incurred irreparable losses.

Here are the details of this event: The intelligence department of the Prophet reported to him that in the valley of Yabis, thousands of persons had concluded a mutual agreement that they would annihilate Islam with full force and would lay down their lives for the achievement of this object or kill Muhammad and his brave and victorious officer, Ali.

Ali bin Ibrahim Qummi writes: "Divine revelation informed the Prophet about their plots".1 But Shaykh Mufid, the great research scholar says: "A Muslim submitted a report about this to the Prophet and mentioned the locality of the plot to be the valley of Raml2 and added that the said tribes had decided to carry out a night attack on Madina and settle the matter finally.

The Prophet considered it necessary to inform the Muslims about this great danger. In those days the code word for calling the people to prayers or to hear some important news was Assalat Jami'ah. Hence, as ordered by the Prophet, the announcer took his place at an elevated spot of the roof of the mosque and uttered the said sentence loudly. Immediately thereupon the Muslims gathered in the mosque. The Prophet mounted the pulpit and spoke *inter alia* thus: "The enemies of Allah are sitting in ambush and have decided to attack you unawares at night. Some of you should stand up to ward off this mischief".

At this moment a group of persons was appointed for the purpose and Abu Bakr was nominated to be its commander. He, along with the special unit, proceeded towards the tribe of Bani Salim. The distance which the soldiers of Islam covered consisted of a peculiar stony path and the area of the valley inhabited by the said tribe was very vast. When the soldiers of Islam tried to enter the valley they had to face Bani Salim and the commander of the army of Islam could think of no other alternative except that he should return the way he had come.3

Ali bin Ibrahim writes in his Tafsir; "When the chiefs of the tribe said to Abu Bakr: 'What is the purpose of this military expedition?' he replied: 'I have been appointed by the Prophet of Allah to present Islam to you and to fight against you if you decline to accept it'.

At this moment the chiefs of the tribe terrified him by making him face a large number of men. He, therefore, ordered the soldiers of Islam to return, and brought them back to Madina, notwithstanding the fact that they were inclined to put up a good fight".

The return of the army of Islam and that too in the said condition touched the Prophet He now entrusted the command of the army to Abu Bakr's friend, Umar. This time the enemies were more alert than before and had concealed themselves at the entrance of the valley behind the stones and the trees. At the time of the arrival of the army of Islam they came out of their hiding places and began to fight valiantly. The commander of the army was, therefore, obliged to retreat and to return to Madina.

'Amr As, the cunning politician of Arabia, who had then embraced Islam recently, came to the Prophet and said: "War is deceit". He meant to say that victory in war does not depend on valour and strength only but is also due to ingeniousness and deceit which should be practiced upon the enemy to achieve success. He added: "If I am allowed to lead the soldiers of Islam I shall be able to do the needful". In view of some good purpose the Prophet accepted his proposal, but he too like the two earlier commanders met the same fate.

Ali Is Selected As The Commander Of The Army

The successive defeats had made the Muslims very sad. Eventually the Prophet organized a force and selected Ali to be its commander and gave the standard in his hand. Ali entered his house and asked his wife Fatimah to give him the piece of cloth, which he used to tie on his head in critical circumstances. The Prophet's daughter wept bitterly to see that her dear husband was proceeding on a very dangerous mission. The Prophet consoled her and cleared up the tears from her eyes.

Then he accompanied Ali up to the Masjidul Ahzab. Ali mounted on a piebald horse, and wearing two garments woven in Yemen, and carrying in his hand a spear, made in Hind,4 set off. He completely changed his itinerary, so much so that the soldiers began thinking that he was proceeding towards Iraq. The Prophet saw him off saying, "He is an attacking commander who never flees the battlefield".

Associating this sentence specially to Ali, shows that the former commanders had not only been defeated but, contrary to the military principles of Islam, their retreat also meant defeat.

The Secret Of Ali's Victory In This Battle

The secret of the victory achieved by Ali in this battle may be summarized in the following three points:

1. He did not let the enemy become aware of his activities, because he changed his course so that information regarding his tactics might not reach the enemy through the nomadic Arabs and the neighbouring tribes.

2. He acted on an important military principle i.e. camouflage. He travelled during night and concealed himself at some place during day time and took rest. He had no yet reached the entrance to the valley when he ordered all the soldiers to take rest. And in order that the enemy might not become aware of their arrival near the valley, he also instructed the soldiers of Islam to tie the mouths of their horses lest their neighing should awaken the enemy.

In the morning he offered his prayers along with his companions and then made the soldiers ascend the mountain from the back side, and moved them into the valley from above the mountain. Under the command of a brave and valiant officer, the soldiers proceeded forth like a torrent and attacked the sleeping enemies like lightening. Some of them were killed and others took to their heels.

3. The unmatched bravery of the Commander of the faithful, who killed seven of his opponents, overpowered the enemy. They were so much terrified that finding themselves incapable of further resistance, they ran away leaving a large booty behind them.5

The brave commander returned to Madina, crowned with laurels. The Prophet, accompanied by some of his companions, received him. On seeing the Prophet he dismounted immediately. The Prophet, while patting the back of Ali said to him: "Mount the horse. Allah and His Prophet are pleased with you".

At that moment tears trickled down his cheeks on account of excessive joy and the Prophet then uttered his historical sentence about Ali: "If I had not been afraid that a group of my followers might say the same thing about you as the Christians say about Prophet 'Isa, I would have said something about you, as a consequence of which the people would have taken the dust lying under your feet as an article of blessing from wherever you might have passed".6

This bravery and self-sacrifice was so valuable that Surah al-Adiyat was revealed about this event and its peculiar and sensational oath aims at appreciating the military spirit and manliness of the valiant soldiers who took part in this battle. Here are some verses of this Surah:

By the snorting chargers (***of the warriors***)***, whose hooves strike against the rocks and produce sparks while running during a raid at dawn, and leave behind a trail of dust which engulf the enemy.*** (**Surah al-Adiyat, 100:1- 5**).

The above is the summary of the events of the Battle of Zatus Salasil as the Shi'ah exegetes and historians have recorded on the basis of authentic authorities. However, Sunni historians like Tabari, have given another version of this event which differs much from what we have stated above. It is not improbable that two battles bore the name of Zatus Salasil and each group has narrated the events of one of them and has refrained on the basis of certain considerations, from narrating those of the other.7

1. Tafsir-i Qummi, page 733.
2. Possibly the Valley of Raml (the sandy desert) and the Valley of Yabis (the dry desert) are one and the same place.
3. al-Irshad, page 84.
4. Name of a town.
5. Tafsir-i Furat, pp. 222-226 and Majma'ul Bayan, vol. I, page 528.
6. al-Irshad, pp. 84-86.
7. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. III, page 30; Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 215 and Mughazi Waqidi, vol. II, pp. 769 - 774.

Besides being one of the greatest events of the History of Islam, the conquest of Makkah throws light on the sacred aims and objects of the Prophet and his sublime morals.

In this period of history the good faith and sincerity of the Prophet and his companions with regard to all the clauses of the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah, which was signed by them, becomes clear and, over against it, the perfidy and breach of trust on the part of Quraysh in connection with abiding by the terms of the pact also becomes evident.

The study of this part of history proves the skill and prudence of the Prophet and the wise policy adopted by him to conquer the last and the most solid stronghold of the enemy. It appears that this Divinely appointed man had spent a part of his life in one of the greatest military academies, because he planned the victory like an experienced commander in such a way that the Muslims achieved this greatest success without the least labour and hardship.

However, the love of the Prophet for humanity and his concern for the safety of the lives and property of his enemies is also evidenced from this period of history. As we shall observe soon, this great man, exercising unusual foresight, ignored the crimes of Quraysh after achieving victory and proclaimed general amnesty. Here are the details of this event:

In the 6 A.H., a pact was concluded between the chiefs of Quraysh and the Prophet of Islam and was ratified by both the parties. According to the third clause of the pact, Quraysh and the Muslims were free to make agreements with such other tribes as they liked.

In the light of this clause, the tribe of Bani Khuza'ah made an agreement with the Muslims and the Prophet undertook to protect their water, land, lives and property. The tribe of Bani Kananah, who were old enemies of their neighbouring tribe, Bani Khuza'ah, made an agreement with Quraysh. The matter was concluded by a peace pact according to which maintenance of a general peace throughout Arabia for ten years (and, according to another version, for two years) was agreed upon.

According to the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah, the two parties were not to rise against each other and were also not to instigate the allies of the one to rise against the allies of the other. Two years passed after the conclusion of this pact, and both the parties spent this time in peace and in the years following the pact, the Muslims went freely for the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah and performed their religious rites in the presence of thousands of idolaters belonging to the enemy camp.

In the month of Jamadi-1 of the 8 A.H., the Prophet sent 3000 strong soldiers under the command of three brave officers of Islam, towards the frontiers of Syria, to punish the Roman authorities for their killing unprotected Muslim missionaries in a dastardly manner. The Muslim warriors saved their lives in this expedition and not more than three of their commanders and a few soldiers were killed, but they did not return with the victory which was expected of the mujahids of Islam and their operation was not dissimilar to the condition of strike and run.

The publicity of this news encouraged Quraysh and they began to think that the military strength of the Muslims had weakened and they had lost the spirit of bravery and self-sacrifice. They, therefore, decided to disturb the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity.

In the first instance they distributed arms amongst the people of Bani Bakr and instigated them to conduct a night attack on Bani Khuza'ah, who were the allies of Muslims, and to kill some of them and arrest others. They were not, however, contented even with this, and a unit of Quraysh participated in the night attack on Bani Khuza'ah. Thus they violated the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah and converted the two years' old peace and tranquillity into war and bloodshed.

The result of this night attack was that some of the people of the tribe who were in their beds, or were offering prayers, were killed and others were made prisoners. A few of them abandoned their houses and took refuge in Makkah which was considered to be a place of peace amongst the Arabs. The refugees who had come to Makkah went to the house of Budayl bin Warqa'1 and related the pitiable tale

of their tribe to him.

In order that the news of their victimization might reach the ears of the Prophet they sent 'Amr Salam, the chief of their tribe, to him. On arriving in Madina he went straight to the mosque and stood before the people. He recited, in a special tone, some heart-rending verses indicating the oppression suffered by the tribe of Bani Khuza'ah and their imploration for help and reminded the Prophet to honour the agreement made with them.

He requested the Prophet to help them and to avenge the blood of the oppressed. In the end of his verses he said: "O Prophet of Allah! While some of us were at the bank of the water of Wateer and others were offering prayers the idolatrous Quraysh, who had signed a non-aggression pact covering a period of ten years, fell upon our unprotected and unarmed people at midnight and massacred them". He repeated this verse: "They massacred us while we were Muslims", many times to arouse the sentiments and the spirit of swordsmanship of the Muslims.

The stirring verses of the chief of the tribe had their effect. The Prophet turned to 'Amr in the presence of a large number of Muslims and said: "O 'Amr bin Salam! We shall assist you".

This decisive reply gave a wonderful peace of mind to 'Amr, because he became sure that the Prophet would very soon avenge the fate of Bani Khuza'ah upon Quraysh, who were the real cause of the tragic event. However, he could not imagine that this task would bring about the conquest of Makkah and the end of the oppressive rule of Quraysh.

Soon afterwards Budayl bin Warqa' came to the Prophet along with a group of the people of Bani Khuza'ah to seek help. He informed him of the co-operation of Quraysh with Bani Bakr about the striking and killing the men of Bani Khuza'ah, and then they proceeded to Makkah.

The Prophet's Decision Makes Quraysh Uneasy

Quraysh regretted very much what they had done, and realized that they had provided a very dangerous pretext to the Muslims and had committed an act which violated the very spirit of the pact and its terms. With a view to pacifying the Prophet and to seek the confirmation and strengthening of the ten years' pact, (and according to one version) for its extension,2 they sent their leader, Abu Sufyan, to Madina so that he might hide their crimes and transgression by all possible means.

He proceeded to Madina and on the way he met Budayl, the leader of Bani Khuza'ah, at a place called Asfan situated near Makkah. He enquired from Budayl whether he had been to Madina and had informed Muhammad of the recent developments. Budayl replied that he had gone to see his oppressed kinsmen and to console them, and had not at all been to Madina. Saying this he proceeded to Makkah. However, Abu Sufyan broke the dung of his camel and found in it the stones of the palm-dates peculiar to Madina. He, therefore, became sure that Budayl had gone to Madina to see the Prophet.

Abu Sufyan arrived in Madina and went straight to the house of his daughter, Umme Habibah, the wife of the Prophet. He wanted to sit on the mattress used by the Prophet, but his daughter folded it up. Abu Sufyan said to his daughter: "Did you not consider the bedding fit for me or your father fit for it? " She replied: "This bedding is specially meant for the Prophet and as you are an unbeliever, I didn't wish that a person who is an unbeliever, and unclean should sit on the bedding of the Prophet".

This is the logic of the daughter of a man, who worked against Islam for a long period of twenty years, brought about revolutions, and perpetrated massacres on this account. However, as this honourable lady had been nurtured in the cradle of Islam, the school of monotheism, her spiritual ties were so strong that she subordinated all her inner inclinations and filial sentiments to her religious fervour.

Abu Sufyan felt very uneasy regarding his daughter's behaviour, who was his only refuge in Madina. He left his daughter's house and went to the Prophet and spoke to him about the extension and strengthening of the Peace Pact. However, he had to face the silence of the Prophet which showed his indifference to the proposal.

Abu Sufyan contacted some companions of the Prophet so that he might approach him again through them and thus achieve his object. But these contacts too did not prove fruitful. At last he went to the house of Ali and spoke to him thus:

"You are the man nearest to me in this city, because you are my kinsman. I, therefore, request you to intercede with the Prophet on my behalf ". Ali replied: "We don't at all interfere in matters in which the Prophet has taken a decision".

Having been disappointed from Ali's side, he turned to Lady Fatimah Zahrah, the wife of Ali and daughter of the Prophet, and saw that her two sons Hasan and Husayn were nearby. In order to arouse her sentiments, he said to her: "O Prophet's daughter! It is possible that you may direct your children to provide refuge to the people of Makkah and to become the chiefs of Arabia, till the earth and time exist". Zahrah, who was aware of the evil intentions of Abu Sufyan, said at once: "This matter rests with the Prophet, and my children don't enjoy any such position at present ".

He turned to Ali again and said "Dear Ali! Guide me in this matter". Ali replied: "There is no way out, except that you should go into the mosque and proclaim security for the Muslims". He said: "If I do so, will it be of any use?" Ali replied: "Not much, but I can't think of anything else at present".

Abu Sufyan, who was aware of the truthfulness, uprightness and purity of Ali, went to the mosque and put his suggestion into practice. He then left the mosque and proceeded to Makkah. In connection with the report which he gave to the chiefs of Quraysh about his performance at Madina, he also mentioned the advice given by Ali and said:

"As suggested by Ali, I went into the mosque and proclaimed security for the Muslims". Those present said to him: "Ali's suggestion was nothing more than a jest because the Prophet didn't pay any heed to

your providing security to the Muslims and a one-sided declaration is useless". Then they held more meetings to find out some other means to pacify the Muslims.3

A Spy Is Trapped

The entire life of the Prophet shows that he always endeavoured that the enemy should surrender before truth and never thought of taking revenge on him or of annihilating him.

In many battles, in which the Prophet either participated personally or dispatched a group for fighting, his object used to be that the plot of the enemies might be frustrated, their unity might come to an end and their men should disperse.

It was because he knew very well that if obstacles in the path of propagation of Islam were removed, the forceful logic of Islam would make its impression in a free environment and if the very persons, whose assemblage and forming factions prevented the penetration and propagation of Islam, were disarmed and ceased to be in a state of war and did not entertain in their minds the hopes of gaining victory over Islam, they would willy-nilly be attracted towards Islam and would naturally become its supporters and friends.

Hence, many vanquished nations which were defeated by the military strength of Islam and later pondered over its sublime teachings, in an environment distant from confusion and tumult, got attracted towards it and occupied themselves in the propagation of the religion of monotheism.

At the time of the conquest of Makkah, this phenomenon made its appearance in its most perfect form. The Prophet knew that if he conquered Makkah, disarmed the enemy, and made the environments peaceful, the persons, who were his sworn enemies at that time would soon become the faithful believers of Islam. It was, therefore, necessary to defeat and overcome the enemy but not to annihilate him and also to avoid bloodshed as far as possible.

In order to achieve this sacred object (overpowering the enemy without bloodshed), the principle of taking the enemy by surprise should be followed and he should be attacked and disarmed before he thinks of collecting force and defending himself.

The principle of surprise attack on the enemy could, however, be acted upon only when all military secrets of the Muslim army remained secure and the enemy did not know whether the Prophet had decided to attack or was only thinking about it. It was also necessary that the enemy should not become aware of the activities and tactics of the army of Islam.

The Prophet ordered general mobilization to conquer Makkah and to subjugate the most firm stronghold of idolatry. His aim was to topple down the oppressive government of Quraysh which was the greatest impediment in the advancement of Islam. He also prayed to Allah that the spies of Quraysh might not become aware of the activities of the Muslims.

In order to maintain perfect secrecy all the routes leading to Makkah were watched by the Muslims appointed for the purpose and strict control was exercised on the traffic.

The soldiers of Islam had not yet moved when the Archangel Jibreel informed the Prophet that a simpleton who occupied his place in the ranks of the Muslims had written a letter to Quraysh and had entrusted it to a woman named Sarah to deliver it to them on payment of wages, and in that letter some military secrets of Islam including their imminent attack on Makkah had been disclosed.

Sarah was a singing-girl of Makkah who at times also sang dirges in the mourning parties of Quraysh. After the Battle of Badr her business in Makkah slackened, because on account of a large number of important personalities of Quraysh having been killed in that battle, Makkah was completely engulfed in grief, and there was no occasion for musical and pleasure-seeking parties. Furthermore, in order that the anger and grudge of Quraysh should survive and their desire to take revenge might not die away, singing of mournful songs was strictly prohibited.

For the reasons mentioned above Sarah came to Madina after two years of Badr. When the Prophet asked her whether she had embraced Islam she replied in the negative. Then the Prophet asked her as to why she had come to Madina. To this she replied:

"From the view point of origin and lineage I belong to Quraysh. However, some of them have been killed and some others have migrated to Madina. After the Battle of Badr my business slackened and I have come over here out of need". The Prophet then ordered immediately that necessary food and dress might be provided to her. Sarah was treated so kindly by the Prophet, but, on receiving ten Dinars from Hatib bin Abi Balta'ah, she undertook to spy against Islam and to carry to Quraysh his letter containing information regarding the preparedness of the Muslims to conquer Makkah.

The Prophet summoned three brave soldiers and asked them to proceed to Makkah, arrest the said woman wherever they saw her and take the letter from her. The persons to whom this task was entrusted were Ali, Zubayr and Miqdad. They arrested the woman at a place called Rauzat Khakh and checked her luggage minutely but did not find anything. The woman also strongly denied that she was carrying any letter from Hatib. Ali said: "By Allah! Our Prophet never tells a lie. You must surrender the letter, or else we shall recover it from you by all possible means".

In the meantime Sarah realized that Ali was a soldier who would not give up the search until he had carried out the orders of the Prophet. She, therefore, requested him to keep aloof. Then she took out a small letter from the inner folds of her hair and surrendered it to Ali.

The Prophet was very much perturbed to find that such a thing had been done by a Muslim, who had a long record of service and was eager to assist Islam even in very critical times. He, therefore, called Hatib and asked him to explain his position. He swore by Allah and the Prophet and said: "Not the least instability has taken place in my faith.

However, as the Prophet of Allah is aware, I am living alone in Madina and my children and kinsmen are suffering pressure and torture in Makkah at the hands of Quraysh. My object in sending the report in question, therefore, was that Quraysh might diminish the torture to which my people are being subjected".

The excuse offered by Hatib shows that, in order to obtain information about the secrets of the Muslims, the chiefs of Quraysh subjected their kinsmen residing in Makkah to torture and made their deliverance conditional upon that they should obtain necessary information from their relatives in Madina.

Although the excuse offered by Hatib was not well-founded, the Prophet accepted it on account of various considerations, including his long past services for the cause of Islam, and set him free. When Umar sought permission from the Prophet to cut off Hatib's head, he replied: "I am setting him free because he participated in the Battle of Badr and was one day the object of Divine blessing"

However, to ensure that such an incident might not be repeated, the first nine verses of Surah al-Mumtahinah were revealed:4 *O You who believe! Choose not My enemy and your enemy for friends .....*

The Prophet And The Muslims March Towards Makkah

In observance of the rule of surprise attack, the time of departure, the itinerary and the purpose of the expedition were not made known to anyone till orders for marching were given by the Prophet. Such orders were given on the 10th of Ramadan 8 A.H., although instructions had been issued earlier to the Muslims of Madina and its suburbs to keep themselves alert.

On the day the Prophet left Madina, he appointed a person named Abu Ruhm Ghifari to act as his representative there and reviewed his army in the vicinity of Madina. When he had covered some distance from Madina he asked for water at a place named Kadid and broke his fast and also ordered all others to do so. Most of them broke the fast, but some persons refrained from doing so under the impression that if they performed jihad while fasting they would become entitled to greater recompense.

These simple-minded persons did not realize that the same Prophet who had given orders regarding fasting during the month of Ramadan had also given orders now for breaking the fast, and if he was the guide towards prosperity and truth, both of his orders were for the good of the people and there was no discrimination in his orders. The Prophet was displeased to learn that some persons had abstained from complying with his orders and said: "These people are sinners and rebels".5

Seeking of such precedence and lead over the Prophet is a sort of deviation from truth and shows lack of faith of these people in the Prophet and in his religion. Hence, the Holy Qur'an has reproached such people and says:

O You who believe! Be not forward in the presence of Allah and His Messenger, and be careful of

your duty to Allah. (**Surah al-Hujurat, 49:1**).

Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib was one of those Muslims who were residing in Makkah. He was staying there under the advice of the Prophet and used to inform him about the decisions taken by Quraysh. He demonstrated his Islam after the Battle of Khayber, but his relations with the chiefs of Quraysh remained intact.

He decided to leave Makkah as a last Muslim family to settle in Madina. During the days when the Prophet was proceeding to Makkah, Abbas left for Madina and met the Prophet on the way at a place called Ju'fah. Presence of Abbas proved to be very useful for the conquest of Makkah and resulted in the benefit to both the parties. It is possible that if he had not been present, the conquest of Makkah might not have been accomplished without resistance by Quraysh.

Hence, it is not improbable that his departure from Makkah to Madina was under instructions from the Prophet so that he might play a conciliatory role in the event.

Showing Indulgence While In Power And Authority

The brilliant past of the Prophet, his pleasing manners and his truthfulness and righteousness were very well-known to the members of his family and to his kinsmen in general and all his relatives knew that he had led an honourable life and had never committed any sin or aggression or spoken anything false. Hence, from the very first day of his general call, almost all the members of the family of Bani Hashim responded to his call and gathered round him like moths round a candle.

One of the unbiased British orientalists, considers this fact to be a symbol of the purity and piety of the Prophet and says: "Every person, howmuchsoever careful and cautious he may be, cannot hide the particulars of his life from the members of his family and his near relatives. If Muhammad had possessed bad mentality and character these things would not have remained hidden from his kinsmen and they would not have been attracted to him so soon".6

However, there were a few persons amongst Bani Hashim also who declined to express faith in him. Besides Abu Lahab the names of two such persons viz. Abu Sufyan bin Harith and Abdullah bin Abi Umayyah may be mentioned in this behalf. They displayed enmity and obstinacy against him and they not only did not express faith in him but also became an impediment in the path of truth and hurt the Prophet's feelings.

Abu Sufyan was the son of Harith, the uncle of the Prophet and was also his foster brother. Before the appointment of the Prophet to the prophetic mission, Abu Sufyan loved him very much but became inimical to him thereafter. Abdullah was the brother of Umme Salma and the son of 'Atika, the aunt of the Prophet and daughter of Abdul Muttalib.

However, the publicity of Islam throughout the Arabian Peninsula made these two persons decide to

leave Makkah and join the Muslims. While the Prophet was on his way going to conquer Makkah, they met the army of Islam at a place known as Thanyatul 'Uqab or Nabqul 'Uqab.

Inspite of their persistent requests the Prophet declined to meet them. And even when Umme Salma interceded affectionately, the Prophet rejected her recommendation and said: "It is true that Abu Sufyan is my cousin, but he has annoyed me much. And the second man is the same person who made foolish requests to me7 and has been preventing others from embracing Islam".

Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, who was acquainted with the temperament of the Prophet and the method of arousing his sentiments, said to the two persons: "Go and sit before the Prophet and utter the same sentence which the brothers of Joseph uttered while offering apology".

While offering apology the brothers of Joseph had said:

"By Allah, He has given preference to you over us and we have sinned". And Joseph on hearing these words forgave them saying: "No one will blame you this day! Allah will forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy".8

Then the Commander of the Faithful added: "If you recite the first sentence he will certainly give you a reply in the second sentence, because he is a person who is not at all willing that anyone should be more affable than him". They acted as advised by Ali and the Prophet also forgave them like Joseph. Both of them then put on the requisite dress for jihad and remained steadfast in their faith till the end of their lives.

To make amends for his past Abu Sufyan recited a laudatory poem, the first verse of which is, "By your life! The day on which I carried the standard on my shoulder so that the army of Lat (an idol in Makkah) might be victorious over the army of Muhammad, I was like a perplexed night-traveller who gropes in the dark, but now is the time when I should be under the auspices of the guidance of the Prophet.

Ibn Hisham writes9 that the Prophet's cousin Abu Sufyan bin Harith sent a message to the Prophet saying: "If you don't accept my faith (i.e. conversion to Islam) I shall hold the hand of my young child and walk away into the desert". And in order to arouse the kind sentiments of the Prophet, Umme Salma said: "I have heard you saying time and again that 'Islam covers the past'. On this basis the Prophet received both the persons in his presence.10

Fascinating Tactics Of The Army Of Islam

Marruz Zahran is a few kilometres away from Makkah. The Prophet led his ten thousand strong army most skillfully up to the borders of Makkah so that Quraysh and their spies and agents did not become aware of its movement. In order that the residents of Makkah might surrender without any resistance, and that big fort and sacred centre should be conquered without bloodshed the Prophet, in order to create fear in the hearts of the Makkans, ordered that the Muslims should kindle fire at the elevated

places. He also ordered, to intimidate the Makkans still more, that every person should kindle a fire independently so that the fire and the flames might make all the adjoining hills and high places glow up.

Quraysh and their allies had gone into deep slumber. However, the flames which had given all the elevated places the shape of a mass of fire and whose light was reaching the houses of the people of Makkah created fear and anxiety in their hearts and attracted their attention to the high places.

In the meantime the chiefs of Quraysh, like Abu Sufyan bin Harb and Hakim bin Hizam, came out of Makkah for investigation and busied themselves in observation and exploration.

Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, who was accompanying the Prophet thought that if the army of Islam was resisted by Quraysh many persons from amongst Quraysh would be killed. He therefore, decided to play a part which might be beneficial to both the parties and to persuade Quraysh to surrender.

He mounted the Prophet's white mule and proceeded to Makkah in the dead hours of night, so that he might inform the chiefs of Quraysh, through the thorn-pickers and wood-carriers, about the siege of Makkah by the army of Islam, and to make the numerical strength and war-like spirit of the Muslims known to them, and let them realize that they (Quraysh) had no alternative but to surrender. From a distance, however, he heard the following conversation between Abu Sufyan and Budayl Warqa':

Abu Sufyan: I have not so far seen such a great fire and such a big army.

Budayl bin Warqa': They are the people of the tribe of Khuza'ah, who have prepared for war.

Abu Sufyan: "Khuza'ah are too few to kindle such a great fire or to make such a big army."

At this moment Abbas interrupted their conversation and called Abu Sufyan and said: "O Abu Hanzalah!"[11] Abu Sufyan immediately recognized the voice of Abbas and said "O Abul Fadl,[12] what do you say?" Abbas said: "By Allah! All this commotion has been created by the warriors of the Prophet of Allah. He has come towards Quraysh with a very strong army and it is not at all possible for Quraysh to resist him".

The words of Abbas made Abu Sufyan tremble severely. In that state of fear he turned to Abbas and said: "May my parents be your ransom! What is the remedy?" Abbas replied: "The remedy lies in that you should accompany me to the Prophet and seek security from him, otherwise the lives of all Quraysh are in danger".

Then he made him sit on the pillion of his mule and proceeded to the camp of the army of Islam. The other two persons (Budayl bin Warqa' and Hakim bin Hizam), who had come with Abu Sufyan for investigation, returned to Makkah.

Now, as can be observed, Abbas acted for the benefit of Islam and made Abu Sufyan so much afraid of the strength of the Muslims that he could not think of anything other than surrender. And his most

important action was that he did not let Abu Sufyan return to Makkah but brought him to the Muslim encampment in the dead hours of night and thus isolated him from all sides. Had he returned to Makkah it was possible that he might have been influenced by the extremist elements and might have made a passive resistance for a few hours.

Abbas Makes Abu Sufyan Pass Through The Muslim Camp

The Prophet's uncle was mounted on the particular mule of the Prophet and Abu Sufyan was accompanying him. He made him pass from between the masses of fires and the large army consisting of infantrymen and mounted soldiers. The sentries recognized Abbas as well as the particular mule belonging to the Prophet and, therefore, made way for him.

While they were still on their way Umar's eyes fell on Abu Sufyan sitting on the pillion of Abbas, and he wanted to kill him (Abu Sufyan) at once. As, however, the Prophet's uncle had provided him protection, he (Umar) desisted from doing so. Eventually Abbas and Abu Sufyan reached the tent of the Prophet. The Prophet's uncle sought permission and then entered the tent.

There a very serious dispute took place between Abbas and Umar in the presence of the Prophet. Umar insisted that Abu Sufyan being an enemy of Allah should be killed immediately whereas Abbas said that he had provided him protection. The Prophet silenced them by asking Abbas to keep Abu Sufyan in a tent during the night and to bring him in the morning.

Abu Sufyan Appears Before The Prophet

When the day dawned Abbas brought Abu Sufyan before the Prophet. The Muhajirs and the Ansar were then around the Prophet. When the Prophet's eyes fell upon Abu Sufyan he said: "Has the time not yet arrived when you should acknowledge their there is no god but Allah?" Abu Sufyan said in reply: "May my parents be your ransom! How forbearing, generous and kind you are towards your kinsmen! I have now realized that if there had been a god other than Allah he would have done, till now, something for our benefit."

When the Prophet saw that he had acknowledged the Oneness of Allah, he added: "Has not the time yet arrived when you should know that I am Allah's Prophet." Repeating the former sentence, Abu Sufyan said: "How forbearing, generous, and kind you are towards your kinsmen! At present I am reflecting about your Prophethood".

Abbas felt annoyed at Abu Sufyan's expressing doubt (about the Prophethood of Muhammad and said: "If you don't embrace Islam, your life is in danger. You should, therefore, testify to the Oneness of Allah and to the Prophethood of Muhammad as early as possible". Abu Sufyan followed the advice and joined the ranks of Muslims.

Abu Sufyan embraced Islam on account of fear, and such faith did not at all conform with the aim of Islam, but in this case it was expedient that Abu Sufyan should join the Muslims, in whatever manner it might be, so that the greatest obstacle in the path of the Makkans embracing Islam might be removed, because he and those like him (i.e. Abu Jahl, 'Ikrimah, Safwan bin Umayyah etc.) were the persons who had created fear and terror since long and none could pick up courage to think about Islam or to show inclination towards it. Even if apparent embracement of Islam by Abu Sufyan was not beneficial for him, it was very beneficial and useful for the Prophet of Islam as well as for those persons who were his kith and kin.

Even then the Prophet did not release Abu Sufyan, because he was not confident about his activities till Makkah was conquered. He, therefore, gave directions to Abbas that, for reasons to be mentioned later, he should keep him confined within a narrow pass of a valley. Abbas turned to the Prophet and said: "Abu Sufyan is ambitious of social status and now that matters have taken such a turn you had better confer some position on him".

Notwithstanding the fact that during a long period of twenty years, Abu Sufyan had done the greatest harm to Islam and the Muslims; the Prophet, keeping some higher interests in view, conferred a position on him and uttered the following sentence which is indicative of the greatness of his soul:

"Abu Sufyan is authorized to assure the people that whoever takes refuge within the precincts of Masjidul Haram or lays down arms on the ground and declares his neutrality or confines himself to his house or takes refuge in the house of Abu Sufyan (and, according to one version, in the house of Abu Sufyan or in the house of Hakim bin Hizam) shall remain safe from molestation by the army of Islam".[13]

Makkah Surrenders Without Bloodshed

The grand army of Islam had reached close to Makkah. However, the Prophet desired that he should conquer the city without any resistance or bloodshed and the enemy should surrender without any conditions.

Out of the factors, besides camouflage and surprise, which helped much in achieving this object, one was that Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet, went to Makkah as a gesture of goodwill to Quraysh and brought Abu Sufyan to the Islamic camp and the chiefs of Quraysh could not take a final decision in the absence of Abu Sufyan.

When Abu Sufyan submitted himself to the unmatched greatness of the Prophet of Islam and expressed his faith in him, the Prophet decided to take the maximum advantage from his presence to intimidate the idolaters. He, therefore, asked Abbas to detain him in the narrow pass of the valley so that the units of the newly-formed army of Islam might march past him with all their equipment, and he should observe the military strength of Islam and then on return to Makkah, he might inform Quraysh about the strength of the army of Islam and keep them from resistance.

Some of the units of the army of Islam were as mentioned below:

1. A strong regiment of one thousand soldiers of the tribe of Bani Salim under the command of Khalid bin Walid which held two standards. One of these standards was being carried by Abbas bin Mirdas and the other by Miqdad.

2. Two battalions of five hundred warriors under the command of Zubayr Awwam who had a black standard in his hand. The majority of the soldiers of these two battalions consisted of the Muhajirs.

3. A strong battalion of three thousand soldiers of the tribe of Bani Ghifar under the command of Abuzar Ghifari, who was carrying the standard.

4. A strong battalion of four hundred soldiers of the tribe of Bani Salim under the command of Yazid, son of Khusayb, who was carrying the standard.

5. Two battalions consisting of five hundred men belonging to the tribe of Bani Ka'b under the command of Busr bin Sufyan, who was also carrying the standard.

6. A one thousand persons strong regiment of Bani Muzaynah which bore three standards. These standards were in the hands of No'man bin Maqran, Bilal bin Harith and Abdullah 'Amr.

7. A regiment consisting of eight hundred persons belonging to Bani Juhaynah, with four standards which were being carried by Ma'bad bin Khalid, Suwayd bin Sakhra, Rafe' bin Makith and Abdullah Badr.

8. Two groups consisting of two hundred persons from the tribes of Banu Kananah, Banu Layth and Hamzah under the command of Abu Waqid Laythi, who was carrying the standard.

9. A battalion consisting of three hundred persons belonging to the tribe of Bani Ashja', which carried two standards. One of these standards was being carried by Ma'qal bin Sanan and the other by Na'im bin Mas'ud.

When these units passed by Abu Sufyan, he immediately enquired about their particulars from Abbas and the latter gave him the reply. The thing which added to the grandeur of this organized army was that when the commanders of the units came before Abbas and Abu Sufyan they pronounced *Takbir* (*Allahu Akbar*) thrice with a loud voice and thereafter the soldiers also pronounced it thrice with loud voices by way of the greatest Islamic rite. This *Takbir* resounded in the valleys of Makkah in such a manner that the friends were greatly impressed with the discipline of Islam and the enemies were filled with extreme fear and terror.

Abu Sufyan was waiting impatiently to see the unit in which the Prophet had taken his place. Hence, every time a unit passed by him he asked Abbas whether Muhammad was present in it. Abbas continued to reply in the negative till their attention was attracted by a great force consisting of about five thousand soldiers in which two thousand warriors were wearing coats of mail and the company

commanders were carrying many standards at specified distances.

The name of this unit was Katiba-i Khazra' i.e. the Green Army. Its soldiers were armed to the teeth. Their entire bodies were covered with arms and nothing except their bright eyes could be seen. Swift Arabian horses and red-haired camels could be seen in this unit in abundance.

The Prophet could be seen in the middle of this unit riding his particular camel. Distinguished personalities had encircled him and he was conversing with them.

The grandeur of this unit overawed Abu Sufyan. He involuntarily said to Abbas: "No force can resist this army. O Abbas! The kingdom of your nephew has flourished to a great extent". Abbas replied reproachfully: "The source of the strength of my nephew is the Prophethood bestowed upon him by Allah, and it has nothing to do with outward and material power."

Abu Sufyan Proceeds To Makkah

Abbas had so far performed his role admirably well and had impressed Abu Sufyan with the military strength of the Prophet. At this moment the Prophet considered it expedient to set Abu Sufyan free so that he might go to Makkah before the arrival of the units of the army of Islam, inform the people of the unusual strength of the Muslims and also tell the Makkans about the means of their safety, because merely frightening the people without showing them the path to safety could not enable the Prophet to achieve his object.

Abu Sufyan arrived in the city. The people who had spent the night in great anxiety and fear and had not been able to take any decision in his absence, encircled him. With a distressed face and a trembling body, and while he was pointing towards Madina, he said:

"Units of the army of Islam, whom it is not possible for anyone to resist, have besieged the city and will be entering it within a short time. Their leader, Muhammad, has given me a promise that the life and property of everyone who takes refuge in the mosque or in the precincts of the Ka'bah, or lays down his arms on the ground and confines himself to his house as a mark of neutrality, or enters my house or that of Hakim Hizam, will be respected and will remain secured.

With this message Abu Sufyan weakened the morale of the people so much that even if some persons had been thinking of offering resistance, they abandoned the idea. Thus all the preliminaries, which had been settled the previous night, owing to the steps taken by Abbas, proved fruitful and the conquest of Makkah and that too without any resistance on the part of Quraysh, seemed imminent. The terrified people took refuge in various places and, as a result of the wise plan of the Prophet, the sworn enemy of Islam rendered a great service to the Muslim army.

In the meantime Abu Sufyan's wife, Hind, incited the people to resist, and abused her husband. Nothing could, however, be done now and all the cries and appeals were useless. However, some extremists like

Safwan bin Umayyah, 'Ikrimah bin Abu Jahl and Suhayl bin 'Amr (the champion and special representative of Quraysh for the conclusion of the Peace Pact of Hudaybiyah) swore that they would prevent the army of Islam from entering the city. Some persons were deceived by their words and they with swords in their hands, blocked the path of the first unit of the army of Islam.

Military Forces Of Islam Enter The City

Before the forces of Islam reached the main roads of the city of Makkah, the Prophet summoned all the commanders of the army and said to them: "It is my earnest desire that Makkah should be conquered without any bloodshed. Killing of non-combatant persons should, therefore, be avoided.

However, ten persons namely 'Ikrimah bin Abu Jahl, Habbar bin Aswad, Abdullah bin Sa'd Abi Sarah, Miqyas Subabah Laythi, Huwairath bin Nuqayd, Abdullah Hilal and four women who have been guilty of murder or other offences or have sparked off the war should be killed for their offences immediately, whenever they are captured".14

This order was notified to all the soldiers through their commanders. Notwithstanding the fact that the mental attitude of the people of Makkah towards the Prophet was very clear, he did not ignore military precautions at the time of entry into Makkah. His plan was as follows:

All the units forming one line reached Zi Tuwa (an elevated point from where the houses of Makkah as well as the Ka'bah and the Masjidul Haram can be seen), while the Prophet was encircled by a regiment consisting of five thousand soldiers. When the Prophet's eyes fell on the houses of Makkah, tears of joy gathered in his eyes and as a mark of thanksgiving for the victory which he had gained without any resistance on the part of Quraysh, he, while riding the camel, bent himself so much that his beard touched the saddle fixed on the back of the camel.

As a precautionary measure, he divided the army and sent a part of it from the upper side and another part from the lower side of Makkah. He did not content himself with only this and also sent units by all the routes which led to the city.

All the units entered the city without any fighting and the gates of the city were opened for them, except the unit which was commanded by Khalid bin Walid. At the instigation of 'Ikrimah, Safwan and Suhayl, a group of persons resorted to fighting and displayed resistance by shooting arrows and using swords. However, when twenty-eight of them were killed, the instigators went into hiding and the others fled.15

Once again Abu Sufyan unknowingly rendered assistance to Islam in this incident. He was still very much over-awed and knew that resistance was only harmful. To prevent bloodshed he shouted and addressed the people thus: "O Quraysh! Don't endanger your lives, because fighting against the organized army of Muhammad is useless. Lay down your arms and sit in your houses or take refuge in the mosque and the precincts of the Ka'bah, for in that case your lives will be safe".

The words of Abu Sufyan had the desired effect and some persons confined themselves to their houses whereas others took refuge in the mosque.

The Prophet saw the flashes of the swords of the unit of Khalid from a point named Azakhir and, being aware of the cause of conflict, said: "Allah's Will is above everything".

The camel of the Prophet entered the city with great dignity and grandeur from the highest point of Makkah (Azakhir). He alighted in Jahoon by the side of the grave of his dear uncle, Abu Talib, and a special tent was pitched for him. Although the people insisted that he might stay in the house of someone, but he declined.

Breaking The Idols And Washing The Ka'bah

The city of Makkah, which had been the centre of idol worship for a very long time, surrendered before the army of Islam and all the points of the city came under the control of the Muslim soldiery. The Prophet took rest for some time in the tent.

Thereafter he mounted a camel and proceeded to the Masjidul Haram for pilgrimage and *tawaf* (circumambulation) of the Ka'bah. He had put on military dress, was wearing a helmet on his head and the Muhajirs and the Ansar encircling him reflected his greatness.

The reins of the camel of the Prophet were being held by Muhammad bin Maslamah, and the Muslims and some of the idolaters had lined up on his route. Some of them were astonished and over–awed whereas others were expressing their joy. For some good purposes the Prophet did not alight from his camel and arrived in Masjidul Haram mounted on it and halted opposite the Black Stone. Instead of kissing the Black Stone he pointed towards it with a special stick which he was carrying in his hand and uttered *Takbir.*

Imitating the Prophet, his companions, who were gathered round their illustrious leader uttered *Takbir* with a loud voice.

The voice of *Takbir* reached the ears of the idolaters of Makkah, who had taken refuge in their houses or at elevated places. A strange tumult prevailed in the mosque and the hue and cry of the people prevented the Prophet from performing *tawaf* peacefully.

The Prophet made a sign to the people to remain quiet. Perfect silence prevailed immediately and all those within and outside the mosque began looking at the Prophet. He began performing *tawaf* and during the first round of *tawaf,* turned towards the three big idols named Hubal, Isaf and Na'ilah which had been installed above the gate of the Ka'bah. He knocked them down with a stick or a spear which he was carrying in his hand and recited this verse:

Say: Truth has come and falsehood has been banished and falsehood is certainly doomed to

banishment. **(Surah Isra, 17:81)**

As ordered by the Prophet, Hubal was broken to pieces before the very eyes of the idolaters. When this big idol, which had ruled over the minds of the people of the Peninsula for a very long time, was toppled down, Zubayr said to Abu Sufyan jestingly, "Hubal, the big idol, has been broken".

Abu Sufyan said to Zubayr with great displeasure, "Desist from saying so. If Hubal had been able to do something we would not have met this fate". He had realized that their destiny was not in the hand of this idol.

The Prophet completed his *tawaf* and sat for some time in a corner of the mosque. In those days Uthman bin Talhah was the custodian of the keys of the Ka'bah and this office of his was hereditary. The Prophet asked Bilal to go to Uthman's house and bring the key of the Ka'bah from him. Bilal conveyed the Prophet's message to the custodian.

However, his mother prohibited him from surrendering the key and said, "Custodianship of the Ka'bah is our hereditary honour and we should not lose this honour". Uthman caught the hand of his mother and took her into a closet and said, "If we don't give the key voluntarily, you should rest assured that they will take it from us forcibly".16

The custodian unlocked the Ka'bah and the Prophet entered the Ka'bah. Usamah bin Zayd and Bilal and the custodian himself followed him in. As ordered by the Prophet the gate of the Ka'bah was closed and Khalid bin Walid stood outside it to restrain the people from swarming towards the gate.

The inner walls of the Ka'bah were full of pictures and the figures of the Prophets. As ordered by the Prophet, the walls were washed with the water of the well of Zam Zam and the pictures were rubbed off.

The Prophet ordered the gate of the Ka'bah to be opened. Then, placed both of his hands on the wooden frame of the gate and the people could see his sacred and luminous face, he addressed them thus: "Praised be Allah, Who has fulfilled His promise and helped His servant and routed the enemies'".

The Almighty Allah had promised the Prophet through revelation that He would make him return to his birth-place:

(***Muhammad***) ***Allah who has commanded you to follow the guidance of the Qur'an will certainly return you victoriously to your place of birth.*** **(Surah al-Qasas, 28:85).**

By saying, "Allah has fulfilled His promise" the Prophet made a mention of the correctness of that Divine promise and once again demonstrated his truthfulness.

Complete silence prevailed over the precincts of the mosque and outside it. The people, holding their breath, were thinking different things. At this hour the people of Makkah were reminded of the cruelty, oppression and injustice which they had perpetrated and various other thoughts came to their minds.

The people, who had risen a number of times to fight bloody battles against the Prophet, had wounded and killed his friends and companions, and had decided to conduct a night attack on his house and to cut him to pieces, were now in his control and he could take any sort of revenge on them.

These people, while mentioning the big crimes committed by them, were saying to one another: "He will certainly put us to the sword or will kill some of us and detain others and will make our women and children prisoners".

They were absorbed in different satanic thoughts when suddenly the Prophet broke the silence and said, "What are you saying and what are you thinking about me?"

The astonished and frightened people, keeping in mind the past favours of the Prophet, said with broken voice: "We are not thinking of anything about you except kindness and good.

ess. We consider you to be our honourable brother and the son of our honourable brother."

When the Prophet, who was inherently kind and forgiving, heard these emotional sentences from them, he said in reply: "I too say to you the same thing, which my brother Yusuf said to his unkind brothers i.e., "Have no fear this day! May Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful".17

The thing which made the people of Makkah hopeful, besides these words, was the adverse reaction of the Prophet to the words of one of his own officers, who was reciting the following slogans at the time of his arrival in Makkah.

"Today is the day of battle. Today your lives and property are treated to be lawful (for Muslims)."

The Prophet was annoyed by these unusual slogans and, in order to punish the officer concerned, gave directions that the standard might be taken away from him and he might be dismissed from the office of 'Commander'. Ali was appointed to take away the standard from him and according to another version that officer's own son was appointed as commander in his place and he took away the standard from his father.

This officer was Sa'd bin Ubadah, the chief of the Khazraj tribe. Demonstration of this kindness (for the Makkans) before the very eyes of the people of Makkah made the defeated people somewhat hopeful that general amnesty might be granted. And then the safety of those who took refuge in the Ka'bah or in the house of Abu Sufyan or confined themselves within their houses and shut the doors thereof had already been guaranteed through Abu Sufyan.

The Prophet Grants General Amnesty

While granting general amnesty the Prophet addressed the people of Makkah thus: "You have been my very unreasonable countrymen. You refuted my prophethood and turned me out of my house. And when

I took refuge in a far-off place, you rose to fight against me. However, inspite of all these crimes of yours, I forgive all of you and make you free and declare that you may go after the pursuits of your life."

Bilal Pronounces Azan (Call To Prayers)

The time for noon prayers arrived. Bilal, the official mu'azzin of Islam, went on the roof of the Ka'bah and announced, with loud voice, the Oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muhammad, making it reach the ears of those present in the general gathering. The obstinate idolaters were saying all sorts of things. One of them said: " Such and such person was lucky, because he died earlier and didn't hear *azan*". In the meantime Abu Sufyan said: "I won't say anything in the matter, because the information department of Muhammad is so skilful that I am afraid that these very particles of sand in the mosque may inform about our conversation."

This obstinate old man, who did not sincerely believe in Islam till the end of his life, considered Divine knowledge and procurement of realities from Divine revelation to be at par with the spying and espionage of the tyrants of the world and mixed them up with each other.

However, the fact is that Divine knowledge is received by a Prophet through an angel and the information received bythe politicians is something quite different from this and is collected through persons appointed for the purpose.

The Prophet offered the noon prayers. Then he called Uthman bin Talhah and, returning the key of the Ka'bah to him, said: "This position belongs to you and will remain safe in your family!" And nothing else could me expected from the Prophet of Islam – the Prophet, who takes orders from Allah and conveys the people:

Allah commands you to return the things entrusted to you to the rightful owners. (**Surah al-Nisa, 4:58**)

he should certainly precede others in returning such a big trust. He does not trample upon the rights of the people means of military strength. Hence he announces in open terms: "Custodianship of the key of the Ka'bah is the admitted right of the son of Talhah and nobody shares this right with him."

Hence, he cancelled all the offices related to the Ka'bah, except those which were useful to the people (e.g. custodianship of the key, covering of the Ka'bah with a mantle and supplying water to pilgrims of the Ka'bah).

The Prophet Exhorts His Kinsmen

In order that the near relatives of the Prophet should know that their relationship with him had not only not removed the burden from their shoulders but had made their responsibility heavier, he exhorted that they would not be allowed, because of their relationship with him, to violate the laws of Islam or to take

any undue advantage of their kinship with the head of the State.

In the speech which he made in a gathering consisting of the members of the families of Bani Hashim and Bani Abdul Muttalib, he condemned every discrimination and laid stress upon the necessity of justice and equality between all classes, and said:

"O Children of Hashim and Muttalib! I have been sent to you by Allah as His Messenger and the ties of love and kindness between you and myself are also unbreakable. You shouldn't, however, think that only relationship with me will ensure your salvation on the Day of Judgement.

All of you should understand that my friend from amongst you and others is he who is pious and virtuous, and my connection with those, who come before Allah with a heavy burden of sins is cut off. I shan't be able to do anything for you on the Day of Judgement. (On that day) I and you will be responsible for our respective actions".18

Historical Sermon Of The Prophet In The Masjidul Haram

There was a large and magnificent gathering at Masjidul Haram, around the Ka'bah. The Muslims, the idolaters, the friends and the enemies, were sitting side by side with one another and the grandeur of Islam and the greatness of the Prophet presented a grand spectacle in the mosque.

Tranquillity prevailed over Makkah and the time had now come when the Prophet should show the real features of his invitation to the people, and should complete the mission, which he had commenced twenty years ago, but had not been able to finalize it owing to the slackness of the idolaters.

The Prophet himself was an inhabitant of the same environments and knew fully well the ailments of the Arab society and their remedy. He knew the reason for the decline of the people of Makkah. Hence, he decided to look into the social ailments of the Arab society and to remedy them fully.

We reproduce here some of the directions of the Prophet of Islam. Each of them is intended to remedy a particular ailment.

The question of self-glorification on account of one's family, household or tribe was one of the deep-rooted ailments of the Arab society and the greatest pride for a person was that he should belong to a branch of a well-known tribe like Quraysh.

The Prophet condemned this imaginary basis of superiority. He said, "O people! Allah has abolished from amongst you, under the tenets of Islam, the bases of pride of the Age of Ignorance and self-glorification on account of lineage. All are the descendants of Prophet Adam and Adam was created with clay. The best person amongst you is he who refrains from sin and disobedience".

In order to make the people understand that the criterion of superiority is only piety, he, in one of his

sermons, divided all human beings into two groups, and declared only pious persons to be entitled to honour and superiority. By means of this division and classification, he nullified all imaginary standards of rank and position and said: "Before Allah, people consist of only two groups; one of those groups is that of the pious people, who are honourable before Allah, and the second group is that of the transgressors and the sinners, who are abject and humble before Him".

Superiority On Account Of Being An Arab

The Prophet knew that the Arabs considered being of Arabian descent to be a great honour for themselves; they were proud of being of Arabian lineage. This spirit was like a contagious disease in them. To remedy this ailment and to do away with the conception of this superiority he turned to the people and said:

"O people! Being an Arab is not the criterion of your personality or a part of your being, but only a mode of expression. The genealogical pride is not of any use to a person who does not carry out his duties properly, and it does not make amends for deficiency in his performances".

Is it possible to find a more eloquent and a more expressive statement than this? The real proclaimer of freedom did not content himself with the foregoing sentences but to confirm the equality of the men and the communities added:

"All persons have been equal in the past and are also equal at present like the teeth of a comb and an Arab does not enjoy any superiority over a non-Arab, nor is a red-coloured person superior to a black one. The criterion of superiority is piety".

By this statement he removed all sorts of improper distinctions and unlimited restrictions amongst the nations of the world and performed in those earlier times the duty, which the present 'Declaration of Human Rights' or the 'Charter of Human Freedom and Equality' have not been able to perform inspite of all the hue and cry about them.

The Hundred Years' Wars And Old Grudges

Owing to internal wars and continued bloodshed the people of Arabia had become a revengeful nation and they were constantly at war with one another. After assuming complete control over the Peninsula, the Prophet took up this social problem, and it was necessary that he should remedy this ailment to ensure the safety of the Islamic State.

He found the remedy of this ailment in asking the people to ignore the entire bloodshed which had taken place during the Period of Ignorance, and to treat all such dossiers as sealed. In this manner he prevented bloodshed which disturbed peace and order, and made the people forget transgression, plundering and murder, which could result in claims of blood-money or in confrontation. To achieve this end he declared: "I reject all claims relating to life and property and all imaginary honours of the past,

and declare them to be baseless".

Islamic Brotherhood

A part of what the Prophet said on that day related to the unity of the Muslims and the rights which a Muslim has on his brother Muslim. His aim in mentioning these advantages was that by maintaining such ties of friendship and unity, as well by honouring the rights enjoyed by the Muslims over one another, the non-Muslims might be inclined towards Islam and might join the ranks of the Muslims.

Here is the text of his remarks: "A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim and all the Muslims are brothers of one another and constitute one hand as against the non-Muslims. The blood of every one of them is equal to that of others and even the smallest among them can make a promise on behalf of others".19

The Criminals Are Arrested

There is no doubt about the fact that the Prophet was a great model of kindness and forgiveness, and in spite of the strong sentiments of the extremist group he granted general amnesty. However, there were a few persons, who had been guilty of serious offences and crimes, and it was not appropriate that in spite of all their felonies they should move freely amongst the Muslims, because it was quite possible that taking undue advantage of the forgiveness, granted to them, they might have plotted against Islam.

Some of them were killed at the hands of Muslims in the streets or in Masjidul Haram and two such persons took refuge in the house of Umme Hani, the sister of Ali. Ali, fully armed, besieged her house. On coming face to face with an unidentified officer, she introduced herself immediately and said: "In the capacity of a Muslim woman, I have given asylum to two persons and the asylum provided by a Muslim woman is respected like that provided by a Muslim man".

At this moment, in order to make himself known to her, Ali pulled off his helmet from his head. The sister saw the brother whom the vicissitudes of time had separated from her for so many years. Her eyes were immediately filled with tears and she put her arms round Ali's neck. Thereafter both of them went before the Prophet and he too treated the asylum provided by Umme Hani to be respectable.

Abdullah bin Sa'd bin Abi Sarah, who embraced Islam but became apostate later, was one of the ten persons who were to be killed. He too escaped death on the intercession of Uthman.

The Story Of 'Ikrimah And Safwan

'Ikrimah bin Abu Jahl, who had sparked off battles which followed Badr, ran away to Yemen. However, he too was forgiven on the recommendation of his wife. Safwan was the son of Umayyah, who had been killed in the Battle of Badr. Besides his other crimes and felonies he had hanged a Muslim in Makkah in broad daylight, to take revenge for the treatment meted out to his father. Fearing punishment, he

decided to leave the Hijaz by sea, especially because he had come to know that his name was also included among the aforesaid ten persons.

'Umayr bin Wahab requested the Prophet to forgive Safwan. The Prophet accepted his recommendation and, as a token of protection given to Safwan, gave 'Umayr the turban which he was wearing at the time of his arrival in Makkah. 'Umayr went to Jeddah with that turban and brought Safwan to Makkah.

When the Prophet's eyes fell on the greatest criminal of the time, he said to him with great magnanimity: "Your life and property are guaranteed. However, it will be better if you embrace Islam". He requested for two months time to think over the matter. The Prophet said: "I am prepared to give you four months time instead of two months, so that you may choose this religion with thorough understanding". The period of four months had not yet passed when he embraced Islam.20

A glance at the time given by the Prophet to Safwan vindicates a positive reality which is opposed so obstinately by the selfish orientalists. The reality is that the chiefs of polytheism enjoyed perfect freedom in the matter of embracement of Islam.

It was not only that no coercion was exercised in this matter, but effort was made that the Divine religion should be adopted by them after careful reflection and study and not on account of fear and intimidation.

Events After The Conquest Of Makkah

The important and instructive events related to the conquest of Makkah have already been narrated. However, there are two other important events, which are mentioned below:

After the oath of allegiance taken at 'Aqabah,21 the Prophet formally took for the first time an oath from the women to perform these duties: Not to associate anyone with Allah as His partner; not to commit breach of trust; not to indulge in corrupt practices; not to kill their own children; not to associate with their husbands, the children, who actually belong to others; not to oppose the Prophet in any matter.

The ceremonies of the above oath were on these lines.

As ordered by the Prophet a vessel full of water was brought to him, and he mixed some perfume in it. Then he put his hand into it and recited the 12th verse of Surah al-Mumtahinah. Thereafter he rose from his seat and said to the women: "Those who are prepared to take the oath of allegiance to me on the said conditions should put their hands in the vessel and formally declare that they would faithfully abide by these conditions".

The cause of taking this oath was that there were many amongst the women of Makkah, who led a loose life and if a promise from them to lead honourable life had not been taken, it was possible that they might have continued their immoral activities, secretly.

One of them was 'Hind', the wife of Abu Sufyan and the mother of Mu'awiyah, who had a dark past. Being extremely rude she imposed her will on her husband Abu Sufyan; and even on the day on which he was inclined towards peace, she was inciting the people to resort to fighting and bloodshed.

It was due to the instigation of Hind that war broke out in the field of Uhud and the Prophet had to sacrifice seventy lives, including that of Hamzah, to quench it. And this savage woman cut the side of the dead body of Hamzah with unusual cruelty and taking out his liver cut it into two with her teeth.

The Prophet had no alternative but to take the oath of allegiance from this and other such women, publicly. When the Prophet, while reciting the text of the agreement, read the clause, 'not to commit breach of trust', Hind, who had fully covered her head and face, rose from her place and said:

"O Prophet of Allah! You are ordering women not to commit breach of trust. What am I to do? My husband is very miserly and exacting master and for this reason I have been embezzling his property in the past". Abu Sufyan rose from his seat and said: "I make lawful for you whatever you have taken in the past but you must make a promise that you will not steal in future".

The Prophet recognized Hind on account of the remarks of Abu Sufyan, and said to her: "Are you the daughter of 'Utbah?" She replied; "O Prophet of Allah! Yes. Forgive our sins so that Almighty Allah may bless you". When the Prophet uttered the sentence: "Not to commit fornication" Hind rose from her place again and uttered a sentence to exonerate herself, whereby she divulged to him unintentionally what was in her mind. She said: "Does a free woman commit fornication? "

From the psychological point of view such defence was in itself a sort of unveiling of one's conscience. As Hind knew herself to be a woman of that type, and was certain that on hearing the above mentioned sentence (from the Prophet), people would look up towards her, she at once enquired, by way of precaution, whether a woman who was not a slave-girl could be guilty of fornication. However, some persons, who had illicit connection with Hind during the period of ignorance, wondered and laughed at her denial, and their laughter and her own defence became all the more the cause of her disgrace.22

Scrutinizing the contents of this oath makes the duties of a Muslim woman abundantly clear. It is also evident from it that in this case the Prophet did not obtain any promise from women regarding defence, whereas in the oaths obtained at 'Aqabah and under the tree (at Hudaybiyah) the most essential clause which he exacted was the one relating to the defence of Islam and protection of the Prophet.

Idol Temples In Makkah And In Its Suburbs Become Desolate

A large number of idol-temples were situated around Makkah. They were the objects of respect for many tribes. In order to uproot idol-worship from the region of Makkah the Prophet sent battalions of soldiers to different directions to destroy the idol-temples situated there. It was also announced in Makkah itself that whoever happened to have an idol in his house should break it immediately.23

Khalid bin Walid proceeded, at the head of a battalion, to the territory of the tribe named Jazimah bin Amir to invite them to Islam. The Prophet ordered him not to shed blood and not to engage in a battle. He also sent Abdur Rahman bin Awf with him as his assistant.

During the Age of Ignorance the tribe of Bani Jazimah had killed Khalid's uncle and Abdur Rahman's father while they were returning from Yemen and had plundered their property, and Khalid nursed a grudge against them on this account.

When he came face to face with the people of Bani Jazimah, he found all of them armed and ready to defend themselves. The commander of the battalion then said aloud: "Lay down your arms on the ground, because the period of idol-worship is over and Makkah has fallen, and all the people have surrendered before the army of Islam".

The chief of the tribe expressed the opinion to his men that they should hand over their arms and surrender before the army of Islam. One person out of them was intelligent enough to realize that the intentions of the commander of the army were not good. Addressing the chiefs of the tribe, therefore, he said: "The result of surrendering will be captivity and thereafter death".

Eventually the opinion of the chiefs was acted upon and the arms were made over to the soldiers of Islam. In the meantime the commander of the battalion ordered, in a perfectly cowardly manner and in violation of the clear instructions of Islam that the hands of the men of the tribe should be tied on their backs and they should be kept in detention. Later, in the morning, some of them were executed under the orders of Khalid and the others were set free.

The news of the dreadful crime committed by Khalid reached the Prophet and he was extremely annoyed. He immediately appointed Ali to go to the said tribe and to pay them the damages of war and the blood-money after a very careful computation. Ali reckoned their losses so minutely that he paid the price of even a wooden vessel in which the dogs of the tribe drank water and which were broken during their encounter with Khalid.

Then he called all the afflicted chiefs and asked them whether the entire war damages and the blood-money of the innocent victims had been fully paid and all of them replied in the affirmative. Thereafter, keeping in view the fact that they might possibly have sustained some loss of which they might not be aware, Ali gave them some money gratuitously and then returned to Makkah and submitted his report to the Prophet. The Prophet praised Ali for his performance and facing the Qibla raised his hands and said by way of supplication: "O Allah! You are aware that I am disgusted with Khalid's crime and I never ordered him to wage war".24

While making compensation for their losses the Commander of the Faithful also kept in view the spiritual and moral harm sustained by them and gave money to those persons, who had become terror-stricken by Khalid's attacks and consoled them. When the Prophet came to know about the righteous behaviour of the Commander of the Faithful, he said 'O Ali! I am not going to exchange this performance of yours

with a large number of red-haired camels.25

O Ali! you have gained my pleasure. May Allah be pleased with you! O Ali! You are the guide of the Muslims. Lucky is he, who loves you and follows your path, and unfortunate is he, who opposes you and deviates from your path.26 Your position to me is the same as it was of Harun to Musa, except that no Prophet will come after me".27

Another Offence Of Khalid

This was not the only offence which Khalid committed during his pretended Islamic life, for he committed a still graver offence during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr. Briefly, the facts are that after the death of the Prophet some tribes apostatized or, to state more correctly, did not formally recognize the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and declined to pay zakat. The Caliph sent various groups of men in different directions to punish the apostates.

Khalid bin Walid attacked the tribe of Malik bin Nuwayrah, on the pretext that those people had apostatized. Malik and all the members of his tribe were ready to defend themselves and were saying: "We are Muslims and shouldn't, therefore, be attacked by the army of Islam". Khalid, however, disarmed them by practicing deceit and killed the chief of the tribe, Malik bin Nuwayrah, who was a Muslim, and also molested his wife.

Does this dark dossier of Khalid justify that we should call him 'Saifullah' (the Sword of Allah) and should consider him to be one of the senior officers of Islam?

1. Budayl was one of the venerated and aged personalities of the tribe of Khuza'ah who resided in Makkah. He was then 97. (Amali Tusi, page 239)
2. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. II, page 792.
3. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. II, pp. 780-794; Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, pp. 389- 397 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 102.
4. Ibn Hisham. vol. II, page 399 and Majma'ul Bayan, vol. IX, pp. 269 - 270
5. Wasailush Shi 'ah (Book on Fasting);Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 90.
6. Heroes and Hero Worship by Thomas Carlyle.
7. AII his requests have been narrated in Surah Isra, 17:90 - 93.
8. Surah Yusuf, 12:91-92.
9. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 402.
10. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 114.
11. The patronymic of Abu Sufyan.
12. The patronymic of Abbas.
13. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, pp. 400-404; Majma'ul Bayan, vol. X, pp. 554 - 556; Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. II, pp. 816-818 and Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XVII, page 268, quoting from Mughazi-i Waqidi.
14. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 409.
15. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol II. pp. 825 - 826.
16. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. II, page 833.
17. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol.II, page 835 and Bihar, vol. XXI, pp.107 and 133.
18. Biharul Anwar, vol. I, page III.
19. For reproducing these extracts our sources are: Rawzah-i Kafi, p. 246; Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 412; Mughazi-i

Waqidi, vol. II, p. 836; Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, p. 5; Sharh-i Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XVII, p. 281.

20. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 417.

21. In the oath of allegiance taken at 'Aqabah before the Prophet's migration, three women were also included amongst more than seventy persons who took the oath.

22. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. V, page 276.

23. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 140.

24. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 430.

25. Khisal, vol. II, page 125.

26. Majalis-i Ibn Shaykh, page 318.

27. Amali Suduq, page l05.

It was the usual practice with the Prophet that whenever he conquered a region, he personally looked after its political problems and the religious matters of its inhabitants, so long as he stayed there, and as and when he left that place he appointed there suitable persons on different posts. Its reason was that the people of these regions, who were acquainted with the old and wound-up systems, did not possess information about the system which had replaced it.

Islam is a social, moral, political and religious system, its laws emanate from revelation, and acquainting people with these laws and their enforcement amongst them needs distinguished, mature and learned persons, who should teach them correct principles of Islam intelligently and should also enforce Islamic system amongst them.

When the Prophet decided to leave Makkah for the territories of the tribes of Hawazin and Saqif, he appointed Mu'az bin Jabal as a guide to educate and instruct the people and entrusted the government and administration of the city and imamate (leading prayers) in the mosque to 'Atab bin Usayd, who was a capable person. After staying in Makkah for fifteen days the Prophet proceeded to the land of Hawazin tribe.1

An Unmatched Army

On that day the Prophet had twelve thousand armed soldiers under his standard. Out of them ten thousand were those, who had accompanied him from Madina and had taken part in the conquest of Makkah, and the other two thousand were from amongst Quraysh, who had embraced Islam recently.

The command of this group rested with Abu Sufyan.

In those days such an army was hardly found anywhere and this numerical strength of theirs became the cause of their initial defeat. It was because, contrary to the past, they prided themselves on the large number of their soldiers and ignored the military tactics and principles of war.

When Abu Bakr's eyes fell on the large number of men he said: "We shan't at all be defeated, because our soldiers far outnumber those of the enemy".2 He did not, however, pay attention to this reality that

numerical superiority is not the only factor for victory and in fact this factor is of little importance.

The Holy Qur'an itself mentions this fact and says:

Allah has helped you on many occasions including the day of Hunayn. When you were happy with the number of your men who proved to be of no help to you and the whole vast earth seemed to have no place to hide you (***from your enemies***) ***and you turned back in retreat*** (**Surah al-Tawbah, 9:25**)

Acquisition Of Information

After the conquest of Makkah great excitement and enthusiasm could be seen in the areas inhabited by the tribes of Hawazin and Saqif. Special contacts existed between them. The connecting link between them was a war like person named Malik bin 'Awf Nasri.

The result of their mutual contacts was that before the Islamic army could pay attention to them they themselves came up to encounter it, so that, before the Muslims moved, they themselves should strike them hard by military tactics. They also selected from amongst them a thirty year old brave and courageous man to act as their commander.

Besides the aforesaid two tribes, the tribes of Bani Hilal, Nasr and Jasham also participated in this battle and all of them came up as a single striking force.

As ordered by the chief commander, all those who participated in the battle, stationed their women and retinue, behind the rear of the army. When he was asked about the reason for this decision he said: "These men will remain steadfast in their fighting to protect their women and property and will not at all think of flight or retreat".3

When Durayd bin Sammah, an old man and an experienced warrior, heard the wailings of the women and the children, he quarrelled with Malik, and, considering this act of his to be wrong from the point of view of principles of war, said to him:

"The result of this action will be that if you are defeated you will be surrendering all your women and property to the army of Islam gratuitously". Malik did not pay heed to the words of this experienced soldier and said: "You have grown old and have lost your wisdom and knowledge of military tactics".

However, the later events proved that the old man was right and the presence of women and children in a sphere of operation in which one has to strike and run proved to be of no use, except that the soldiers got involved in difficulties and their activities were hindered.

The Prophet sent Abdullah Aslami incognito to collect information about the equipment, intentions and itinerary of the enemy. He roamed about in the entire army of the enemy, collected the necessary

information and placed it at the disposal of the Prophet. Malik, too, sent three spies towards the Muslims in a special manner so that they might bring the requisite information for him. They, however, returned to Malik with their hearts full of awe and fear.

The commander of the enemy army decided to make amends for the numerical inferiority and weak morale of his soldiers by means of a military trick, i.e. by making a surprise attack, create confusion among the army of Islam so that the discipline of their units might be disrupted and the schemes of their high command might be frustrated.

To achieve this end, he encamped at the end of the pass which led to the region of Hunayn. He then ordered all the soldiers to hide themselves behind the stones, the rocks and gaps of the mountains and at elevated places around the pass, and as soon as the army of Islam arrived in this deep and lengthy pass, all of them should come out of their places of hiding and attack the units of Islam with arrows and stones. Thereafter, a special group should descend from the mountains in an orderly manner and put the Muslims to sword under the cover of their archers.

Equipment Of The Muslims

The Prophet was aware of the strength and the obstinacy of the enemy. Before leaving Makkah, therefore, he called Safwan bin Umayyah and borrowed one hundred coats of mail from him and guaranteed its return. He personally put on two coats of mail, put a helmet on his head, mounted a white mule, which had been presented to him, and moved on behind the army of Islam.

The army of Islam rested at night at the mouth of the pass and the day had not yet dawned fully when the tribe of Bani Salim arrived in the passage of Hunayn under the command of Khalid bin Walid.

When a major part of the army of Islam was still in the pass, a sudden noise of the buzzing of the arrows and roaring of the warriors, who were sitting in ambush behind the rocks, was heard and it created a strange fear and terror among the Muslims. Arrows were being showered upon them and a group of the enemy attacked them under the protection of the archers.

This sudden attack terrified the Muslims so much that they began to flee and created, more than the enemy itself, disorder and disruption among their ranks. These developments were a source of great joy for the hypocrites present in the army of Islam, so much so that Abu Sufyan said: "Muslims will run up to the coast of the sea".

Another hypocrite said: "The magic has been counteracted". A third from amongst them determined to do away with Islam in that confused state of affairs by killing the Prophet and thus destroy the belief of the Oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Islam lock, stock, and barrel.

The Steadfastness Of The Prophet And Of A Group Of Self-Sacrificing Persons

The Prophet was disturbed immensely by the flight of his friends which was the main cause of all the alarm and disorder, and felt that if matters were allowed to take their own course, even for a moment longer, the pivot of history would be different, humanity would change its course and the forces of polytheism would beat down the army of monotheism. While riding his mule, therefore, he said loudly: "O supporters of Allah and His Prophet! I am the servant of Allah and His Prophet".

He uttered this sentence and then turned his mule towards the battlefield which was occupied by Malik's men, who had already killed some Muslims and were busy killing others. A group of self-sacrificing persons like Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, Abbas, Fadl bin Abbas, Usamah and Abi Sufyan bin Harith, who had not left him alone and unprotected ever since the battle started, also proceeded along with him.4

The Prophet asked his uncle Abbas, who had a very loud voice, to call back the Muslims in this manner: "O Ansar, who helped the Prophet! O you who took the oath of allegiance to the Prophet under the tree of Paradise! Where are you going? The Prophet is here!"

The words of Abbas reached the ears of the Muslims and stimulated their religious zeal and fervour. All of them responded immediately by saying, *Labbayk! Labbayk* (Here am I! Here am I!) and returned bravely towards the Prophet.

The repeated call by Abbas, which gave the good tidings of the Prophet's safety, made the fleeing men return to the Prophet with a peculiar regret and remorse and made them reorganize their rows. In compliance with the orders of the Prophet and also to obliterate the shameful stain of desertion, the Muslims launched a general attack and compelled the enemies, in a very short time, to retreat or flee.

In order to encourage the Muslims the Prophet was saying: "I am the Prophet of Allah and never tell a lie and Allah has promised me victory". This war tactics made the warriors of Hawazin and Saqif run away to the region of Autas and Nakhlah and to the forts of Ta'if leaving behind their women and retinue and a number of those killed in the battle.

War Booty

In this battle the casualties of the Muslims were large, but the biographers have not mentioned the number of those killed.

The Muslims, however, stood to gain and the enemies fled leaving behind six thousand captives, twenty four thousand camels, forty thousand sheep and four thousand Waqih5 of silver. The Prophet ordered that all the men and the entire property should be taken to Ji'ranah. He also appointed some men to

keep a watch. The captives were kept in a particular house and the Prophet ordered that the entire booty should remain there as it was, till he returned from Ta'if.

1. Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. II, page 137.
2. Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. II, page 150.
3. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. III, page 897.
4. In Mughazi, vol. III, page 602, Waqidi has mentioned some feats of valour of the Commander of the Faithful at that critical juncture.
5. It is equal to 213 grams approximately.

Ta'if is one of the fertile country towns of the Hijaz. It is situated in the south–east of Makkah at a distance of twelve leagues from there. It is one thousand metres above sea level. On account of its fine weather, gardens, and palm groves, the town of Ta'if was the centre of a group of people who led very comfortable lives.

This town was inhabited by the tribe of Saqif who were one of the powerful and popular tribes of the Arabs. The Arabs of Saqif tribe were amongst those people, who fought against Islam in the Battle of Hunayn. After suffering a signal defeat they took refuge in their own town which possessed strong and elevated forts.

In order to complete the victory, the Prophet ordered the fugitives of the Battle of Hunayn to be pursued. Abu 'Amar Ash'ari and Abu Musa Ash'ari were deputed along with a unit of the soldiers of Islam to pursue some of the fugitives who had taken refuge in Awtas. The first commander lost his life in the encounter, but the second one scored complete victory and dispersed the enemies.1

The Prophet himself proceeded to Ta'if along with the remaining army2 and, while on his way, destroyed the fort of Malik, (who had sparked off the Battle of Hunayn). Of course, the demolition of the fort of Malik did not carry an aspect of revenge.

What the Prophet desired was that he should not leave a point which could serve as an asylum to the enemies.

The groups of the army of Islam moved one after the other and made the various sides of the town their camping places. The Fort of Ta'if was situated at a great height and had very strong walls, and its watch towers fully controlled the outside area.

The army of Islam proceeded to besiege the fort, but it had not yet been completely encircled, when the enemies checked their advance with a shower of arrows and killed some of them on the spot in the very first moment.3

The Prophet ordered the army to retreat and to transfer its encampment to a point which was beyond the reach of the arrows of the enemies.4 Salman Muhammadi, from whose military plans the Muslims had

availed at the time of the Battle of the Ditch, suggested to the Prophet that the fort of the enemy might be stoned by means of catapults. During the battles of those days a catapult served the same purpose as artillery serves in modern warfare. The Muslim officers erected a catapult under the guidance of Salman and stoned the towers and the interior of the fort for about twenty days. However, the enemies, too, continued to shoot arrows and thereby inflicted injuries on the soldiers of Islam.

Now let us see as to how the Muslims procured a catapult at that juncture. Some say that Salman made it himself and taught the Muslim soldiers how to operate it. Others believe that the Muslims came in possession of this military weapon at the time of the conquest of Khayber and brought it with them to Ta'if.5 It is not improbable that Salman himself made the catapult and taught the Muslims how to install and use it.

History tells us that this was not the only catapult available with the Muslims, because, simultaneously with the Battles of Hunayn and Ta'if, the Prophet had sent Tufayl bin 'Amr Dowsi to pull down the idol–temples of the tribe of Dows. He returned after successfully carrying out his assignment and came to the Prophet at Ta'if along with four hundred soldiers, all of whom belonged to his own tribe, as well as a catapult and a military vehicle. And during this battle these military equipments, which had been acquired by Tufayl bin 'Amr Dowsi as war booty, came into use.6

Splitting The Wall Of The Fort By Means Of Military Vehicles

In order to make the enemy surrender, it was necessary to attack it from all sides. It was, therefore, decided that, simultaneously with the installation of the catapult and throwing stones, the military vehicles should also be utilized to create a rent in the wall of the fort, so that the army of Islam might enter it.

However, the battalions of the army of Islam were faced with a great difficulty in accomplishing this task, because arrows were showered on their heads from the towers and other spots of the fort and none could manage to approach the wall. The best means of achieving this purpose were the military vehicles which were available with the organized armies of those times in an imperfect shape. A military vehicle was made of wood and was covered with a thick hide. Strong soldiers took their places inside it and pushed it towards the fort and began making holes in the wall under its cover.

By making use of this military device the soldiers of Islam busied themselves bravely in splitting the wall. However, the enemies threw melted iron and wires on the vehicle and burnt its covering; inflicted injuries on them. This military device, therefore, proved to be unsuccessful on account of the planning of the enemy and the Muslims failed to achieve victory. Hence, when a number of Muslims were wounded and killed, they abandoned their attempt."7

Economic And Moral Blows

Achievement of victory does not depend on material military devices only. A skilful commander can diminish the power of the enemy by dealing economic and moral blows at him and can thus make him surrender. More often than not moral and economic blows prove to be more effective than corporal injuries which are occasionally sustained by the soldiers of the enemy.

Ta'if was an area of date-palms and vine and was well-known throughout the Hijaz for its fertility. As its inhabitants had taken great pains in developing the palm-groves and the vineyards, they were keenly interested in their safety.

In order to threaten those, who had shut themselves within the fort, the Prophet announced that, if they continued to resist, their gardens would be plundered. However, the enemies did not pay any heed to this threat, because they did not imagine that the kind and merciful Prophet would resort to such an action.

However, as they observed, all of a sudden that compliance with the orders to pull down the gardens and to cut the date-palms and the vines had already commenced, they began to wail and cry and requested the Prophet to refrain from this action as a mark of respect for the proximity and relationship which existed between them.

The Prophet, notwithstanding the fact that those who had now taken refuge in the fort were the very persons, who were responsible for the battles of Hunayn and Ta'if and these two battles had proved very costly, he showed his mercy and kindness once again in the battlefield, which is usually a theatre of wrath and vengeance. He ordered his companions to desist from cutting down the trees.

Though he had lost many officers and men in these two battles (which had been occasioned by the conspiracy of the people of the Saqif tribe who had conducted a night attack on the army of Islam and had now taken refuge in their burrow like a fox) and would have been justified in destroying their farms and gardens as a measure of revenge, his kindness and mercy subdued his anger and he asked his friends to refrain from taking punitive action.

From the conduct of the Prophet and the manner in which he always treated his enemies, it can be safely said that the orders given by him to cut down the trees were a mere threat and if this weapon had not proved effective, he would certainly have refrained from using it.

The Last Stratagem To Conquer The Fort

The people of Saqif tribe were rich and affluent and possessed a large number of slaves and slave-girls. In order to obtain information about the state of affairs within the interior of the fort and to assess the strength of the enemy as well as to create differences amongst that organized group, the Prophet got

announced that those slaves of the enemy, who came out of the fort and took refuge with the army of Islam, would become free.

This device proved effective to some extent and about twenty slaves escaped from the fort very skillfully and joined the Muslims. On enquiries having been made from them it was known that those within the fort were not prepared to surrender at any cost, and even if the siege continued for one year they would not be faced with any shortage of provisions.

The Army Of Islam Returns To Madina

The Prophet used all the physical and moral military devices in this battle, but the experience gained thereby proved that the conquest of the fort needed further activities and patience, whereas the conditions prevailing at the time, the prolongation of war, and the resources of the army of Islam, did not permit any further stay in Ta'if, because, firstly during the period of this siege thirteen persons had been killed.

Out of them seven were from amongst Quraysh, four were Ansar and one belonged to some other tribe. Furthermore, some persons, whose number and names have not unfortunately been recorded in the books, were also killed as a result of the deceitful attack of the enemy in the valley of Hunayn and consequently there appeared lack of discipline and morale in the Muslim army.

Secondly, the month of Shawwal was terminating and the month of Zi Qa'd (during which warfare was forbidden amongst the Arabs, and Islam later confirmed this tradition as well) was fast approaching.8

In order to safeguard this tradition it was necessary that the siege should be raised as early as possible so that the Arab tribe of Saqif might not be able to charge the Prophet with the violation of the good tradition.

Moreover, the Haj season was near and the supervision of Haj ceremonies was the responsibility of the Muslims, because before this all the ceremonies of Haj were performed under the supervision of the polytheists of Makkah.

A very large number of the people came to Makkah from all parts of Arabia to participate in Haj ceremonies and it was the best occasion to propagate Islam and to acquaint the people with the realities of the Divine faith. It was necessary that the Prophet should take full advantage of this opportunity, which had become available to him for the first time and should think of much more important matters as compared with the conquest of an outlying fort. Keeping all these matters in view, the Prophet raised the siege of Ta'if and proceeded, along with his soldiers, to Ji'ranah.

Events After The War

The war of Hunayn and Ta'if terminated and, without achieving any final result, the Prophet proceeded to Ji'ranah to distribute the booty of the Battle of Ta'if.

The war booty which fell in the hands of the Muslims in the Battle of Hunayn was the largest of the booties which had so far been acquired by the army of Islam in different battles, because, when the Prophet reached Ji'ranah, 6000 prisoners, 24,000 camels, more than 40,000 sheep and 852 grams of silver were with him9 and during those days a part of the expenses of the army of Islam was also met from this source.

The Prophet stayed in Ji'ranah for thirteen days. During this period he was engaged in distributing the war booty in a special manner; setting some prisoners free and returned them to their kinsmen; drawing up a plan for the surrender and embracement of Islam by Malik bin Awf (the man who was solely responsible for the battles of Hunayn and Ta'if); manifesting the spirit of appreciation and gratefulness for the services rendered by different persons; attracting, with his wise policies, the hearts of the enemies of Islam to the true religion; and ending, by means of an attractive speech, a dispute which had arisen between him and a group of the Ansar.

Here are the details of the matters mentioned above:

1. One of the distinguished qualities of the Prophet was that he never ignored the services rendered by the people or the rights belonging to them, however insignificant and small they might be. And if any person rendered some service to him, he compensated him for it to a longer extent than that.

The Prophet had spent his childhood amongst the tribe of Bani Sa'd, which was a branch of the tribe of Hawazin, and Halimah Sa'diyah had fostered him and had brought him up in her tribe for five years.

The tribe of Bani Sa'd who had taken part in the Battle of Hunayn against Islam, a number of their women and children as well as property had fallen into the hands of the Muslims, were now regretful for what they had done. However, they had in mind that Muhammad had been brought up in their tribe and had been nurtured by their women, and being a kind, magnanimous and grateful person, he would certainly set their prisoners free if he was reminded of his childhood.

Hence, fourteen chiefs of the tribe, all of whom had embraced Islam, came to the Prophet. They were headed by two persons one of whom was Zuhayr bin Sa'd and the other was the foster-uncle of the Prophet and spoke thus:

"Among the prisoners are your foster-aunts and foster-sisters as well as those, who served you during your childhood, and kindness and affection demands that, keeping in view the rights, which some of our women have upon you, you should free all our prisoners, including women, men and children. And in case we had made such a request to No'man bin Munzir or Harith bin Abi Shamir, the rulers of Iraq and

Syria, we would have hoped for its acceptance by them, not to speak of yourself who are the embodiment of all kindness and love".

In reply to this, the Prophet asked them: "What do you value more; your women and children or your property?" They replied: "We would not exchange our women and children for anything". The Prophet said:

"I am prepared to forego my own share as well as that of the descendants of Abdul Muttalib, but the shares of the Muhajirs, the Ansar and other Muslims concern them and it is necessary that they themselves should give up their rights. When I have finished the noon prayers you should stand up between the rows of the Muslims and address them thus:

"We make the Prophet our intercessor before the Muslims and make the Muslims our intermediaries before the Prophet so that our women and children may be returned to us". In the meantime I shall stand up and shall return to you my own share as well as that of the descendants of Abdul Muttalib and shall also advise others to do the same".

The representatives of Hawazin addressed the Muslims after the noon prayers as advised by the Prophet and the Prophet gifted away to them his own share as well as that of the descendants of Abdul Muttalib. Imitating him the Muhajirs and the Ansar also agreed to forgo their shares.

However, only a very few persons like Aqra' bin Habis and 'Uyainah bin Hisn Fazari declined to surrender their shares. The Prophet said to them: "If you hand over your prisoners, I shall give you, against every one of them, six prisoners, who fall into my hands in the first battle to be fought hereafter".10

The practical steps taken by the Prophet and his impressive words occasioned the release of all the prisoners of the Hawazin tribe except one old woman whom 'Uyainah refused to release. Thus a good and pious action, the foundation of which was laid by Halimah Sa'diyah sixty years ago in the tribe of Bani Sa'd, proved fruitful after a very long time and as a result of it all the prisoners of Bani Hawazin got freedom.

Then the Prophet called Shaymah, his foster-sister and having spread his own cloak on the ground made her sit on it and enquired about her own welfare as well as that of her family.11 By releasing their prisoners the Prophet made the people of Bani Hawazin incline towards Islam. All of them, therefore, embraced Islam whole-heartedly and consequently Ta'if lost its last ally as well.

Malik Bin 'Awf Embraced Islam

2. In the meantime the Prophet availed of the opportunity to solve, through the representatives of Bani Sa'd, the problem of Malik, the headstrong chief of Nasr tribe, who had provoked the Battle of Hunayn, and to attract him towards Islam. In this connection he enquired about the state of his affairs and was

informed that he (Malik) had taken refuge in Ta'if and was co-operating with Bani Saqif. The Prophet said: "Convey my message to him, that if he embraces Islam and joins us, I shall release his people and shall also give him one hundred camels".

The representatives of Hawazin conveyed the Prophet's message to him. Malik had realized that the strength of Bani Saqif had weakened and was also aware of the ever-increasing power of Islam. He, therefore, decided to leave Ta'if and join the Muslims. He was, however, afraid that if Bani Saqif became aware of his decision they would detain him within the fort.

He, therefore, chalked out a plan. He directed that a camel-litter might be kept ready for him at a place distant from Ta'if. Reaching that place he came to Ji'ranah immediately and embraced Islam. The Prophet meted out the same treatment to him as he had already promised and later appointed him as the chief of the Muslims belonging to the tribes of Nasr, Thamalah and Salimah. On account of his pride and the honour which he gained from the side of Islam, he made life miserable for the people of Saqif tribe and subjected them to economic distress.

Malik felt ashamed of the kindness shown to him by the Prophet and recited verses in praise of his sublimity: "I have not seen or heard of amongst the entire mankind anyone, who may be like Muhammad".12

Distribution Of War Booty

3. The companions of the Prophet insisted that the war booty should be distributed as early as possible. The Prophet, in order to prove his disinterestedness, stood by the side of a camel, took some wool from its hump and, while holding it between his fingers, turned to the people and said: "I don't enjoy any right in your booty, even in this wool, except khums and I shall return to you even the khums to which I am entitled. Hence, everyone of you should return all kinds of booty, even though it may be a needle and a thread, so that it may be distributed amongst you equally".

The Prophet distributed the entire contents of the treasury amongst the Muslims and also distributed its khums, which was his own share, amongst the chiefs of Quraysh, who were converted to Islam only recently. He gave one hundred camels to each including Abu Sufyan, his son Mu'awiyah, Hakim bin Hizam, Harith bin Harith, Harith bin Hisham, Suhayl bin Amr Huwaytab bin Abdul 'Uzza, 'Ala' bin Jariyah and others, all of whom had till a few days earlier been the chiefs of blasphemy and polytheism and the sworn enemies of Islam. To persons belonging to another group, whose position was lower as compared with the aforesaid persons, he gave fifty camels per head.

On account of these big gifts and special shares these persons began entertaining feelings of love and affection for the Prophet and were, however, drawn to Islam. In Islamic jurisprudence such people are called Mu'allafatul Qulub (those whom it is desired to encourage) and one of the purposes for which zakat can be spent is expenditure on them.13

Ibn Sa'd said: "All these gifts were given from khums which was the personal property of the Prophet and not even a Dinar was spent out of the shares of the others for the encouragement of the people belonging to this group."14

These gifts and expenditures allowed by the Prophet were strongly resented by a number of the Muslims and especially by some of the Ansar. They, who were not aware of the higher interests kept in view by the Prophet in making these gifts, thought that ties of kinsmanship had prompted him to distribute the khums of the booty among his relatives.

A man named Zul Khuwaysirah who belonged to the tribe of Bani Tamim showed so much impudence that he said to the Prophet: "Today I have studied your activities very minutely and have seen that you have not been just in distributing the booty". The Prophet was annoyed on hearing his words. Signs of anger appeared on his face and he said: "Woe be to you! If I don't act according to equity and justice who else will do so?"

The Second Caliph requested the Prophet for permission to kill that man but the Prophet said: "Leave him alone. In future he will be the leader of a group who will quit Islam in the same manner in which an arrow quits a bow".15 As predicted by the Prophet, this man became the leader of the Khawarij (apostates) during the Rulership of Ali and undertook the guidance of that dangerous group. However, as it is opposed to the principles of Islam that punishment be awarded before an offence is committed, the Prophet did not take any action against him.

Representing the Ansar, Sa'd 'Ubadah communicated their grievances to the Prophet, whereupon the Prophet said to him:

"Assemble all of them at one place so that I may explain the matter to them". The Prophet arrived in the assembly of the Ansar with great dignity and addressed them thus: "You were a misguided group of people and you received guidance through me. You were poor and you became rich. You were enemies and became friends". All of them said: "O Prophet of Allah! All this is correct".

Then the Prophet said; "You can give me a reply in another way as well and as against my services and can mention the rights which you have over me and may say: "O Prophet of Allah! When Quraysh refuted you, we acknowledged you. They didn't help you and we helped you. They made you shelterless and we provided you asylum. There was a time when you were penniless and we helped you". O group of Ansar! Why have you been grieved because I have given some small property to Quraysh so that they may become steadfast in Islam and have given over Islam to you?

Are you not satisfied that others should take away the camels and the sheep whereas you should take away the Prophet with you. By Allah! If all other people go one way and the Ansar go the other way, I will choose the way adopted by the Ansar. Thereafter he invoked Allah's blessings for the Ansar and for their children. The words of the Prophet aroused their sentiments so much that all of them began to cry and said: "O Prophet of Allah! We are contented with our share and don't have the least complaint in this

behalf".

1. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. III, pp. 915 – 916.
2. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 162.
3. Seerah–i Halabi, vol III, page 132.
4. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 158.
5. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 134.
6. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 157.
7. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. III, page 928.
8. This statement is supported by the fact that the Prophet left Makkah on the 5th of Shawwal and the period of the siege was 20 days and the remaining five days of the month were spent in the Battle of Hunayn as well as in journeying. As regards the period of the siege being 20 days it is in accordance with a narrative quoted by Ibn Hisham. However Ibn Sa'd has mentioned the period of the siege to be 40 days (vide Tabaqat, vol. II, page 158).
9. Tabaqat–i Ibn Sa'd, vol. II, page 152.
10. Mughazi–i Waqidi, vol. III, pp. 949 – 953.
11. Tabaqat, vol. II, pp. 153–154 and Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 49.
12. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 491.
13. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. III, page 493.
14. Tabaqat, vol. III, page 153.
15. Mughazi says that the Prophet said about him (i.e. Zul Khuwaysirah): "He will have friends as compared with whose worship your prayers and fasting will be insignificant. They will recite the Qur'an but their recitation will not go beyond their larynx. They will go out of the religion of Islam just as an arrow flings away from the bow". (Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 496.)

A Young Man Becomes The Governor Of Makkah

In the middle of the month of Zil Qa'dah of the eighth year of migration the Prophet disposed of all the booty of Hunayn at Ji'rinah. Haj days were fast approaching and it was the first year when the polytheist Arabs and the Muslims were to perform Haj ceremonies together under the supervision of the Islamic Government of Makkah.

The participation of the Prophet in these ceremonies would add to the pomp and grandeur of Haj, and it was under his wise guidance that the true and basic propagation of Islam was to take place in that grand gathering.

However, the Prophet had to discharge some duties in the centre (Madina) also, because, after three months of his leaving that place, the matters, which should have been looked after by him personally, had remained entirely unattended. Hence, after studying all the pros and cons of the matter the Prophet considered it expedient to leave Makkah after performing 'Umrah and reach Madina as early as possible.

It was necessary that he should appoint some persons to manage the political and religious matters of the newly conquered region so that no crisis might take place in his absence and the affairs of the area might be administered properly. In view of this he appointed a forbearing and wise young man named

'Atab bin Usayd, who was not yet more than twenty years old, as the Governor of Makkah on a monthly salary of one dirham.

Thus by entrusting the Governorship of Makkah to a young man, who was newly converted to Islam, and by preferring him to many old persons, he removed the barrier of groundless fears and proved it practically that acquisition of public offices depends solely on capability, and young age should not prevent a person from attaining to highest public position and offices. The Governor of Makkah addressed a big gathering and said to them: "The Prophet has fixed my salary and in view of this I don't stand in need of any gift or assistance from you".1

Another good selection made by the Prophet was that he appointed Mu'az bin Jabal to teach the Qur'an and the ordinances of Islam to the people. He was distinguished amongst the companions of the Prophet for his knowledge of the Holy Qur'an, jurisprudence, and the commands of Islam.

When the Prophet deputed him to Yemen in the capacity of a judge, he asked him: "On what will you rely for resolving the differences". To this he replied: "On the Book of Allah, the Qur'an". The Prophet said: "If nothing specific is found in the Book of Allah on the point at issue, on what basis will you give the judgement? "

He replied: "On the basis of the judgements of the Prophet of Allah, for I have observed your judgements in different matters and have committed them to memory. If there crops up a matter, which is similar to the one in which you have given a verdict, I shall make use of it and give judgement accordingly".

The Prophet asked for the third time: "What course will you adopt when a problem crops up about which there is nothing specific either in the Book of Allah or in my judgements?" He replied: "In such cases I shall resort to *Ijtihad* (process of deducing Islamic laws) and give a decision on the basis of the Holy Qur'an and your traditions with equity and justice".

The Prophet then said: "Thanked be Allah that He has enabled His Prophet to choose for the administration of justice a person, whose actions are commensurate with His Will".2

Story Of Ka'b Bin Zuhayr Bin Abi Sulma

Zuhayr bin Abi Sulma was one of the poets of the Age of Ignorance who had written one of the seven Mu'allaqat i.e. the masterpieces of poetry, which remained suspended on the walls of the Ka'bah for a long time before the revelation of the Qur'an, and were a source of pride and glory in the literature of the Arab world.

He died before the commencement of the prophethood of the Prophet, leaving behind two sons named Buhayr and Ka'b. Buhayr was a faithful supporter of the Prophet but Ka'b was considered to be one of his ruthless enemies. As he was endowed with a strong inherited talent (i.e. poetry) he calumniated and abused the Prophet in his verses and instigated the people to rise against Islam.

The Prophet arrived in Madina on the 24th of Zil Qa'dah. Buhayr, the brother of Ka'b had accompanied the Prophet during the conquest of Makkah and the siege of Ta'if as well as at the time of his return to Madina. He observed that the Prophet had threatened with death some poets, who were scurrilous like his brother, and who instigated people to rise against Islam, and had declared their blood to be lawful and eventually one of them had been killed, and two others had fled to some unknown destination.

Buhayr wrote a letter to his brother Ka'b informing him of the situation and in the end of the letter mentioned, as a gesture of goodwill, that if he remained inimical towards the Prophet he would lose his life, but it he came to the Prophet and expressed regret for his activities he would be pardoned because the Prophet used to accept the repentance and regret of the wrongdoers and pardoned them.

Ka'b who had full confidence in his brother came to Madina. When he arrived in the Masjidun Nabi, the Prophet was ready to offer morning prayers. Ka'b offered prayers for the first time along with the Prophet.

Then he went and sat by his side and placing his own hand on his, said: "O Prophet of Allah! Ka'b is very much ashamed and regretful for his doings and has come now to embrace Islam. Will you accept his repentance if he comes before you personally?" The Prophet replied in the affirmative. Thereupon, Ka'b declared: "I myself am Ka'b bin Zuhayr".

In order to make amends for the past calumnies and slanders Ka'b had already composed an eloquent panegyric in praise of the Prophet.3 He recited it in the mosque before the Prophet and his companions. This marvellous panegyric is the masterpiece amongst the panegyrics of Ka'b.

Since the day it was recited before the Prophet, the Muslims have been memorizing and publishing it among others. The Muslim scholars have also written commentaries on it. This panegyric has been written in Lamiyah form4 and consists of fifty–eight verses.

Like the poets of the Age of Ignorance who began their panegyrics by addressing their beloved or by mentioning the ruined monuments, he begins the panegyric by remembering his cousin and beloved Sa'd. When he reaches the stage of repentance for his past bad deeds he says; "I was informed that the Prophet of Allah had threatened me, when what is desired from him is pardon and forgiveness". And then he says; "The Prophet is a "Luminous candle" under whose radiation the people receive guidance direct, and he is a "naked sword" of Allah which is always victorious"

Grief Mingled With Joy

In the end of 8 A.H. the Prophet lost his eldest daughter Zaynab. She had been married to her maternal aunt's son, Abul 'As, before the prophethood of the Prophet and had declared her belief in her father immediately after his prophethood. However, her husband continued to remain a polytheist and participated in the Battle of Badr against Islam and was taken prisoner. The Prophet released him on the

condition that he would send Zaynab to Madina. Abul 'As kept his promise and sent her to Madina but the chiefs of Quraysh deputed someone to bring her back from half way.

The man so appointed managed to reach near the camel-litter of Zaynab on the way and plunged his spear into the litter. Due to excessive fear the unprotected daughter of the Prophet had a miscarriage on the way. She did not, however, give up the idea of going to Madina and reached there in an ailing condition. She spent the remaining part of her life as an invalid and breathed her last in the end of 8 A.H.

This grief turned into joy, because in the end of the same year the Prophet was favoured with a son by Marya (a slave-girl whom the Muqawqis, the Ruler of Egypt had presented to the Prophet) and he named him Ibrahim. When the mid-wife (Salma) gave the good news to the Prophet that Allah had granted him a son he gave her a valuable present. On the seventh day he sacrificed a sheep to perform the aqiqah5 ceremony, of the child, and cut the child's hair and gave silver of an equivalent weight in the path of Allah.

1. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham. vol. II, page 500.
2. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 347.
3. Seerah-i Halabi vol. III, page 242.
4. Every verse ends with the Arabic letter Lam i.e. L.
5. Shaving the hair of the head.

The eighth year of migration, with all its joys and sorrows, came to an end and the greatest base of polytheism fell into the hands of the Muslims. The Prophet of Islam returned to Madina after achieving complete victory and the military power of Islam spread all over Arabia. The rebellious Arab tribes, who had never thought before, that Islam would achieve such a victory, now began to think gradually that they should get nearer to the Muslims and should adopt their religion.

In view of this the representatives of different Arab tribes and at times their groups headed by their chiefs had the honour to present themselves before the Prophet and to express their faith in Islam. During 9 A.H. so many representatives of the tribes came to Madina that it began to be called the year of deputations.

On one occasion a group comprising persons belonging to Tayyi' tribe came to see the Prophet under the leadership of Zaydul Khayl. Zayd began talking in the capacity of the chief of the tribe and the Prophet wondered at his coolness and intelligence. He said about him: "I have met well-known personalities of Arabia and have found them of lesser qualities than what I had heard about them, but I have found Zayd better than what he is renowned to be. It would be better if he is called Zaydul Khayr (Zayd the good) instead of Zaydul Khayl ".1

Demolition Of The Idol-Temple

It was the foremost and basic duty of the Prophet of Islam to propagate the religion of monotheism and to eradicate polytheism totally. In order to reform the misguided persons and the idol worshippers, therefore, he, resorted, in the first instance, to argument and logic and tried, with forcelful arguments to make them understand the absurdity of polytheism. In case, however he found that his logic cut no ice with them and they continued to be head-strong and obstinate, he considered himself entitled to use force against these spiritual invalids, who were not amenable to reason.

If during these times cholera breaks out in some part of the country and some persons decline to be vaccinated on account of lack of foresight, the Health Department of the State considers itself entitled to vaccinate such persons by force in order to ensure their safety as well as that of others from this contagious disease.

The Prophet of Islam had learnt in the light of the Heavenly teachings that idol-worship is like the germs of cholera. It destroys virtue, excellence and good morals, and, pulling down man from his high status, makes him humble even as compared with stones, clay and other inferior beings. He was, therefore, appointed by Allah to eradicate the disease of polytheism, to abolish all sorts of idol-worship, and to use force against those who stood up to oppose him in the discharge of Divine mission.

The military superiority of Islam provided an opportunity to the Prophet of Islam to depute parties to different parts of the Hijaz to destroy all idol-temples and not to spare even one idol in this region.

The Prophet had received information earlier that there was a big idol with the tribe of Tayyi' and some persons still had faith in it. He, therefore, dispatched Ali, his wise and experienced officer along with one hundred and fifty mounted soldiers to go and pull down the idol-temple and to break the idol. The Commander of the Faithful came to know that the said tribe would oppose the action of the army of Islam and the matter would not be settled without warfare.

He, therefore, attacked, early in the morning, the spot where the idol was placed and achieved complete success in the performance of his mission. He also arrested some persons belonging to the opposing group and took them to Madina as a part of war booty. Adyy bin Hatim, who later joined the ranks of the brave Muslim warriors and held chiefship of that area after his generous and noble-minded father Hatim, narrates the story of his flight in these words:

"Before embracing Islam I was a Christian and had enmity against the Prophet of Islam on account of the adverse propaganda which had been carried on against him. I was also not unaware of the great successes of Islam in the Hijaz and was certain that one day its power would also reach the area of Tayyi', of which I was the ruler.

However, as I did not wish to forsake my religion and did not also like to fall a prisoner in the hands of

the Muslims, I had ordered my slaves to keep the camels ready for journeying so that whenever I was faced with danger I should immediately proceed to Syria and get beyond the approach of the Muslims.

In order that I might not be caught unawares I had posted sentries at different points of the highways, so that they might inform me as and when they saw dust raised by the march of the army of Islam, or observed the signs of their standards.

One day one of my slaves came all of a sudden, gave the alarm and informed me about the advance of the army of Islam. On that very day I, accompanied by my wife and children, proceeded to Syria, which was the centre of Christianity in the East. My sister, the daughter of Hatim, remained with the tribe and was arrested.

After her being transferred to Madina my sister was kept under detention in a house near the Masjidun Nabi where all other prisoners were also accommodated. She has related her story thus: One day, while the Prophet was going to offer prayers in the mosque, he chanced to pass by the house where the prisoners had been accommodated. I availed of the opportunity and standing opposite the Prophet said to him: "O Prophet of Allah! My father is dead and my guardian has disappeared. Do me a favour. Allah will do favour to you.'

The Prophet asked me: "Who was your guardian? " I replied: "My brother Adyy bin Hatim". The Prophet said: "Is he the same person who ran away from Allah and His Prophet to Syria?" Then he proceeded to the mosque. On the following day also the same conversation took place between me and the Prophet but it did not produce any result. On the third day I had lost all hope of any such conversation with the Prophet proving fruitful.

However, while the Prophet was passing from the same spot I saw a man coming after him. He made a sign to me to get up and repeat the same words which I had spoken on the previous day. The sign made by that man revived my hopes. I, therefore got up and repeated the aforesaid sentence before the Prophet for the third time. He replied: "Don't be in a hurry to go. I have decided to return you to your place with a reliable person; but for the present the arrangements for your journey are not complete".

My sister says that the man who was walking behind the Prophet and had made a sign to her to repeat her words before the Prophet, was Ali, the son of Abu Talib.

One day a caravan which contained some of our kinsmen also, was going from Madina to Syria. My sister requested the Prophet to permit her to go to Syria with that caravan and join her brother. The Prophet acceded to her request and managed all the facilities for her journey. I was sitting in Syria by a window of my residence.

Suddenly I saw that a camel stopped at my house. On observing carefully I saw my sister sitting in the litter. I brought her down from the litter and took her in. She began complaining of my leaving her in the area of Tayyi' and failing to bring her to Syria.

I considered my sister to be a wise and intelligent woman. One day I had a talk with her about the Prophet and enquired from her: "What is your opinion about him?" She replied: "I have observed excellent virtues and sublime qualities in him and I consider it advisable for you to conclude a pact of friendship with him as early as possible. I say this because, if he be a Prophet of Allah, the superiority will be with him, who expresses his faith in him earlier than others, and if he be an ordinary ruler you will not at all meet any harm from him and will benefit from the power that he possesses.

Adyy Bin Hatim Proceeds To Madina

Adyy says: "My sister's words impressed me so much that I set my heart on leaving for Madina. On reaching there I went straight to see the Prophet and found him in the mosque. I sat down by his side and introduced myself to him. When the Prophet came to know about me he got up from his place and holding my hand, took me to his house.

While we were on the way an old woman came up before him and spoke some words to him. I saw him listening to the old woman attentively and giving replies to her. His high morals impressed me and I said to myself: "He is decidedly not an ordinary ruler".

When we arrived in his house his simple life attracted my attention. He placed at my disposal a mattress made of palm fibres which was available in the house and requested me to sit on it. The topmost person of the territory of the Hijaz, who wielded authority over all powers, sat down on the ground. I was extremely amazed to observe his modesty and realized from his excellent manners, high morals and the respect which he extended to every person, that he was not an ordinary man or a common place kind of ruler.

In the meantime the Prophet turned his face to me and mentioned minute details of the particulars of my life and said; "Were you not a follower of the Rakusi religion?2 I said: "Yes". Then he asked me: "Why did you appropriate one-fourth of the income of your nation yourself? Did your religion allow you to do this?" I said: "No". I was convinced, on account of his occult knowledge, that he had been sent by Allah.

While I was thinking on these lines he spoke to me for the third time and said: "The poverty and indigence of the Muslims should not restrain you from embracing Islam, because a day is coming when the wealth of the world will flow towards them, and there will be none to collect and retain it.

And if the numerical strength of the enemies and the comparative smallness of the numbers of the Muslims prevents you from adopting this faith I swear by Allah that a day is coming when, on account of the prevalence of Islam and a large number of the unprotected Muslim women will come from Qadisia for the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah and none will molest them. And if you observe today that power and authority is in the hands of others, I give you my word that a day will come when the forces of Islam will occupy all these palaces of yours and will conquer Babylon".

Adyy further says: "I remained alive and saw that under the security provided by Islam, unprotected women came from far off places for the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah and nobody interfered with them. I also saw that the territory of Babylon was conquered and the Muslims occupied the throne and crown of Kisra. I hope that I shall see the third thing as well i.e. the riches of the world will flow towards Madina and none will be inclined to collect and retain them".3

1. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 577.
2. A religion in between Christianity and Sabi'i.
3. Mughazii Waqidi, vol. III, pp. 988 – 989; Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, pp. 578 – 581 and Darajatur Rafi'ah fi Tabaqatish Sh'iah Imamiyah. pp. 352 – 354.

The lofty and strong fort, which had been built by the side of a spring on the road leading from Hijr to Damascus in the border area of the territory of Syria, was called Tabuk. In those times Syria was one of the colonies of the Eastern Roman Empire. Its capital was Constantinople. Its frontier people were the followers of Christianity and the chiefs of the districts were satellites of the Ruler of Syria who himself took orders directly from the Roman Emperor.

The rapid penetration and expansion of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and the brilliant conquests by the Muslims in the Hijaz were being noticed in areas beyond the Hijaz, and were making their enemies tremble and think of ways and means to check this tide.

The fall of the Government of Makkah, the adoption of Islam by the prominent chiefs of the Hijaz, and the bravery and sacrifices of the Muslim warriors, made the Roman Emperor decide to launch a surprise attack on the Muslims with the help of a well–equipped army, because he felt his empire to be in grave danger on account of the extraordinary influence and expansion of Islam. He was very much afraid of the increase in the military and political power of the Muslims.

In those days Rome was the only powerful adversary of Iran and possessed the greatest political and military strength. It was very proud on account of the victories which it had achieved against Iran and the defeat which it had inflicted on the Iranian army.

The Roman army, which consisted of 4000 mounted soldiers and infantry–men and was equipped with the armour of the latest model available in those times, encamped in the frontier strip of Syria. The tribes residing in the border areas (like the tribes of Lakham, 'Amilah, Ghassan and Jazam) also joined them and the vanguard of the army advanced up to Balqa'.1

News about the encampment of a group of the Roman soldiers in the frontier strip of Syria reached the Prophet through the caravans, which were travelling between the Hijaz and Syria in connection with trade. He found no alternative except to give a reply to the aggressors with a big army and to protect, from the surprise attacks of the enemy, the religion, which had spread at the cost of the lives of the dear ones of Islam, and of his personal sacrifices, and had since taken root, and was about to spread

throughout the world.

This unpleasant news reached him at a time when the people of Madina had not yet properly collected their produce, and the dates were about to ripen, and Madina and its suburbs were, so to say, in the grip of a sort of famine. However, for the godly persons the spiritual life and the protection of high ideals, and jihad in the path of Allah are preferable to everything else.

Inviting Warriors And Procuring Expenses Of War

The Prophet was aware to some extent of the capability and experience of the enemy and was sure that besides necessitating spiritual capital (viz. faith in Allah and fighting for the sake of Allah), victory in this battle also depended on a big army. Keeping this fact in view he sent men to Makkah as well as to the areas adjoining Madina to invite Muslims to fight in the path of Allah and also to ask well-to-do Muslims to provide for the expenses of war by making payment of zakat.

Soon after the proclamation made by the Prophet, 30,000 persons declared their readiness to participate in the battle and gathered in the camping ground of Madina (Thaniyya tul Wida'). The expenses of war were provided by collecting zakat. Out of these 30,000 men, 10,000 were mounted soldiers and the remaining 20,000 were infantry-men. Later the Prophet ordered that every tribe should choose a standard for itself.2

Persons Opposed To Participation In The Battle

The Battle of Tabuk was the best occasion on which the self-sacrificing persons and the pretenders and hypocrites could be recognized, because general mobilization was ordered when the weather was very hot and the business community of Madina was ready to harvest the palm-dates. Refusal of some of them, on various pretexts, to take part in the battle cast off the veil from their real faces and Qur'anic verses were revealed condemning their action. All these verses are contained in Surah al-Tawbah.

Some persons declined to take part in this sacred jihad for the following reasons:

1. When the Prophet proposed Jadd bin Qays, who was an influential man, for joining the army against the Romans, he replied thus: "I have a fanatical attachment with women. I am, therefore, afraid that I may chance to see Roman women and may not be able to control myself". On having heard this childish excuse of his the Prophet decided to leave him alone and to contact others. Jadd was condemned by Allah in this verse:

Some of them ask you, "Make us exempt from taking part in the battle and do not try to tempt us by telling what we may gain from the battle; many people have died in the battle". Hell certainly encompasses the unbelievers. **(Surah al-Tawbah, 9:49).**

2. The hypocrites: those persons, who had ostensibly embraced Islam but had, in fact, no interest in it,

were preventing the people on different pretexts from taking part in this jihad. At times they put forth the excuse that the weather was very hot. The Divine revelation replied to their objection in these words:

Say: The fire of Hell is much severer in heat, if they but understood. (**Surah al-Tawbah, 9:81**).

There were some persons who frightened the Muslims of participation in this battle and said: "The Arabs are not competent to fight with the Romans and consequently all the participants in the battle will be tied with ropes and sold in the free markets ".3

Discovery of the centre of espionage in Madina: The great leader of Islam attached great importance to intelligence reports and half of his victories were the result of prior information about the conditions of the enemies and the mischief-mongers. By this means he nipped many of their satanic deeds and anti-Islamic schemes in the bud.

A report was received by the Prophet that the house of a Jew named Suwaylam had become the centre of anti-Islamic activities and the hypocrites gathered there and chalked out schemes to prevent the Muslims from participating in this sacred jihad. The Prophet therefore, decided to frighten the conspirators in such a way that they might not entertain any such satanic thoughts in future.

He ordered Talhah bin Ubaydullah to go with some brave companions and set the house of Suwaylam on fire while their meeting was in progress. As directed by the Prophet, Talhah set the house on fire when the conspirators were busy discussing anti-Islamic plans. All of them ran away from the flames of fire and one of them injured his foot. This action was so effective that it served as a great lesson to the hypocrites for the future.4

A group of persons who shed tears: some of the companions of the Prophet, who were very keen to take part in this sacred jihad came and requested him to provide them facilities for the journey so that they could discharge that sacred religious duty. When the Prophet told them that he did not possess any animal for riding which he might place at their disposal, they wept bitterly and tears trickled down their faces.

If there were some persons amongst the companions of the Prophet who conspired or indulged in hindrances or coined excuses, there were also others amongst them, who were anxious to participate in jihad, which at times costs one one's life, and non-participation in it made them weep bitterly. In the terminology of history these persons are called criers and the Qur'an makes a mention of their faith in these words:

Those who come to you (***Muhammad***) ***asking to be taken to the battle, but you cannot find the necessary means for them, are exempt from the duty of fighting for the cause of Allah, even though they leave you with their eyes flooded with tears because of not being able to help the cause of Allah.*** (**Surah al-Tawbah, 9:92**).5

3. Another group consisted of persons like Ka'b, Hilal and Mararah who had full faith in Islam and were also desirous of participating in jihad, but as they had not yet collected their produce they decided that after collecting the produce they would join the warriors of Islam. In the terminology of the Holy Qur'an (vide Surah al-Tawbah, 9:118) they are the same three violators who were severely reprimanded by the Prophet on return from Tabuk and the rebuke administered to them also served as an example for others.

Ali Did Not Participate In This Battle

One of the distinctions of the Commander of the Faithful is that he accompanied the Prophet and was his standard-bearer in all Islamic battles except in the Battle of Tabuk, he stayed in Madina and did not participate in jihad under the orders of the Prophet himself. The Prophet took this decision, because he knew very well that the hypocrites and some persons from amongst Quraysh were seeking an opportunity to bring about disorder and topple the newly established Islamic Government in his absence.

Tabuk was the farthest point to which the Prophet travelled in connection with the battles in which he participated. He realized perfectly that it was possible that during his absence anti-Islamic groups might create disturbance and might call their sympathizers from different places to join them for the success of their nefarious schemes. Hence, although he had nominated Muhammad bin Maslamah to act as his representative in Madina during his absence, he also said to Ali:

"You are the guardian of the Ahl al-Bayt and my kinsfolk and the group of the Muhajirs, and none except myself and you is suited for this task".

The stay of the Commander of the Faithful in Madina upset the conspirators very much, because they realized that they could not put their schemes into practice in the presence of Ali who was continuously vigilant.

Hence, in order to ensure the exit of Ali from Madina, they decided upon another plan and circulated the rumour that the Prophet had asked Ali very earnestly to take part in jihad but the latter had declined to participate in this sacred battle on account of the very long journey and excessively hot weather. In order to contradict these people Ali saw the Prophet and placed the matter before him. At this moment the Prophet uttered his historical sentence which is a clear proof of Ali's Imamate and his immediate succession as Caliph after the demise of the Prophet. He said:

"O my brother! Return to Madina, because none is more suited to preserve the dignity and position of Madina than myself and you. You are my representative amongst the Ahl al-Bayt and my kinsfolk. Don't you feel happy when I say that your relationship with me is similar to the one which existed between Harun and Musa except that no prophet will come after me. Just as Harun was the immediate successor of Prophet Musa you are my successor and Caliph after me".6

The Army Of Islam Proceeds Towards Tabuk

The usual practice of the Prophet was that, while performing a journey to chastise a people, who obstructed the advancement of Islam, or intended to attack the Muslims, or had evil designs against them, he did not make his aims and objects known to the officers and the soldiers, and made the army march through comparatively unfrequented routes. Thus he did not let the enemies become aware of his intentions and came upon them absolutely unawares.7

However, in order to rout the Roman forces, who had collected on the frontiers of Syria to attack the Muslim territories, he made his aim clearly known to all concerned on the very day the general mobilization was proclaimed. The point in doing so was that the mujahids (warriors) should become aware of the importance of the journey and the hardships involved on the way, and should carry sufficient provisions with them.

Furthermore, in order to strengthen the army of Islam, the Prophet was obliged to seek help from the tribes of Tamim, Ghatfan and Tayyi' and they were residing at far-off places from Madina. In view of this the Prophet wrote letters to the chiefs of these tribes and also wrote a letter to 'Atab bin Usayd, the young Governor of Makkah, and invited the tribes as well as the Makkans to partake in this sacred jihad8 as extension of such a general invitation was not possible secretly.

Hence it was necessary that he should make the particulars of the expedition and its importance clearly known to the chiefs of the tribes so that they might place sufficient provisions and animals for riding at the disposal of their mujahids.

March Past Of The Army Before The Prophet

The day for the departure of the army of Islam arrived. On that day the Prophet reviewed his troops in the army headquarters of Madina. The magnificent scene of the march past of the faithful and self-sacrificing men who had preferred, for the sake of their objective, hardships and death to comfort and worldly gains with enthusiasm and faith, impressed the audience.

At the time of departure the Prophet addressed the soldiers to strengthen their morale, and explained to them his aim in ordering general mobilization. Then the soldiers proceeded towards the prescribed route.

The Story Of Malik Bin Qays

After the army of Islam had marched off Malik bin Qays returned to Madina from his journey. It was very hot on that day. He found that loneliness prevailed over Madina and came to know about the departure of the soldiers of Islam. In the meantime he arrived in his garden and saw that his beautiful wife had erected a shade for him. He cast a glance at the attractive face of his wife and also stared a little at the food and water which she had prepared for him.

Thereafter he thought of the painful difficulties of the Prophet and his companions who were proceeding to perform jihad in the path of Allah and to face death in such a hot weather. Then he decided not to avail of the water and food prepared by his wife or the shade erected by her but to ride his animal immediately, and join the army of Islam as early as possible.

He, therefore, turned to his wife and said: "It is not at all fair that I should take rest under this shade along with my spouse and eat delicious food, and drink cold and wholesome water, whereas my master should be proceeding for jihad in such scorching heat. No. This doesn't accord with justice and the rules of friendship, and faith and sincerity don't permit me to do so".

He said these words, picked up some small provisions for the journey and went his way. On the way he met 'Umar bin Wahab, who, it would appear, lagged behind the Islamic army, and both of them reached the Prophet when he was at Tabuk.9

This man did not acquire the blessing of accompanying the Prophet in the beginning, still he eventually offered his services in this noble cause by means of his commendable self-sacrifice. On the other hand there are some persons at whose door good luck knocks itself but they remain away from it on account of their lack of suitability and competence and consequently throw themselves into adversity and perdition.

For example, Abdullah bin Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites, had pitched a tent in the camping place of the Prophet so that he might participate in this jihad in the company of the Prophet. Since he was an ill-intentioned person and a ruthless enemy of Islam, he changed his mind when the army was about to march off and returned to Madina along with his supporters so that he might create disturbance there, in the absence of the Prophet. The Prophet did not also pay the least heed to him, because he was aware of his hypocrisy and did not consider his participation in the jihad to be of any use at all.

Difficulties On The Way

The army of Islam was faced with great difficulties on its way from Madina to Syria and it is for this reason that it had been given the name of *Jayshul 'Usrah* (the army of hardship). However, their faith and fervour overcame all these difficulties and they welcomed all the hardships that came in their way.

When the army of Islam reached the land of 'Thamood' the Prophet covered his face with a cloth on account of the hot and scorching winds blowing there, and passed by that place in great haste and said to his companions "Reflect over the end of the lives of the people of Thamood who became subjected to the wrath of Allah because of their obstinacy and disobedience, and remember that no true believer should think that the end of his life will not be like that of those people. The death-like quietness of this place and the ruined houses which have gone into deep silence are a lesson for other nations".

Thereafter, the Prophet ordered the soldiers not to drink water of that place or prepare food or bread with

it and that they should not even perform ablution with it, and if they had, in some cases, prepared food or kneaded flour with that water they should give it to the animals to eat.

Then the army of Islam continued its march under the guidance of the Prophet and when a part of the night had passed they reached a well from which the camel of Swaleh had drunk water. On reaching that spot the Prophet gave orders that all should encamp there and take rest.

Precautionary Orders

The Prophet was fully aware of the poisonous and fast winds and the violent storms of that area, which at times overtook the men and the camels and buried them under the mounds of sand and dust. He, therefore, ordered that the knees of the camels should be tied and none should go out of the camping place alone at night.

Experience proved that the precautionary orders given by the Prophet were very useful, because two men belonging to the tribe of Bani Sa'idah violated them and came out of the camping-place alone at midnight with the result that the intense storm suffocated one of them and flung the other on a hill. The Prophet came to know about it and was very much unhappy for those who lost their lives on account of their indiscipline. He, therefore, asked the soldiers once again to maintain discipline.[10]

'Abbad bin Bishr, who headed a group which was responsible for the safety and security of the army of Islam, reported to the Prophet that the Muslim soldiers had become involved in difficulties owing to shortage of water, and the entire storage of water was likely to be finished soon. Hence, some of them slaughtered very precious camels to utilize the water available in their bellies, and others had submitted to the Divine will and were awaiting anxiously the blessing of Allah.

The Almighty Allah, who had promised victory to His Prophet, once again helped him and his faithful companions. Torrential rains came and all drank water to their fill. Furthermore, those appointed to stock provisions, as well as the entire army, stored as much water as they desired.

Occult Information Of The Prophet

There is no gain saying the fact that, as clearly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an,[11] the Prophet could give information about occult matters of which other people knew nothing. However the knowledge of the Prophet was limited and depended on what he was taught by Allah. It is, therefore, possible that he might not have been aware of certain matters.

For example, he might lose some money or misplace the key of the house and might not have been able to locate it. At times, however, he gave occult information about most obscure and intricate matters and left the people wonder-struck. The reason for this ascension and descent is the same as mentioned above viz. whenever Allah willed the Prophet gave information about matters related to the occult world.

On the way the camel of the Prophet was lost and some of his companions went to search it. In the meantime one of the hypocrites got up and said: "He says he is the Prophet of Allah and gives information about the heavens, but it is strange that he doesn't know the whereabouts of his camel".

The Prophet came to know about this and made the position clear by means of an eloquent remark. He said: "I know only that what Allah tells me. Just now Allah has informed me about the whereabouts of my camel. It is available in this desert in such and such valley. Its bridle has got entangled in a tree and has prevented it from moving further. Go and bring it".

Some persons went immediately to that place and found the camel exactly in the same position as was described by him.[12]

Another Occult Information

The camel of Abu-Dharr became incapable of walking and Abu-Dharr was left behind the army of Islam. He waited for some time but without any result. Eventually he left the camel, loaded the provisions on his own back and walked on so that he might join the army of Islam as early as possible.

The Muslim soldiers had encamped on a spot as ordered by the Prophet and were taking rest. Suddenly they saw, at a distance, the figure of a man who was traversing the path with a heavy load on his back. One of the companions informed the Prophet of the position. He said: "It is Abu-Dharr. May Allah forgive Abu-Dharr! He walks alone, will die alone and will be brought to life alone".[13]

The later events proved that what the Prophet had predicted was absolutely correct, because Abu-Dharr died in a very pitiable condition, away from habitation in the desert of Rabzah, when only his daughter was by his side.[14]

Army Of Islam Arrives In The Area Of Tabuk

The army of Islam arrived in the area of Tabuk in the beginning of the month of Sha'ban 9 A.H. However, no trace of the Roman army could be seen there. It appears that the commanders of the Roman army became aware of the numerical strength of the Muslim soldiery and their bravery and unparalleled self-sacrifices, a small specimen of which had already been seen by them from very close quarters in the Battle of Mu'tah. Hence, they considered it expedient to recall their army within the frontiers of their own territories. By doing so they practically wished to deny that they had mobilized forces against the Muslims, and wanted to give the impression that they had never thought of launching an attack, and that any such report was a mere gossip, and thus wished to prove their impartiality regarding the events which took place in Arabia.

At this juncture the Prophet assembled his esteemed officers, and acting on the established Islamic principle of consultation, asked for their views as to whether they should advance into the territory of the

enemy or should return to Madina.

As a result of military consultations it was decided that the army of Islam which had suffered innumerable hardships while performing the journey to Tabuk should return to Madina to revive its strength.

Furthermore, by performing this journey the Muslims had already achieved their major aim, which was to scatter the Roman army. The Romans were so much frightened and intimidated that for quite a long period they did not think of launching an attack and during that period, therefore, the security of Arabia from the northern side was ensured.

In order to safeguard the position of the Prophet and to make it clear that their own suggestions could be rejected or withdrawn, the members of the war consultative council added this sentence also: "If you have been ordered by the Almighty Allah to advance you should give orders, and we too shall follow you".15

The Prophet said: "No order from Allah has been received and if any such order had been received from Him I would not at all have consulted you. According respect to the views of the consultative council, therefore, I have decided to return to Madina from this very point".

The rulers who inhabited the frontier areas of Syria and the Hijaz and wielded influence amongst their people were all Christians and it was possible that one day the Roman army might utilize these local powers and attack the Hijaz with their assistance. It was, therefore, necessary for the Prophet to conclude non-aggression treaties with them so that he might acquire better security.

He personally contacted those frontier rulers, who belonged to areas adjoining Tabuk, and concluded non-aggression treaties with them, subject to certain conditions. As regards areas lying at a greater distance from Tabuk he sent deputations to the rulers concerned so that better security could be ensured for the Muslims.

He also contacted the Rulers of Aylah, Azri'at and Jarba' and non-aggression pacts were concluded between the parties. Aylah is a coastal city situated on the coast of the Red Sea and is at some distance from Syria. Its ruler named Yuhanna (John) son of Rowbah came from his capital to Tabuk, wearing a golden cross round his neck. He presented a white mule to the Prophet and expressed his obedience to him. The Prophet appreciated his gesture and also gave him a present in return.

The said ruler decided to remain a Christian and agreed to pay three thousand Dinars per year as *jizyah* (tribute) and also to receive every Muslim who passed through the region of Aylah. A pact on the following lines was signed by the parties: "This is a non-aggression pact from the side of Allah and His Prophet, Muhammad for Yuhanna and the residents of Aylah. According to this pact all their means of transport whether by sea or by land and all the persons belonging to Syria, Yemen and the islands, who may be with them, shall be under the protection of Allah and His Prophet. However, if anyone of them

violates the rule his wealth shall not save him from punishment. All sea routes and land routes are open for them and they are entitled to frequent them".[16]

This pact shows that if a nation co-operated with the Muslims in a peaceful manner it was provided all the facilities, and its security was also guaranteed by them.

The Prophet also concluded pacts with the frontiers-men like the people of Azri'at and Jarba' whose lands had great strategic importance, and thus ensured the safety of the Islamic territories from the northern side.

Khalid Bin Walid Is Dispatched To Dowmatul Jandal

The populous region with green trees, running waters and a strong fort situated at a distance of about fifty leagues from Syria was called Dowmatul Jandal.[17] In those days the Christian Okaydar bin Abdul Malik Kindi ruled there. The Prophet feared that in the event of a renewed attack by the Roman army the Christian Ruler of Dowmah would assist them and thus endanger the security of Arabia.

For this reason he considered it necessary to derive the maximum benefit from the force available with him, and to depute a unit under the command of Khalid to subjugate the said region. Khalid reached near Dowmatul Jandal along with mounted soldiers and lay in ambush outside the fort.

During that moonlit night Okaydar came out of the fort along with his brother Hassan for hunting. They had not gone far away from the fort they came face to face with the soldiers of Khalid. During the brief encounter, which took place between the two groups. Okaydar's brother was killed, and his men fled and took refuge in the fort and shut its gate, and Okaydar was taken prisoner.

Khalid promised him that if the inmates of the fort opened its gate under his orders and surrendered their arms to the army of Islam he would forgive him and would take him before the Prophet .

Okaydar was aware that the Muslims were truthful and kept their promises. He, therefore, gave orders that the gate of the fort might be opened and the arms surrendered to the Muslims. The arms available in the fort consisted of 400 coats of mail, 500 swords and 400 spears. Khalid left for Madina along, with this booty and Okaydar also accompanied him.

Before arriving in Madina, Khalid sent to the Prophet Okaydar's brocade mantle, which the latter used to put on his shoulders like kings. The eyes of the worldly-minded persons were dazzled to look at the mantle, but the Prophet displayed perfect indifference towards it and said: "The dress of the people who will go to Paradise will be more wonderful".

Okaydar reached the Prophet. He declined to embrace Islam, but agreed to pay tribute to the Muslims and an agreement was concluded between him and the Prophet. Thereafter the Prophet gave him costly presents and appointed 'Abbad bin Bishr to convey him safely to Dowmatul Jandal.[18]

Evaluation Of The Journey To Tabuk

As a consequence of this tedious journey the Prophet did not come face to face with the enemy and no fighting took place, but a number of benefits were achieved.[19]

Firstly, this expedition enhanced the prestige of the army of Islam and the Prophet was enabled to impress his greatness and strength on the hearts of the people of the Hijaz and the frontiers-men of Syria. Consequently the friends as well as the enemies of Islam came to know that its military power had grown so much that it could face the biggest powers of the world and could frighten and intimidate them.

Crime and rebellion had become second nature with the Arab tribes. However, their becoming aware of the strength of the army of Islam could restrain them for quite some time from opposing the Muslims and revolting against them.

Hence, after the return of the Prophet to Madina the representatives of the tribes, which had not surrendered till then, began coming to Madina and making declarations regarding their submission to the Islamic Government and embracement of Islam, so much so that the ninth year of migration began to be called the year of deputations.

Secondly, on having concluded various agreements with the frontiers-men of the Hijaz and Syria the Muslims ensured the safety of this region, and were satisfied that the chiefs of these tribes would not co-operate with the Roman army.

Thirdly, by performing this painful journey the Prophet made conquest of Syria easier. He made the commanders of the army acquainted with the difficulties of this region and taught them the method of warfare against the big powers of that time.

Hence, the first region which the Muslims conquered after the demise of the Prophet was the territory of Damascus and Syria. Furthermore, by general mobilization the true believers were distinguished from the hypocrites and profound understanding was created among the Muslims.

The Hypocrites Plot Against The Holy Prophet

The Prophet stayed in Tabuk for ten days[20] and returned to Madina after dispatching Khalid to Dowmah. Twelve hypocrites, out of whom eight were from amongst Quraysh and the remaining four were the inhabitants of Madina, decided to scare the camel of the Prophet from the top of a defile situated on the route between Madina and Syria and to make him fall into the valley.

When the army of Islam reached the first point of the defile, the Prophet said: "Whoever desires to go through the desert may do so because the desert is quite extensive". However, he himself went above the defile while Huzayfah was driving his camel and 'Ammar was holding its bridle.

When he turned back his head he saw in the moonlit night that some mounted persons were pursuing him. To ensure that they might not be identified they had covered their faces and were conversing in very low voices. The Prophet became angry and challenged them and ordered Huzayfah to turn away their camels with his stick.

The call of the Prophet frightened them very much and they realized that he had become aware of their plot. They therefore, immediately went back the way they had come and joined other soldiers.

Huzayfah says: "I identified them from the marks of their camels and said to the Prophet: "I can tell you who they are so that you may punish them". But the Prophet instructed me in a kind voice not to divulge their secret, because it was possible that they might repent. He also added: "If I punish them the non-Muslims would say that now that Muhammad has achieved power, he has made a victim of his own companions".21

Cold War

No scene is more grand than the scene of the return of a victorious army to its homeland, and nothing is more pleasant to a soldier than victory over the enemy which protects his honour and ensures his safety and existence. It so happened that both of these things were apparent and visible at the time of the return of the victorious army of Islam from Tabuk.

After covering the journey between Tabuk and Madina the army of Islam arrived in Madina with great splendour. The soldiers of Islam were very much elated and the pride of distinction as a warrior and of predominance was apparent from their gait and conversation. The reason for this pride was also evident, because they had made a big power retreat; the power, which had defeated earlier its powerful adversary (Iran). The Muslims had frightened and over-awed the Romans and had also subjugated the frontiers-men of Syria and the Hijaz.

These persons had admittedly secured an honour by overpowering the enemy and were evidently justified in priding themselves over others, who had stayed on in Madina without a just cause.

However, it was possible that this way of thinking and this victorious return might create undue pride in the narrow-minded persons, and might result in insult to some of those persons, who had stayed on in Madina for some good excuse, but their hearts were with the soldiers in the battlefield and they sincerely shared their weal and woe.

Hence, the Prophet addressed the army of Islam, at a place near Madina where it had stayed for a short time, in these words: "There are some persons in Madina, who joined hands with you in this journey and kept step with you".

The Prophet was asked as to how it could be imagined that those, who stayed in Madina also participated in the journey with the army. He replied: "They, in spite of being very keen to take part in this

sacred obligation (jihad), could not join on account of some good excuse".22

By means of this brief speech the Prophet alluded to one of the instructional programmes of Islam and directed the people that good intentions and upright thinking take the place of pious deeds, and those people, who are deprived of doing good deeds on account of lack of strength or resources, can become partners of others in the matter of spiritual reward and recompense for good deeds.

If Islam desires outward reformation it is all the more keen on spiritual reformation and purity of thinking, because the real source of reformation is reformation of belief and the way of thinking, and all our actions originate from our thoughts.

Thus the Prophet removed the unjustified pride of the mujahids and guaranteed the position of the excusable persons, but he determined from that very moment that he would award exemplary punishment to those violators, who had no just excuse to offer, and would make their lives miserable. The following event is an example of such an action.

On the day general mobilization was proclaimed in Madina three Muslims named Hilal, Ka'b and Murarah came to the Prophet and requested that they might he excused from participating in the jihad. The reason mentioned by them was that their produce from the jungle and from their gardens had not yet been collected and was still half-ripe. They also promised the Prophet that when their produce was collected within a few days they would join the army of Islam at Tabuk.

Those persons, who do not differentiate between material gain and political independence, are the short-sighted people who consider the transient worldly pleasures to be at par with respectable life, which is passed under the banner of intellectual, political and cultural independence and at times even prefer the former to the latter.

The Prophet was obliged, after his return, to punish such persons and incidentally to prevent this disease penetrating into the minds of others as well. Not only that these persons had not participated in the jihad but they had also not kept the promise made by them with the Prophet. They were still busy in their trade and in accumulating wealth when suddenly the news of the victorious return of the Prophet spread in Madina.

These three persons, in order to make amends for their misconduct and to deceive other Muslims, went to welcome the Prophet like all others and paid their respects to him and congratulated him; but he did not pay any heed to them.

On reaching Madina he addressed the people amidst all the rejoicing and tumult, and the first thing which he said was this: " O people! These three persons belittled the Islamic orders and didn't keep the promise they had made with me. They preferred worldly gains to the respectable life under the banner of Islam. Hence you should cut off all relations with them"

The number of the violators reached ninety, but as most of them belonged to the group of hypocrites and it could not be expected from them that they would join in jihad against the enemy, the pressure was directed towards these three Muslims of whom, Murarah and Hilal, had participated in the Battle of Badr and enjoyed a reputation amongst the Muslims.

The wise policy of the Prophet, which is an integral part Islam, had a wonderful effect. The trade and business of the violators came to a perfect standstill. Their commodities had no demand in the market. Their nearest ones cut off their relations with them and refrained from even conversing with them or visiting them. Social boycott by the people lowered the spirits and morale of these persons, so much that the spacious land of Madina was nothing more than a cage for them.23

Hence, it was fortunate that these three persons realized, through their intelligence and insight, that life in Islamic environments was not possible without whole-hearted association with the Muslims, and the life of an insignificant minority, opposed to the majority, could not last long, especially when the minority consisted of a group of mischievous, quarrelsome, and spiteful persons.

On the one side they had been called to account and on the other side the natural and instinctive force pulled them once again towards real faith, and they repented before Allah of their cowardly act. The Almighty also accepted their repentance and informed His Prophet of their being forgiven. Orders regarding the termination of the boycott were, therefore, promulgated immediately.24

The Event Of Masjid Zirar

In the Arabian Peninsula Madina and Najran were considered to be two extensive areas and big centres for the people of the Scriptures. Hence some Arabs belonging to the tribes of Aws and Khazraj were inclined towards Judaism and Christianity and had become followers of these religions.

During the Age of Ignorance Abu 'Amir, father of Hanzalah, the well-known martyr of the Battle of Uhud, had become very much inclined towards Christianity and had become a monk. When Islam dawned in Madina and absorbed the religious minorities, Abu 'Amir was upset and began co-operating earnestly with the hypocrites of Aws and Khazraj.

The Prophet became aware of his subversive activities and wanted to arrest him, but he ran away from Madina to Makkah and then to Ta'if and after the fall of Ta'if, to Syria. From there he began guiding the spying network of the hypocrites.

In one of his letters Abu 'Amir wrote to his friends:

"Construct a mosque in the village of Quba' opposite the mosque of the Muslims. Assemble there at the time of prayers and on the pretext of offering prayers, discuss and chalk out plans against Islam and the Muslims".

Like the present day enemies of Islam Abu 'Amir had also realized that in a country in which religion is fully established, the best way to destroy it, is to use the name of religion itself, and religion can be harmed more by using its own name rather than by any other factor. He knew fully well that the Prophet would not permit the hypocrites to build a centre for themselves under any circumstances, except when they gave that centre a religious tinge and erected a meeting-place for themselves with the name of a mosque.

When the Prophet intended proceeding to Tabuk the representatives of the hypocrites came to him and requested him to accord them permission to construct a mosque in their own area, on the pretext that when the nights were dark or it was raining their old men and invalids were not in a position to cover the long distance between their houses and Masjid Quba. The Prophet did not give them any reply, either in the affirmative or in the negative, and postponed final decision in the matter till after his return from the intended journeys.25

The hypocrites selected a place in the absence of the Prophet and completed the construction of their rendezvous as quickly as possible, giving it the name of mosque. On the day the Prophet returned to Madina they requested him to perform the opening ceremony of this place of worship by offering a few rak'ats of prayers there.

In the meantime the Archangel Jibreel came and informed the Prophet of the position and called the building Masjid Zirar as it had been constructed to create differences amongst the Muslims.26 The Prophet ordered Masjid Zirar to be razed to the ground, its beams to be burnt, and its rubbish thrown there for some period.27

Destruction of Masjid Zirar was a serious blow to the hypocrites and thereafter their group broke up and Abdullah bin Ubayy, their sole supporter, also died after two months of the Battle of Tabuk.

Tabuk was the last Islamic campaign in which the Prophet took part. After that he did not participate in any battle.

1. Tabaqat, vol.II, page 165
2. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 166.
3. Mughazi-i Waqidi, page 1003.
4. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 517.
5. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 518; Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. III, pp.992-993
6. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 520; Bihar, vol. XXI, page 207.
7. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. III, page 990.
8. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 244.
9. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 520. But Waqidi has ascribed this incident with a little variation, to Abdullah bin Khaythamah
10. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. III, page 152.
11. (He is) the Knower of the Unseen, and He reveals to none His secret, save to every messenger whom He has chosen. (Surah al-Jinn, 72:26 - 27).
12. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 523.

13. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 525.
14. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. III, page 1000.
15. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 161.
16. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 526; Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 160 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 160.
17. Dowmah is situated within ten miles of Madina. (Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. III, page 1025).
18. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 146 and Biharul Anwar, vol. II, page 246.
19. The Prophet stayed in Tabuk for twenty days. One day, after offering morning prayers he delivered a detailed, eloquent and instructive sermon. Thereafter he quotes the text of the sermon. (Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. III, pp. 1014 - 1015).
20. The period of stay of the Prophet in Tabuk is stated to be twenty days. (Seerah-i Ibn Hisham vol. III, page 527 and Tabaqat-i Ibn Sa'd vol. II, page 168).
21. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol. III, pp. 1042 - 1043; Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 247 and Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 162.
22. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 163; Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 219.
23. The contents of this sentence are an extract from the Qur'an wherein it has been said: "As though there was no place in the whole vast earth to hide them or in their souls to console them" (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:118).
24. (Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 165 and Biharul Anwar, vol. X, page 119). The Prophet's instructive method serves as an example for us, Muslims, in the matter of insignificant minorities. Such opposition can be tackled only by sincerity, determination and unity. Waqidi has given a more detailed account of the three persons. (vide Mughazi, vol. III, pp. 1049 - 1056).
25. Mughazi-i Waqidi, vol III, page 1046.
26. Verses 107 -110 of Surah al-Tawbah were revealed in connection with Masjid Zirar.
27. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 530 and Bihar, vol. XX, page 253.

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

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

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

By chance, the Battle of Tabuk was very fruitful in the achievement of the real target of the Prophet of Islam viz. attracting the Arab tribes to the religion of Islam. It was so, because the news spread throughout the Hijaz that the Romans (the same Romans, who had, during the last war with the Iranians (who had for long ruled over Yemen and the adjoining areas) defeated them and had taken back the

cross from them and brought it to Jerusalem) had been frightened of the military power of the Muslims and dared not fight with them.

The circulation of this news was sufficient to make the obstinate Arab tribes, who had not, till the previous day, agreed at any cost to remain on peaceful terms with the Muslims, think of co-operating with them and to join them to keep themselves safe from the transgression of the Rome and Iran, the two super powers of the world of that time. Here is an example of the changes which took place amongst the most obstinate tribes of Arabia.

Dissensions Amongst The People Of Thaqif Tribe

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

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

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

The Deputation Of Thaqif Meets The Prophet

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

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

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

should also go with me and all of us should be equally responsible for the developments".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Conditions Of The Deputation

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

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

it was for one month.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Dear Ibrahim! We can't do anything for you. Divine Will can't be changed. Your father's eyes shed tears, and his heart is sad and grieved for your death. However, I will not say anything which may invite the wrath of Allah. If there had not been the true and certain promise of Allah that we too shall come after you, I would have wept more and become more grieved at the separation from you".1

These sentences were uttered by the Prophet of Islam while mourning for his dear son Ibrahim, who was breathing his last in the lap of his kind father. The Prophet had fixed his kind lips on the rosy face of his son and bade him goodbye with a very sad face and a heavy heart and at the same time with full submission to the Will of Allah.

Love for one's off-spring is one of the purest and most sublime manifestations of human spirit and is a sign of health and purity of one's soul.

The Prophet used to say: "Be gentle to your children and display kind sentiments for them.2 Furthermore, kindness and love for children was one of his most pleasing attributes.3

During the past years the Prophet had been faced with the death of three sons named Qasim, Tahir and Tayyib4 and three daughters named Zaynab, Ruqayyah and Umme Kulsum and had been deeply grieved on this account. After their death his only surviving child and the souvenir of his esteemed wife Khadijah was Fatimah.

In 6 A.H. the Prophet sent ambassadors to foreign countries including Egypt. He sent a letter to the ruler of Egypt inviting him to accept Islam. Although he did not apparently give a positive reply to the Prophet's call, he sent him a respectful reply along with some presents including a slave-girl named Marya.

This slave-girl later acquired the honour of becoming the Prophet's wife and gave birth to his son Ibrahim, who was loved very much by him. The birth of Ibrahim diminished to some extent the unpleasant effects caused by the death of his six children, and provided him consolation. However, to his great sorrow Ibrahim also passed away after eighteen months.

The Prophet had gone out of the house on some business when he came to know about the critical condition of his child. He returned home, took the child from his mother's lap, and while signs of uneasiness were apparent from his face, he uttered the sentences quoted before.

The mourning of the Prophet for his son is a sign of his human sentiments, which continued even after the death of the child, and manifestation of sentiments and expression of grief was a sign of his kind nature, which showed itself involuntarily throughout his life. As regards his not uttering anything against the pleasure of Allah, was a sign of his faith and resignation to the Divine Will, which none can escape.

Baseless Objection

Abdur Rahman bin Awf, who belonged to a family of the Ansar, was surprised to see the Prophet shedding tears. He objected to it saying: "You have been restraining us from weeping for the dead. How is it that you are now shedding tears at the death of your son? "

The objector was not only not aware of the sublime basic principle of Islam but was also ignorant of the spirit and special sentiments with which the Almighty has endowed human beings. All human instincts have been created for particular purposes and it is necessary that everyone of them should manifest itself at its proper time and place.

A person who is not moved by the death of his near ones, whose heart does not move, whose eyes do not shed tears, in short, who does not display any reaction on account of being separated from them is nothing more than a stone, and should not be called a human being.

However, a delicate and appreciable point deserves attention here for although this objection was baseless, it tells us that complete freedom and perfect democracy existed in the newly formed society of the Muslims at that time, so that a person could pick up courage to comment upon the action of his absolute ruler with perfect freedom and without any fear or awe and could also get a reply.

The Prophet replied: "I have never said that you should not weep on the death of your dear ones, because it is a sign of kindness and pity and a person whose heart is not moved for others does not become entitled to the blessings of Allah.5 I have said that you should not make excessive lamentations on the death of your near ones and neither utter indecent or objectionable words nor tear your dress out of too much grief".6

As directed by the Prophet the Commander of the Faithful washed the dead body of Ibrahim and shrouded him. Then the Prophet and some of his companions escorted the funeral party and buried the child in the Baqi' graveyard.7

The Prophet looked into the grave of Ibrahim and saw a pit in a corner thereof. In order to level it he sat down on the ground, smoothed the surface of the grave with his own hands, and uttered this sentence: "Whenever anyone of you does a job he should endeavour to do it in a solid way".

Campaign Against Superstitions

Solar eclipse took place on the day Ibrahim passed away. Some persons, who were ignorant of the laws of nature, thought that the sun had been eclipsed on account of the death of Ibrahim. Although this thinking was absolutely baseless, it could apparently be beneficial for the Prophet. In case, therefore, he had been an ordinary and a worldly leader he could very well confirm this view and thus prove his own magnificence and greatness.

However, as opposed to this thinking, he mounted the pulpit and informed the people of the factual position. He said: "O People! Be it known to you that the sun and the moon are the signs of the Power of Allah. They move in a particular course which Allah has prescribed for them according to the laws of nature. They are not eclipsed on account of the death or birth of anyone. It is your duty, at the time of solar eclipse, to offer prayers".8

As opposed to many people, who not only interpret facts in their own favour but also take advantage of the ignorance and superstitious thinking of the people, he did not conceal facts and did not try to profit from the ignorance of the people.

If he had endorsed this false thinking on that day he could not have been able to signalize himself and claim to be the eternal leader of mankind and the representative and the chosen one of Allah during the present age when astronomy has taken long strides and the reasons for the solar and lunar eclipses have become clearly known to mankind.

His law and call are not for Arabs alone and are not confined to any time and space. If he is the leader of those, who lived in earlier ages, he is also the Prophet of the space age and of the period of the discovery of the secrets of nature. On whatever subject he has spoken, his words are so sound and firm that the recent scientific upheavals, which have disproved many of the theories of the past scholars, have not been able to find even one weak point in his statements.

1. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 34 and Bihar, vol. XXII, page 157.
2. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXIII, page 114.
3. Muhajjatul Baydhah, vol. III, page 366.
4. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXII, page 166. However, some Shi'ah scholars have stated that he had only two male children from Khadijah. (Biharul Anwar,vol. XXII, page 151–new edition).
5. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXII, page 151.
6. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 348.
7. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXII, page 156). According to Halabi the washing and shrouding of the Prophet's son, Ibrahim was performed by Fadl, the son of the Prophet's uncle Abbas.
8. al–Muhasin, page 313 and Seerah–i Halabi, page 348.

In the end of the ninth year of migration the initial verses of Surah al–Tawbah (Bara'at) were revealed and the Prophet was ordered to send a person to Makkah during Haj season so that he might read out

those verses along with a proclamation consisting of four articles.

In these verses security granted to the polytheists has been withdrawn and all the treaties made with them (except those which the parties had acted upon faithfully and had not violated them in practice) have been annulled and the chiefs of polytheism and their followers have been told that they should clarify, within a period of four months, their position vis-a-vis the Islamic Government which is based on monotheism and if they do not give up polytheism and idol-worship, the immunity provided to them would terminate.

As and when the orientalists reach this stage of the history of Islam they violently attack this religion and consider this severity to be opposed to the principle of 'freedom of faith'. However, if they undertake an unbiased perusal of the history of Islam, and study the motive which prompted this action mentioned in the historical texts, as well as in Surah Tawbah, they will probably realize their misunderstanding and will confirm that this action was not at all opposed to the principle of 'freedom of faith', which is respected by all the wise men of the world. Here are the causes for the issuance of this manifesto:

1. During the Age of Ignorance a custom prevailed among the Arabs that a person who performed the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah, gave away to an indigent person the dress with which he performed tawaf (circumambulation). If a person had only one dress he usually borrowed another and performed tawaf with it so that he might not have to give away his own dress to a poor man. And if it was not possible to borrow a dress the tawaf was performed naked!

One day a fat and beautiful woman entered the mosque. As she did not possess more than one dress she was obliged, in observance of the superstitious custom of that time, to perform tawaf with a naked body. It is evident as to what a bad effect the tawaf by the naked woman in the most sacred place amidst a crowd must have produced!

2. When Surah al-Tawbah was revealed, more than twenty years had passed since the appointment of the Prophet to the prophetic mission, and during this period the strong logic of Islam, regarding the prevention of idol-worship, had reached the ears of the polytheists of the Peninsula. In case, therefore, an insignificant group still persisted in polytheism and idol-worship, its reason was only their fanaticism and obstinacy.

Hence, the time had now arrived that the Prophet of Islam should use the last remedy for the reformation of the society, destroy all images of idol-worship by force, consider it (i.e. idol-worship) a transgression against humanity and annihilate the source of hundreds of other indecent habits in the society.

However, the orientalists, who consider this action to be opposed to the principle of freedom of faith, which is the basis of Islam and the foundation of modern culture, have ignored one point, that is, the principle of freedom of faith is respectable only so long as it does not harm the prosperity of the individual and the society. Otherwise, in accordance with the dictates of reason and the course adopted by the thinkers of the world, it should be opposed to the utmost extent.

For example, in modern Europe, on account of some wrong ideas, some sensual men support the movement of nudism in the society and on the basis of an idea and a logic which is only childish (viz. covering of a part of the body is a source of excitement and, therefore, corrupts the morals) they form secret clubs and become naked there before others!

Does human intellect permit that these people should be allowed to continue their activities on the plea of 'freedom of faith' and should it be said that their 'faith' must be respected? Or is it necessary that, to protect the welfare of these people as well as of the society, we should fight against this way of thinking which is totally foolish?

This method (i.e. prevention of corruption by force) is not employed by Islam only, but intelligentsia of the world put up a tough fight against all movements and ideas which result in harm to the interests of a society, and, in fact, such a fight is a war against the foolish beliefs of the depressed people.

Idol-worship was nothing more than a handful of superstitions and ridiculous beliefs, which brought hundreds of abominable habits in its train, and the Prophet had paid sufficient heed towards the guidance of the idolaters. Time had, therefore, arrived that he should, as a last resort, use military force to destroy this source of corruption.

3. Haj is one of the greatest articles of Islamic worship and religious rites, and till the day of the revelation of this Surah the conflicts and battles with the chiefs of polytheism had not permitted that the Prophet should practically teach the Muslims the ceremonies connected with Haj in a correct and simple manner. It was, therefore necessary that the Prophet should participate personally in this great Islamic congregation and give practical training to the Muslims for the performance of this great worship.

However, the Prophet could take part in it only when the Holy Ka'bah and its precincts had been vacated by the polytheists, who had surrendered it to the wooden and stone idols, and when the House of Allah was opened primarily for the worshippers of Allah and His real servants.

In view of the above-mentioned three factors the Prophet called Abu Bakr and taught him some initial verses of Surah al-Tawbah and ordered him to proceed to Makkah along with forty other persons1 and to recite on Eid al-Adha day the verses, which comprise estrangement from and disgust towards the polytheists.

As ordered by the Prophet, Abu Bakr proceeded to Makkah. In the meantime the Archangel Jibreel came and brought a message from Allah to the effect that disgust towards the polytheists should be proclaimed either by the Prophet himself or by one from him.2

Hence, the Prophet called Ali and informed him of the position. He then placed his special animal for riding at Ali's disposal and ordered him to leave Madina as early as possible so that he might contact Abu Bakr on the way and take the verses from him and recite the same along with the requisite proclamation on the day of Eid al-Adha before the grand gathering in which people from all parts of

Arabia would be participating.

The contents of the proclamation were as under:

1. The idolaters have no right to enter the House of Allah.

2. Performing tawaf with naked body is prohibited.

3. No idolater will participate in the ceremonies of Haj.

4. If some people have concluded non-aggression pacts with the Prophet and have carried out their obligations under those pacts faithfully, the pacts made with them would be honoured and their lives and property would be respected till the expiry of those pacts. However, the polytheists who have not concluded any pact with the Muslims or have violated practically any such pact are hereby given four months time from today (the tenth of Zil Haj) to explain their position vis-a-vis the Government of Islam. They should either join the monotheists (the Muslims) and give up every sort of polytheism or get ready for war.3

The Commander of the faithful left for Makkah, riding the special animal provided to him by the Holy Prophet. He was accompanied by some other persons including Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari. He met Abu Bakr at Juhfah and conveyed the message of the Prophet to him and he thereupon placed the verses at Ali's disposal.

The Shi'ah as well as many Sunni traditionalists quote Ali as saying to Abu Bakr: "The Prophet has given you the choice either to accompany me to Makkah or to return from here to Madina". Abu Bakr preferred to return to Madina, and after reaching the Prophet, he said: "You considered me fit to accomplish a task which others were also keen to accomplish and thus earn glory, but when I had covered some distance you relieved me of the responsibility. Has anything been revealed about me?"

The Prophet replied affably: "Jibreel came and brought a Divine message to the effect that none except myself or one belonging to me is competent to accomplish this task".4

However, it appears from some narratives of Ahl Sunnah that Abu Bakr held the office of supervisor of Haj ceremonies whereas Ali was appointed only to recite the Divine verses and the proclamation of the Prophet before the people on Mina day.5

The Commander of the Faithful arrived in Makkah. On the tenth day of Zil Haj he mounted Jamrah 'Aqabah and recited the first thirteen verses of Surah Bara'at. He also read out the proclamation of the Prophet with a heart overflowing with valour and strength and with a loud voice which could be heard by all those present, and made it clear to the polytheists who had not concluded any pact with the Muslims that they had only four months' time at their disposal, within which they should purify their environments from all types of corruption and perverse thinking, and should give up polytheism and idol-worship, failing which the privileges granted to them would be withdrawn.

The effect of these verses and proclamation was that the prescribed period of four months had not yet expired when the polytheists embraced Islam in groups, and idol-worship was completely eradicated from the Peninsula by the middle of the tenth year of migration.

Unfair Bias In The Assessment Of This Event

Divesting Abu Bakr of the responsibility to read out the verses of Surah al-Bara'at and appointing the Commander of the Faithful in his place and that too in compliance with the Divine command is no doubt one of Ali's positive and undeniable distinctions. However, a group of fanatical writers adopt a perverse view in the assessment of this event.

While assessing this event Alusi Baghdadi says in his Tafsir: "Abu Bakr was known for his compassion whereas Ali was his reverse because of his bravery and strength. As the recitation of the verses of Surah Bara'at and threatening the polytheists needed bravery and strength of mind more than anything else and Ali possessed these elements more than Abu Bakr, he was appointed in his place".6

This explanation, which is based on fanaticism, does not conform to the words of the Prophet, because he said in reply to Abu Bakr: "Divine revelation has ordered that these verses should be recited by me myself or by one who belongs to me". Kindness or bravery have, therefore, nothing to do with the matter.

Furthermore, the Prophet himself was a perfect manifestation of kindness. In the light of the above explanation, therefore, the Prophet, too, should not have been asked to communicate the verses of Surah al-Bara'at himself to the people because the Divine order was that either he himself or someone from his Ahl al-Bayt should discharge this responsibility.

While commenting on the same Surah, Ibn Kathir Shami, following the views of Maqrizi, has explained the matter in another way in Al-Imta'a. He writes: "The custom amongst the Arabs with regard to the violation of agreements was that someone who is a party to the agreement, or one of those related to him, should take the initiative in violating the agreement. Failing this the agreement remained valid. And as Ali was one of the nearest relatives of the Prophet, he was made responsible to recite these verses".

However, this explanation, too, is not valid because, amongst the relatives of the Prophet there was also Abbas, his uncle, whose relationship with him was in no way lesser than that of Ali. The question would, therefore, remain as to why this task was not assigned to him.

If we are asked to give an unbiased judgement about this historical event we should say that this dismissal and appointment was not due to Ali's strength of heart or his relationship with the Prophet, but the real purpose of this change was that the suitability of the Commander of the Faithful with regard to matters related to Islamic Government should become evident in a practical manner, and the people should come to know that from the point of view of personal qualities and capability he is the associate and companion of the Prophet.

And in case, after some time, prophethood comes to an end, the political affairs and the matters connected with the authority of the caliphate should be handled by him and none is more suited for them except he himself and after the demise of the Prophet the Muslims should not feel any difficulty, because they have seen with their own eyes that Ali has been appointed under the orders of Allah to nullify the agreements and such nullification is the prerogative of the ruler and his vicegerent only.

1. Waqidi has stated their number to be three hundred (Mughazi, vol. III, page 1077.
2. In some narratives the words "or one from your Ahl al-Bayt" occur. (Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. VI, page 545 and Bihar, vol XXI, page 267).
3. Furu' Kafi, vol. I, page 326.
4. al-Irshad Mufid, page 33.
5. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 546.
6. Ruhul Ma'ani, commentary of Surah al-Tawbah.

The pleasant territory of Najran comprising seventy-two villages is situated on the border of the Hijaz and Yemen. In the early days of Islam this was the only region in the Hijaz which was inhabited by the Christians, who had, for some reasons, forsaken idol-worship and embraced Christianity.1

Simultaneous with the letters which the Prophet of Islam wrote to the heads of different countries of the world he also wrote a letter to Abu Harith, the Bishop of Najran, and, through that letter, invited the people of that area to embrace Islam. The text of the said letter runs as under:

In the name the Lord of Ibrahim, Ishaq and Ya'qub.

This is a letter from Muhammad, the Prophet and Messenger of Allah to the Bishop of Najran. I praise and glorify the Lord of Ibrahim, Ishaq and Ya'qub, and invite you all to worship Allah instead of worshipping His creatures, so that you may come out of the guardianship of the creatures of Allah and take place under the guardianship of Allah Himself.

And in case you do not accept my invitation you must (at least) pay Jizyah (tribute) to the Islamic Government (in lieu of which it will undertake the protection of your lives and property), failing which you are hereby warned of dangerous consequences.2

Some of the Shi'ah sources add that the Prophet also wrote down in his letter the verse relating to the people of the Scripture wherein all of them have been invited to worship the One Allah. Here the 64th verse of Surah Ale Imran has been referred to viz: *Muhammad, say to the followers of the Bible, 'We must come to a common term: 'Let us worship no one except Allah' . . .*

The representatives of the Prophet arrived in Najran and delivered his letter to the Bishop. He read the letter very carefully and then, in order to take a decision, called a meeting of the religious and the secular personalities for consultation. One of the persons called for consultation was Shurahbil, who was renowned for his knowledge, intelligence and experience.

He spoke thus in reply to the Bishop: "My knowledge of religious matters is very meagre, and I have, therefore, no right to express my views about them, but in case you consult me regarding some thing other than this I may be able to suggest a solution of the problem. However, I am obliged to point out one thing that we have heard time and again from our religious leaders that one day the Office of Prophethood will be transferred from the descendants of Ishaq to the descendants of Isma'il and it is not improbable that Muhammad, who is a descendant of Isma'il, may be the same promised Prophet!"

The consultative council decided that a body of men should go to Madina as representatives of Najran so that they might contact Muhammad from near and should scrutinize the proofs of his prophethood.

Sixty most distinguished and wise men of Najran were selected for the purpose; they were headed by three religious leaders namely;

1. Abu Harith bin 'Alqamah, the Grand Bishop of Najran, who was the official representative of the Roman Church in the Hijaz.

2. Abdul Masih, the chief of the representative body, who enjoyed great renown for his wisdom, prudence and experience.

3. Ayham, an aged man, who was considered to be a respectable person of the community of Najran.3

The members of the deputation arrived in the mosque in the afternoon, wearing silken clothes, golden rings, and crosses round their necks; saluted the Prophet. However, their repulsive and improper posture and that, too, in the mosque displeased the Prophet. They realized that he had been displeased with them, but did not understand the cause of his displeasure.

They, therefore, immediately contacted Uthman bin Affan and Abdur Rahman bin Awf, who were their former acquaintances, and mentioned the matter to them. They were of the view that the solution of their problem lay with Ali bin Abu Talib. They then met the Commander of the Faithful and he said in reply to them: "You should alter your dresses, and come to the Prophet in a simple dress without any ornamentation Then you will be accorded honour and respect".

The representatives of Najran put on simple clothes and removed the rings and then came to the Prophet. The Prophet replied to their salutation with great respect and also accepted some of the presents, which they had brought with them. Before the commencement of mutual discussions the members of the deputation said that the time for their prayers had set in. The Prophet permitted them to offer their prayers in the Masjid with their faces turned towards the east.4

The Representatives Of Najran Have Discussions With The

Prophet

A large number of biographers, traditionalists and Islamic historians have quoted the text of the discussions between the representatives of Najran and the Prophet. However, the late Sayyid bin Tawus has quoted the particulars of the discussions and the event of Mubahilah (imprecation) in a more exact, more comprehensive and more detailed manner, as compared with others. He has quoted all the particulars of Mubahilah from the beginning up to the end from Kitab Mubahilah by Muhammad bin Abdul Muttalib Shaybani and Kitab 'Amali Zil Haj by Hasan bin Ismail.5 However, it is beyond the scope of this book to give details of this great historical event, which, unfortunately, has not even been alluded to by some biographers.

We, therefore, mention here a few aspects of the discussions, as given by Halabi in his Seerah.6

The Prophet: I invite you to the religion of monotheism and the worship of One Allah and submission to His commands. (Then he recited some verses of the Holy Qur'an before, them).

The representatives of Najran: If Islam means faith in the only Lord of the World we already believe in Him and act according to His Commands.

The Prophet: Islam carries a few signs and some of your actions show that you do not believe in Islam. How do you say that you worship One Allah when you worship the cross and do not abstain from the meat of the swine and believe that Allah has son?

Representatives: We believe him (i.e. 'Isa) to be God because he brought the dead to life, cured the sick, made a bird with clay and made it fly, and all these things show that he is God.

The Prophet: No. He is the servant of Allah and is His creature. Allah placed him in the womb of Mary. And all this power and strength was given to him by Allah.

One of the represenatatives: Yes! He is the son of God, because Mary gave him birth without marrying anyone, and it is, therefore, necessary that his father should be the very Lord of the World.

At this juncture the Archangel Jibreel came and advised the Prophet to tell them: "From this point of view the condition of 'Isa resembles that of Adam who was created by Allah with His unlimited power from clay without his having a father and a mother7 and if one's not having a father is the proof of one's being the son of Allah, Adam is all the more entitled to this position, because he had neither a father nor a mother".

The representatives: Your words do not satisfy us. The best way to resolve the issue is that we should engage in imprecation with each other at an appointed time and may curse the liar and pray to Allah that He may destroy the liar.8

At this moment the Archangel Jibreel came and brought the verse pertaining to imprecation and conveyed to the Prophet the Divine command that he should engage in imprecation with those, who contended and disputed with him and both the parties should pray to Allah that He might deprive the liar of His blessings. The Holy Qur'an says,

If anyone disputes with you after the knowledge has come to you, say, 'Let each of us bring our children, our women, our people and ourselves to one place and pray to Allah to curse upon the liars among us'. **(Surah Ale Imran, 3:62)**

Both the parties agreed to settle the issue through imprecation and it was decided that all of them would be ready for it on the following day.

The Prophet Goes For Mubahilah (Imprecation)

The incident of Mubahilah of the Prophet of Islam with the representatives of Najran is one of the most attractive and wonderful events of the history of Islam. Though some traditionalists and biographers have been negligent in quoting its details as well as in analysing it, but a large number of them like Zamakhshari in Kashshaf,9 Imam Razi in his Tafsir10 and Ibn Athir in Kamil11 have been most eloquent on this subject. Here we reproduce a part of Zamakhshari's narrative on the subject.

"The time for Mubahilah arrived. The Prophet and members of the deputation of Najran had already agreed that the ceremonies of Mubahilah should take place at a spot outside the city of Madina in the desert. Out of the Muslims and many relatives of his, the Prophet selected only four persons who were to participate in this significant event.

These four persons were Ali bin Abi Talib, Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet, Hasan and Husayn, as amongst all the Muslims no purer souls could be found. He covered the distance between his house and the place fixed for Mubahilah in a special manner. He stepped into the field of Mubahilah when he was carrying Husayn in his lap, and was holding the hand of Hasan in his own hand, and Fatimah was following him and Ali bin Abi Talib was walking behind them".12

Before arriving at the place fixed for Mubahilah he said to his companions: "Whenever I utter an invocation you should pray for its acceptance by saying Amin."

Before facing the Prophet the chiefs of the representatives of Najran were saying to one another: "In case you see that Muhammad has brought his warriors and officers in the field of Mubahilah and has displayed his material grandeur and external strength you should conclude that his claim is not true and he has no faith in his prophethood.

If, however, he comes for Mubahilah along with his children and the dearest ones and appears before the Almighty Allah devoid of every sort of material might and glory, it would mean that he is a true Prophet and has so much faith and self-reliance that he is not only ready to be annihilated personally,

but is fully prepared with perfect courage to let his dearest ones also meet destruction and extinction".

While the chiefs of the deputation were engaged in conversation, the Prophet made a sudden appearance before the Christians of Najran along with four of his dear ones, out of whom three were his own offspring. All were wonder-struck to see that he had brought into the field of Mubahilah even the innocent children of his dear daughter and said: "This man has perfect faith in his call and claim, because a wavering person does not bring his dearest ones into the arena of Divine wrath".

The Bishop of Najran said: "I see such faces that if they raise their hands in supplication and pray to Allah that the biggest mountain may be moved from its place, the same will happen immediately. We should in no circumstances engage in Mubahilah with these sacred and virtuous personalities because it is not improbable that we may be annihilated and it is also possible that the Divine wrath may expand and engulf the entire Christian world and not even one Christian may remain alive on the face of the earth!"[13]

The Represents Of Najran Give Up The Idea Of Mubahilah

On observing the aforesaid situation the representatives of Najran made mutual consultations and unanimously decided not to participate in Mubahilah at any cost. They also agreed to pay a fixed sum per year as *jizyah* and requested that in lieu of this the Islamic Government might protect their lives and property. The Prophet agreed to this and it was settled that against the payment of that petty amount they should be entitled to the privileges granted by the Islamic Government.

Then the Prophet said: "Trouble had spread its inauspicious shadow on the heads of the representatives of Najran and if they had decided to participate in Mubahilah and cursing they would have lost their human shapes and would have been burnt in a fire which was being kindled in the desert and the torture would have spread up to the territory of Najran".

It has been quoted by A'isha that on the day of Mubahilah the Prophet accommodated his four dear ones under a black cloak and recited this verse:

O people of the Prophet's House! Allah intends but to ward off all sorts of pollution and blemish from you and to purify you with a thorough purification. (**Surah al-Ahzab, 33:33**)

Then Zamakhshari mentions the points connected with the verse of Mubahilah and says in the end of the discussion: "The incident of Mubahilah and the substance of this verse is the greatest evidence of the excellence of the People of the Mantle and is a vital proof of the rightfulness of Islam".

Contents Of The Agreement Concluded Between The Parties

The representatives of Najran requested the Prophet that both, the amount of annual tax payable by them, and the security of Najran region, might be recorded and guaranteed by the Prophet in the deed.

As ordered by the Prophet, the Commander of the Faithful wrote the deed as follows:

In the name Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

This is a deed from Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah, in favour of the people of Najran and its outskirts. The order and decision of Muhammad about the entire property and wealth of the people of Najran is that they will supply to the Islamic Government every year two thousand garments the price of everyone of which will not exceed forty dirhams. They will be at liberty to supply half of this quantity in the month of Safar and the remaining half in Rajab.

And in case there is danger of war from the side of Yemen, they (the people of Najran) shall, as a mark of co-operation with the Islamic Government, place thirty coats of mail, thirty horses and thirty camels at the disposal of the army of Islam by way of guaranteed loan and shall also be responsible to entertain the representatives of the Prophet in the territory of Najran for a period of one month.

Furthermore, as and when a representative of his comes to them they shall receive him. And the lives, property, lands, and places of worship of the people of Najran shall be under the protection of Allah and His Prophet, provided that they will immediately give up usury, failing which Muhammad will not be responsible for them and no commitment made by him will be operative.14

This deed was written on a red skin. Two companions of the Prophet signed below it as witnesses, and thereafter the Prophet sealed it. This Peace Pact, of which a summarized translation has been given above, speaks of the justice and equity of the highest standard, as practiced by the Prophet and shows that the Islamic Government was not like the powerful states of the world which take undue advantage of the weakness of others and impose tributes on them. Islam always kept in view the spirit of conciliation and justice and the principles of humanity; it always shunned transgression.

The event Mubahilah and the verse revealed in connection with it have been the greatest merit and glory for Islam and the followers of Ahl al-Bayt throughout the long span of history, because the words and contents of this verse show the high status enjoyed by those, who accompanied the Prophet to the place appointed for Mubahilah.

For besides calling Hasan and Husayn the sons of the Prophet and calling Fatimah, only the lady belonging to his household, it calls Ali the "self" i.e. the very soul of the Prophet. What honour could be greater then this for anyone?

Is this verse not an evidence of the superiority of the Commander of the Faithful over all other Muslims of the world? Fakhr-i Razi, whose attitude in the discussions of the nature of scholastic theology and matters relating to Imamate is well known, has mentioned the reasoning of the Shi'ah and has ended the discussion with a petty and insignificant objection. Its reply is quite clear to the fair-minded people.

It is learnt from the narratives quoted from our religious leaders that Mubahilah is not particular to the

Prophet, and every Muslim can combat his opponent by this means. The invocations connected with it are given in the books on Hadith and the book entitled Nur–al–Thaqalayn may be referred to for further information in this behalf.15

In the tract written by the respected teacher Allamah Tabatabai we read this: Mubahilah is one of the permanent miracles of Islam and every true believer can combat with his opponent by means of Mubahilah to prove the realities of Islam, following the first leader of this faith and can request Allah to punish the opponent and condemn him.16

1. Yaqut Hamawi has related the reason for their embracement of Christianity in Majma'ul Buldan, vol. V, pp. 266 – 267.
2. al–Bidayah wan Nihayah, page 53 and Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 285.
3. Tarikh–i Ya'qubi, vol. II, page 66.
4. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 239.
5. The details of this historical event is given in the book entitled "Iqbal" by the late Ibn Tawus, pp. 496 – 513.
6. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 239.
7. This is the purport of the verse: To Allah the case of Jesus is as that of Adam whom He created from the earth and then said, "Be and he came into existence". (Surah Ale Imran, 3:59).
8. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 32 as quoted from al–Iqbal by Ibn Tawus. It is, however, learnt from Seerah–i Halabi that Mubahilah was suggested by the Prophet himself.
9. Kashshaf, vol. I, pp. 282 – 283.
10. Tafsir–i Mafatihul Ghayb, vol. II, pp. 481 – 482.
11. Tarikh–i Kamil, vol. II, page 112.
12. In some narrations it has been stated that the Prophet was holding the hands of Hasan and Husayn in his own hands and Ali was walking in front of him and Fatimah was following him. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 338.
13. Ibn Tawus quotes this in al–Iqbal: "On the day of Mubahilah a large number of Muhajirs and Ansar had gathered near the place where Mubahilah was to take place. However, the Prophet left his house with the said four persons only and none out of the Muslims was present at the appointed place except those five. The Prophet removed his cloak from his shoulder and flung it on two trees which were situated near each other. He then sat under its shade along with the four others and invited the "representatives of Najran to Mubahilah".
14. Futuhul Buldan, page 76.
15. Nur–al Thaqalayn, vol. I, pp. 291 – 292.
16. This subject has been clarified in certain Islamic narratives. In this connection refer Usulul Kafi, Book on Invocations, Chapter of Mubahilah, page 538.

The sharp and pungent proclamation read out by the Commander of the Faithful during Haj season of the ninth year of migration at Mina, on behalf of the Prophet, and official declaration by him to the effect that Allah and His Prophet were disgusted with the idolaters and they (the idolaters) should decide once and for all within a period of four months, either to embrace Islam and forsake idol–worship or to get ready for total war, had a very deep and quick effect.

The tribes of different regions of Arabia, which had so far declined to submit to the logic of the Qur'an, and the law of Allah, on account of enmity and grudge, and insisted on sticking to their evil and indecent habits, superstitions, foolish beliefs, and worship of stones and clay, became helpless now and sent their representatives to the headquarters of Islam (Madina).

Everyone of these deputations had discussions and conversation with the Prophet. Ibn Sa'd in his Tabaqat-i Kubra1 has recorded the particulars of seventy-two persons out of them. Arrival of these deputations in large numbers and that too after declaring the proclamation, shows that in the beginning of the tenth year of migration no dependable fort had been left for the polytheists of Arabia, otherwise they would have taken refuge there and waged war with the help of one another.

The period of four months had not yet passed when the entire Hijaz came under the banner of Islam and not a single idol-temple or idol or idolater was left in it, so much so that a number of persons belonging to Yemen, Bahrain and Yamamah also embraced Islam.

Plot To Kill The Prophet

The chiefs of the tribe of Bani 'Amir were widely known amongst the Arab tribes for their obstinacy and mischief. Three persons from amongst their chiefs named 'Amir, Arbad and Jabbar decided to arrive in Madina at the head of a deputation and somehow to kill the Prophet while having discussions with him in a meeting. Their scheme was that 'Amir should engage himself in discussion with the Prophet and while their conversation was in full swing Arbad should attack the Prophet with his sword and kill him.

Other members of the deputation, who were unaware of this plot of the three persons, declared their fidelity for Islam and the Prophet. However, 'Amir refrained from expressing any inclination towards Islam and said to the Prophet repeatedly, "I want to talk to you in seclusion". Every time he uttered this sentence he looked towards Arbad.

However, although he looked at his face very intently he found him calm and tranquil. The Prophet said to him in reply: "Unless you embrace Islam this thing is not possible, (i.e. to see you alone)". At last 'Amir lost all hope of Arbad's assistance in the success of their plot. It would appear that as and when Arbad intended to put his hand on his sword he was stricken with terror and the Prophet's greatness kept him (Arbad) from carrying out his plan.

When the meeting ended 'Amir stood up from his place, declared his enmity for the Prophet and said: "I will fill Madina with horses and soldiers to do harm to you".

On account of the great forbearance which he possessed, however, the Prophet did not give him any reply, but prayed to Allah to keep him safe from the mischief of the two men. The supplication of the Prophet was accepted soon. 'Amir had an attack of plague while he was on his way, and died in a very bad condition in the house of a woman belonging to the tribe of Bani Salul.

As regards Arbad, he was struck by lightning in the desert and was burnt to death. And the fate met by these persons, who had plotted against the Prophet further intensified the people's faith (in Islam).2

The Commander Of The Faithful Is Deputed To Yemen

Acceptance of Islam by the people of the Hijaz and the security which the Prophet felt from the side of the Arab tribes enabled him to extend the influence of Islam to the neighbouring areas of Hijaz. For the first time, therefore, he deputed one of his wise companions named Mu'az bin Jabal to Yemen so that he might explain Islam to the people of that region.

While giving him detailed instructions the Prophet also said to Mu'az: "Avoid harsh treatment with the people, and inform them of Divine blessings which are meant for the true believers. When you face the people of the Scriptures in Yemen, and they enquire from you about the key to Paradise, you should tell them that it is the acknowledgment of the Oneness and Uniqueness of Allah"

It would appear that with all his knowledge of the Book and the Sunnah Mu'az did not give a satisfactory reply when he was asked about the rights of a husband over his wife.3 The Prophet, therefore, decided to send his distinguished disciple Ali to Yemen so that Islam might spread there under his continuous teachings, logical arguments, the strength of his hands, and his unparalleled bravery and moral heroism.

Furthermore, Khalid bin Walid had also been dispatched by the Prophet to Yemen sometime earlier than Ali4 so that he might remove the obstacles in the way of advancement of Islam, in that area. He did not, however, do anything in this behalf during that period.

The Prophet, therefore, called Ali and said to him: "O Ali! I am sending you to Yemen so that you may invite its inhabitants to Islam and inform them about the Command of Allah as well as about the things, which are lawful, and which are unlawful. At the time of your return to Madina you should collect zakat from the people of Najran as well as the taxes which they are liable to pay and should deposit the same in the public treasury.

Ali replied to the Prophet most respectfully in these words: "I am a young man and have never arbitrated throughout my life and have never occupied the seat of justice". The Prophet placed his hand on Ali's chest and prayed for him in these words: "O Allah! Guide the heart of Ali and protect his tongue from errors". Then he said: "O Ali! Do not quarrel with anyone and try to guide the people to the right path with logic and good behaviour. By Allah! If Allah guides someone to the right path through you, it is much better than that on which the sun shines".

In the end the Prophet made four recommendations to Ali:

1. Make prayer and glorification of Allah your profession, because prayer is usually accepted.

2. Be thankful to Allah in all circumstances, because thankfulness increases blessings.

3. If you conclude an agreement with an individual or a group of persons, honour it.

4. Desist from cheating others, because the deceit of the evil-doers returns to themselves".

During his stay in Yemen, Ali passed spellbound judgements, most of which are recorded in the books of history.

The Prophet did not content himself with guidance but he also wrote a letter to the people of Yemen inviting them to Islam, gave it to Ali and directed him to read it over to them.

Bara' bin 'Azib was Ali's attendant in Yemen. He says that when Ali reached the border of Yemen, he arranged the ranks of the Muslim soldiers who were already stationed there under the command of Khalid bin Walid and offered the morning prayers in congregation. Then he invited the tribe of Hamdan, which was one of the biggest tribes of Yemen, to hear the message of the Prophet.

First he praised Allah. Then he read out the Prophet's message to them. The grandeur of the meeting, the sweetness of the narration and the greatness of the words of the Prophet impressed the people of Hamdan tribe so much that they embraced Islam within a day. Imam Ali wrote a letter to the Prophet informing him of the developments. The Prophet was greatly pleased to learn the good news. He thanked Allah and said: "May the tribe of Hamdan be blessed".

The conversion of Hamdan tribe to Islam became the cause of other people of Yemen embracing Islam gradually.5

1. Tabaqat-i Kubra, vol. II, pp. 230 – 291.
2. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, pp. 568 – 569.
3. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 590.
4. Sahih Bukhari, vol. V, page 163.
5. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 305; Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, pp. 360 – 363.

Amongst the congregational articles of worship of Islam the ceremonies of Haj are the greatest and most magnificent worship performed by the Muslims, because the performance of these ceremonies and that too once in a year is the sublime manifestation of unity and fellowship, a perfect sign of freedom from belongings and place, a prominent example of equality between different classes, a source of strengthening relations between Muslims etc.

Now if we Muslims make little use of the opportunity afforded by Haj for our betterment and convene this annual Islamic congress (which can undoubtedly solve most of our social problems and can bring about far-reaching changes in our lives) without deriving proper benefit from it, it is not because the law is defective but the fault lies with the Muslim leaders who do not, make proper use of this grand ceremony.

Since the day Prophet Ibrahim had constructed the Ka'bah and invited the monotheists to perform its pilgrimage, this place has always been the centre of attraction, where tawaf was done by the godly peoples and every year groups of pilgrims came from different parts of Arabia and from all corners of the

world for the pilgrimage of this House and performed the ceremonies taught by Prophet Ibrahim.

However, as a consequence of the passage of time and also because of the people of the Hijaz being deprived of the guidance of the Prophets, the selfishness of Quraysh, and the rule of idols over the Arab world, the ceremonies of Haj fell prey to change and alteration from the viewpoint of time and place and lost their real features.

For these reasons the Prophet was ordered by Allah in the tenth year of migration to participate in the Haj ceremonies personally so that he might practically teach the people their obligations and might discard the old and unwanted practices of this article of worship and also instruct the people about the limits of 'Arafah and Mina and tell them about the time of departure from those places. As compared with its political and social aspect, therefore, this journey carried a greater educational aspect.

In the eleventh Islamic month (Zil Qa'dah) the Prophet got it proclaimed in the city as well as amongst the tribes that he intended to perform the pilgrimage of the Ka'bah that year. This news inspired great interest in the Muslim ummah. Thousands of persons pitched up tents in the outskirts of Madina and awaited the departure of the Prophet.1

The Prophet appointed Abu Dujanah as his representative in Madina and proceeded to Makkah on the 28th of Zil Qa'dah taking with himself sixty sacrificial animals. When he reached Zil Hulayfah he put on, at Masjid Shajarah, ehram, which consisted of two plain sheets of cloth, and while putting on ehram he recited the well-known supplication, which commences with the word *Labbayk* (Here am I) which is a reply to the call of Prophet Ibrahim.

He said *Labbayk* every time he saw a rider or arrived at a high or a low spot. When he reached near Makkah he discontinued reciting *Labbayk.* He arrived in Makkah on the 4th of Zil Hajah went straight to the Masjid Haram entering there through the gate of Bani Shaybah. He was then glorifying Allah and seeking blessings for Prophet Ibrahim.

During tawaf he stood opposite the Black stone. In the first instance he performed its istilam2 and then went round the Ka'bah seven times. Thereafter he stood behind Maqam-i Ibrahim and offered tawaf prayers consisting of two rak'ats. After offering the prayers he commenced Sa'i between Safa and Marwah.3

Then he turned to the pilgrims and said: "Those who have not brought sacrificial animals with them should come out of the state of ehram and all the things which are unlawful for them (during ehram) will become lawful with taqseer (shortening the hair and/or cutting the nails). However, I and others who have brought sacrificial animals with us shall remain in the condition of ehram till we have slaughtered the animals in Mina.

This thing weighed heavily on some persons and their excuse was that they did not like that the Prophet should continue to remain in ehram whereas they should go out of it, and the things which were unlawful

for him should become lawful for them. At times they said: "It is not correct that we should be the pilgrims of the House of Allah and the drops of the water of (ceremonial) washing should be falling from our heads and necks".4

The Prophet chanced to see Umar who was still in the state of ehram and asked him whether he had brought any sacrificial animal with him. He replied in the negative. Thereupon the Prophet said: "Then why have you not come out of ehram.

He replied: "I don't like that I should come out of ehram whereas you should continue to remain in the same state". The Prophet said "You will stick to this belief not only now, but till the day of your death".

The Prophet was displeased on account of the doubt and indecision of the people and said: "If the future had been as clear to me as the past, and I had been aware of your unjustified indecision and doubt, I too would have come for the pilgrimage of the House of Allah without a sacrificial animal just like yourselves.

However, I can't help, because I have brought the sacrificial animals with me and according to the Command of Allah, "Till the sacrificial (animal) reaches its place". I must remain in the state of ehram till I have slaughtered those animals at the sacrificial ground of Mina.

However, every person who has not brought a sacrificial animal with him should come out of ehram and should treat, whatever he has already performed, to be umrah and should, thereafter, wear ehram for Haj.5

Ali Returns From Yemen To Partake In Haj Ceremonies

The Commander of the Faithful became aware of the Prophet's departure to perform Haj. He also proceeded to Makkah along with his soldiers to perform Haj and took thirty-four sacrificial animals with him. He also brought with him the pieces of cloth which he had collected from the people of Najran the prescribed tribute. While on his way he delegated the command of the soldiers to an officer of his and himself hurried to Makkah.

He met the Prophet, who was extremely pleased to see him and asked him: "How did you make your intention?" He replied: "At the time appropriate for ehram I put on ehram with your intention and said 'O Allah! I too am putting on ehram with the same intention with which Your Prophet has put it on'. Then he informed the Prophet about the sacrificial animals which he had brought with him. The Prophet said: "The obligation of both of us in this matter is one and the same and we must remain in the state of ehram till the sacrificial animals are slaughtered".

Then he ordered Ali to go back to his soldiers and bring them to Makkah. When Ali rejoined his soldiers he found that all the pieces of cloth, which he had collected from the people of Najran in accordance with the agreement concluded on the day of Mubahilah, had been distributed amongst the soldiers and they were wearing them by way of ehram.

Ali was very much displeased on account of this action which had been taken by his representative during his absence and said to him: "Why did you distribute the pieces of cloth amongst the soldiers before I delivered them to the Prophet?" He replied: They insisted that I should lend the pieces of cloth to them and take back after the Haj ceremonies had been performed". Ali said to him: "You were not authorized to do so". Then he took back the pieces of cloth from them, packed them and delivered them to the Prophet in Makkah.

People, for whom justice and discipline is painful, and who wish that events should always take the turn liked by them, went before the Prophet and expressed their annoyance at Ali's taking back the pieces of cloth from them. The Prophet asked one of his companions to go to the complainants and convey to them his message: "Desist from speaking ill of Ali. He is dauntless in enforcing Divine laws and is not a flatterer".6

Haj Ceremonies Begin

Ceremonies of Umrah came to an end. The Prophet was not inclined to stay in the house of anyone during the interval between the ceremonies of Umrah and those of Haj. He, therefore, ordered his tent to be pitched outside Makkah.

The eighth day of Zil Haj arrived. The pilgrims of the House of Allah proceeded on the same day from Makkah to "Arafah so that they might perform the ceremony of "Arafah from noon of 9th Zil Haj till the sunset on that day.

On 8th Zil Haj, which is also called the day of tarwiyyah the Prophet proceeded to "Arafah via Mina and stayed in Mina till sunrise on the 9th of the month. Then he mounted his camel, left for "Arafah and alighted at a place called Numrah, where his tent had been pitched. Addressing the splendid gathering there he delivered his historical sermon while he was mounted on the camel.

The Historical Sermon Of The Prophet At The Time Of The Farewell Haj

On that day the land of 'Arafah witnessed a great and splendid gathering, the like of which had not till then been seen by the people of the Hijaz. The voice of monotheism and the slogans of the worship of One Allah were ringing in that land. The place which had been, till only a little time earlier, the residence of the polytheists and idolaters became, forever, the base for the worshippers of One Allah.

The Prophet offered the noon and the afternoon prayers in "Arafah along with 100,000 persons, and the victory of Islam over blasphemy became decisive and final. Thereafter, the Prophet mounted his camel, and delivered the historical sermon, which was repeated by one of his companions, who had a loud voice, so that those at a distance might also come to know what the Prophet was saying. On that day he

commenced his sermon thus:

"O people! Hear my words, for it is possible that I may not meet you at this spot in future".

"O people! Your blood and property (honour and reputation7) are respectable for one another, like this day and this month, till the day on which you meet Allah, and every transgression in this behalf is unlawful".

In order to be sure of the desired impression of his words on the people about the respectability of the lives and property of the Muslims the Prophet asked Rabi'ah bin Umayyah to ask them: "Which month is this?" –All of them replied: "It is a respectable month and warfare during this month is prohibited and unlawful".

Then the Prophet said to Rabi'ah: "Tell them: Allah has declared your blood and property unlawful and respectable for one another like this month until you leave this world." He again said to Rabi'ah: "Ask them which land is this?" – All of them replied: "It is a respectable land and bloodshed and transgression in it is strictly prohibited". He then said to Rabi'ah: "Tell them your blood and property are respectable like this land and every sort of transgression in it is prohibited ".

Thereafter the Prophet said to Rabi'ah: "Ask them which day is this?"–They replied: "It is the day of Haj–i Akbar (the Great Haj)". The Prophet said: "Tell them your blood and property are respectable like this day".8

"Yes, O people! You should know that the blood, which was shed during the Days of Ignorance should be forgotten and should not be avenged. Even the blood of Ibn Rabi'ah (a relative of the Prophet) should be forgotten.

You will return to Allah soon and in that world your good and bad deeds will be weighed. I tell you. One, to whom something has been entrusted, should return it to its owner.

Yes, O people! You must know that usury is strictly prohibited in Islam. Those, who have invested their capital to earn interest can take back their capital only. They should neither oppress nor be oppressed. And as regards the interest which the debtors of Abbas owed to him before Islam the same has lapsed and he has no right to claim it.

"O people! Satan has lost hope of his being worshipped in your land. However, if you follow him in small matters he will be happy and pleased. So do not follow Satan."

Making change9 in the sacred months (i.e. those months in which warfare etc. is unlawful) shows excessiveness of blasphemy, and those unbelievers, who are not acquainted with the sacred months are misguided because of this change and consequently a sacred month becomes lawful in one year and prohibited in another. They think that by doing so they change things made lawful by Allah into unlawful and vice versa.

It is necessary that the arrangement of lawful and sacred months should be according to the days on which Allah created the skies, the earth, the moon and the sun. In the eyes of Allah the number of months is twelve and out of these He has declared four months to be sacred. They are the months of Zil Qa'd, Zil Haj and Muharram, which are consecutive, and then the month of Rajab.

"Yes, O people! Your women have rights over you and you too have rights over them. Your right is that they should not admit anyone in the house without your consent, and should not be guilty of something unfair, failing which Allah has authorized you to quit their beds and also chastise them. In case, however, they revert to the path of truth, you should treat them with kindness and love and should provide them with comfortable means of life".

I recommend to you on this land that you should be kind to your women, because you hold them in trust from Allah and they have become lawful for you according to His laws.

"Yes, O people! Hear my words carefully and ponder over them. I am leaving two memorable things amongst you–one of them is the Book of Allah and the other is my speech and Sunnah,10 and if you abide by them you will never get astray."

"Yes, O people! Hear my words and think over them. Every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim and all Muslims of the world are brothers of one another. And anything out of the property of the Muslims is not lawful for a Muslim except when he acquires it with an honest intention." 11

"Yes, O people! Those present should communicate these remarks to those who are absent. After me there will be no prophet and after you Muslims there will be no ummah.12

"O people! You should know that I am announcing it today that I have banned all the ceremonies and beliefs of the Age of Ignorance and am informing you of their falsity".13

At this Juncture the Prophet discontinued the sermon and making a sign towards the sky with his forefinger said: "O Allah! I have communicated your message". Then after saying thrice: "O Allah! Be witness to it", he brought the sermon to an end.

The Prophet stayed in Arafah on the ninth of Zil Haj till sunset and before the sun was hidden in the western horizon and the atmosphere became somewhat dark he mounted his camel and spent a part of the night in Muzdalifah, and the time between dawn and sunrise in Mash'ar.

On the tenth day he proceeded to Mina and performed the ceremonies of Rami–i Jamrah, sacrifice and taqseer. Then he proceeded to Makkah to perform other ceremonies of Haj and thus he practically taught the same to others. In the terminology of Hadith and history this historical journey is called *Hijjatul Wida'* (the farewell Haj) and at times it is also named *Hajul Balagh* (Haj of the delivery of the message) and *Hajul Islam* (Haj of Islam). Each of these names has some associations, which are quite evident.

In the end it may be mentioned that it is commonly known amongst the traditionalists that the Prophet

delivered this sermon on the day of 'Arafah, but some of them believe that this sermon was delivered on the 10th day of Zil Haj.14

1. Seerah–i Halabi, vol. III, page 289.
2. Istilam means rubbing one's hands with the Black Stone before performing tawaf; the point underlying it is that, while constructing the Ka'bah, Ibrahim stood on it. Hence this stone has acquired a peculiar honour. During his ten years' stay in Madina the Prophet performed 'Umrah twice –for the first time in the seventh year and for the second time in the eighth year of migration, it was after the conquest of Makkah. The present 'Umrah was the third one which he performed along with the ceremonies of Haj. (Tabaqat–i Kubra, vol. II, page 174).
3. Safa and Marwah are the names of two hills which are situated near Masjidul Haram and Sa'i means covering the distance between those hills. Sa'i commences from Safa and ends at Marwah.
4. It is an allusion to sexual intercourse and the washing necessitated by it, because one of the things prohibited, while one is in the state of ehram, is sexual intercourse with a woman and its prohibition ends with Taqseer.
5. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 319.
6. Biharul Anwar, voI. XXI, page 385.
7. Khisal by Shaykh Saduq, vol. II, page 84.
8. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 605.
9. The custodians of the Ka'bah used to change the sacred months after taking money from those people, who were keen to wage war during these months.
10. In this historical sermon the Prophet recommended the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah to the people; and in the sermon delivered at Ghadir and at the time of his death he recommended to them the Book of Allah and his own progeny. There is nothing contradictory between these two versions which were delivered on two different occasions, because there can be no objection to the Prophet treating Sunnah as equivalent to the Qur'an and announcing both of them as memorable things on one occasion and recommending his family and successors on another occasion and insisting upon their following them, which is in fact following the Prophet and his Sunnah. Some ulema of Ahl Sunnat have imagined in their exegeses that the Prophet said these words on one occasion only, and have mentioned his progeny in the footnotes as an alternative, whereas we do not stand in need of any such correction, because, as a matter of principle, there is no contradiction between the two narratives.
11. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 605.
12. Khisal by Shaykh Saduq, page 84.
13. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXI, page 405.
14. Tabaqat–i Ibn Sa'd, vol. II, pp. 184–186.

From the viewpoint of Shi'ah scholars khilafat (caliphate) is a Divine office which is entrusted to the most distinguished, the most appropriate and the wisest person of the ummah (nation). The most clear line of demarcation between a Prophet and an Imam (Prophet's successor) is that the Prophet lays the foundation of a religion, receives revelation and possesses a Book.

However, as regards the Imam, though he does not possess any of these positions, yet, besides possessing the position of a ruler he is one, who explains and conveys that part of the Divine religion which could not be publicly narrated by the Prophet on account of lack of opportunity or because of the circumstances being unfavourable and, therefore, left it to his successors to tell them.

Hence from the Shi'ah point of view the caliph is not only a ruler of the time, a leader of Islam, the executive authority, the protector of the rights and the defender of the forts and frontiers of the country,

but he is also one, who explains the knotty problems of the religion and completes that portion of the orders and laws which could not, for some reasons, be narrated by the founder of the religion.

According to the scholars of Ahl Sunnat, however, caliphate is a customary and secular office and the object of its creation is only to protect the worldly affairs and the material interests of the Muslims. According to them the caliph is selected, by making a reference to the public opinion, for the administration of political, judicial and economic matters.

As regards disposal of religious matters including interpretation of laws, which were enacted during the time of the Prophet but could not be promulgated on account of various reasons, it is the concern of the scholars of Islam and it is for them to solve such difficult and knotty problems by means of Ijtihad.

On account of this difference in the views of the Muslims about the reality of caliphate two different wings appeared in them divided them into two groups This difference continues even at present.

According to the first view an Imam shares some attributes with the Prophet and is at par with him in that regard and the conditions, the fulfillment of which is considered necessary for the Prophet, are also necessary for the Imam. Here are the conditions which must be fulfilled by the Prophet as well as by the Imam:

1. The Prophet must be infallible viz. he should not commit any sin throughout his life and should not make any mistake while narrating the orders and realities of the religion or replying to the religious queries of the people. The Imam should also be like-wise and the argument in both the cases is the same.

2. The Prophet should be the wisest person in the matter of religious law and none of the points relating to religion should be hidden from him. And as the Imam is one who completes or narrates that portion of the religious law which was not narrated during the time of the Prophet of Allah, he (i.e. the Imam) too should be the most knowledgeable person with regard to the commands, and rules and regulations of religion.

3. Prophethood is a status which comes through nomination by Allah and not through selection by the people. A Prophet is introduced by Allah and is appointed to the office of prophethood by Him, because it is only He who can distinguish between an infallible and a fallible person and only He can understand as to who has attained such a position under the auspices of His blessing that he should be aware of all the details of the religion.

However, according to the second point of view (i.e. of the Sunnis), it is not necessary that any of the conditions for prophethood should be found in the Imam. It is not necessary that he should possess infallibility, righteousness, knowledge or conversance with religious law or should be nominated or should have relationship with the occult world.

It is sufficient that he should protect the glory and worldly interests of Islam by making use of his own intelligence as well as by consulting the Muslims and should ensure the security, of the area by enforcing penal laws and should endeavour to extend the territories of Islam under the call for jihad.

Prophethood And Imamate Were Inter-Related

Besides the logical and philosophical arguments which finally prove the correctness of the first viewpoint the hadiths and the narrations which have come down from the Prophet of Islam also confirm the view of Shi'ah Ulema.

During the period of his prophethood the Prophet specified his successor time and again and excluded the subject of Imamate (successorship) from the purview of selection or reference to the popular vote. He not only specified his successor during the last days of his life, but, even at the outset of his prophethood, when not more than two persons had embraced his religion, he introduced his successor to the people.

One day he was ordered by Allah to warn his near ones of Divine torture and to invite them to Islam before extending an invitation to the public. In a meeting in which forty-five elders of the family of Bani Hashim were present he said: "The first person amongst you who assists me will be my brother and successor".

When Ali stood up and acknowledged his prophethood he turned to those present and said: "This young man is my brother and successor."1 This hadith is very well known amongst the exegetes and the traditionalists with the name of hadith Yaumud Dar and hadith Bid'ul Da'wah.

Not only at the commencement of his prophethood but on various other occasions also the Prophet made declarations about the mastership and the succession of Ali. However, none of these declarations equals the hadith of Ghadir in its greatness, clarity decisiveness and universality.

The ceremonies of Haj were over and the Muslims directly learnt the religious acts connected with Haj from the Prophet. The Prophet decided to leave Makkah for Madina. Orders for departure were given. When the caravan reached the region of Rabigh,2 which is situated at a distance of three miles from Juhfah,3 the Archangel Jibreel descended at a place called Ghadir Khum and communicated the following verse to the Prophet:

O Messenger! Convey what is revealed to you from your Lord, for if you do it not, it would be as though you have not conveyed His message. Allah will protect you from the people. (**Surah al-Ma'ida, 5:67**).

The tone of the verse shows that the Almighty Allah entrusted a very important task to the Prophet. And what task could be more important than that he should appoint Ali as his caliph and successor before the very eyes of hundreds of thousands of people.

Hence orders were given to all the persons to halt. People who had gone forward ceased to move further and those who were left behind joined them. It was the noon time and the weather was very hot. The people covered their heads with a part of their cloaks and placed the other part under their feet.

A shade was arranged for the Prophet by means of a cloak which was thrown on a tree. He offered the noon prayers in congregation. Thereafter, while the people were encircling him, he took his place on a platform which had been prepared with the saddles of the camels, and delivered the following sermon in a loud voice.

Sermon Of The Prophet At Ghadir Khum

All glory is specially for Allah. We seek His help and have faith in Him and rely upon Him. We seek refuge in Him from our evil doings and indecent deeds. He is the Lord besides whom there is no guide. There will be none to mislead one whom He guides. I testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger.

Yes, O people! I may soon accept the Divine invitation and may depart from amongst you. I am responsible and you too are responsible. What is your opinion about me?" At this stage those present said loudly: "We testify that you have carried out your mission and made efforts in this behalf. My Allah reward you for this!"

The Prophet said: "Do you testify that the Lord of the World is one and Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger and that there is no doubt about life in the other world?" All of them said: "It's correct and we testify it".

Then the Prophet said: "O my followers! I am leaving behind two valuable assets as legacies to you and it is to be seen as to how you behave with these two legacies of mine".

At this moment a person stood up and said with a loud voice: "What do you mean by the two exquisite things? To this the Prophet replied; "One of them is the Book of Allah, one side of which is related to Allah and the other side is in your hands. And the other thing is my progeny and my Ahl al-Bayt. Allah has informed me that these too memorable things will not act separated from each other".

Yes, O people, Don't seek precedence over the Qur'an and over my progeny and do not be negligent in your behaviour towards them, lest you should be annihilated. At this moment he held the hand of Ali and raised it so high that the whiteness of the armpits of both of them became visible to the people.

He introduced him (i.e. Ali) to all the people and then said: "Who enjoys more rights over the believers than themselves?" All of them said, "Allah and His Prophet know better". Then the Prophet said: "Allah is my *maula* (master) and I am the *maula* of the believers and I am more deserving and enjoy more rights over them than they themselves.

Yes, O people! Of whomsoever I am the maula this Ali is also his maula.4

"O Allah! Love those, who love Ali and be inimical to those who are inimical towards Ali. O Allah! help Ali's friends; humiliate his enemies and make him the pivot of truth".

In the meanwhile the Archangel Jibreel came and brought this verse:

This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favours to you, and have chosen for you the religion Islam **(Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:3)**

At this moment the Prophet pronounced Takbir loudly and then added: "I thank Allah for His having perfected His religion and for having completed His favour and for His having been pleased with the mastership and succession of Ali after me".

Then the Prophet stepped down from the platform and said to Ali: "Sit in a tent so that the chiefs and distinguished personalities of Islam may shake hands with you and congratulate you".

The two shaykhs (Abu Bakr and Umar) congratulated Ali before all others and called him their *maula.*

Hassan bin Thabit, the renowned poet, after obtaining the Prophet's permission recited the following verses:

"He said to Ali: Stand up for I have selected you to succeed me and to guide the people after me".

"Of whomsoever I am the *maula* Ali is his *maula.* You love him sincerely and follow him".

The Authentic Sources Of The Hadith Ghadir

Amongst all the traditions and Islamic narrations no other hadith (tradition) has been published and quoted as much as Hadith Ghadir. From out of the Ulema of Ahl Sunnat alone 353 have quoted it in their books and the number of authorities they rely upon reaches up to 110 companions. 26 great scholars of Islam have written independent books about the authorities and channels of this hadith. The famous historian of Islam, Abu Ja'far Tabari, has collected the authorities and channels of this hadith in two big volumes.

Throughout the passage of history this hadith has been the greatest authority about the precedence of Imam Ali over all other companions of the Prophet and Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, himself argued on its basis in the consultative meeting which was held after the death of the Second Caliph as well as during the Caliphate of Uthman and his own Caliphate.

Besides the Commander of the Faithful many other distinguished personalities amongst the Muslims have always relied on this hadith in reply to the opponents and deniers of the rights of Ali.

The event of Ghadir5 enjoys so much importance that, as quoted by numerous exegetes and traditionalists, verses of the Holy Qur'an have been revealed in connection with the event of that day.

1. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 216 and Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 410.
2. Rabigh is a place situated between Makkah and Madina.
3. It is one of the Miqats (i.e. places where ehram is put on). From here the paths of the people of Madina, Egypt and Iraq were separated.
4. In order to make sure that no misunderstanding arose afterwards the Prophet repeated this sentence thrice.
5. For further details refer al-Ghadir vol. I, by Allamah Amini.

The Impostors And Apprehensions Of Rome

After the formalities regarding the appointment of the successor had been completed at Ghadir Khum, all the people who had come from Syria and Egypt to partake in the ceremonies of Haj took their leave of the Prophet at Juhfah and proceeded to their homes.

And the persons, who had come from Hazramaut and Yemen, also separated from the Haj caravan at this or an earlier point and left for their homes. However, the ten thousand persons who had come with the Prophet from Madina accompanied him back to Madina and reached there before the close of the tenth year of migration

The Prophet and the Muslims were happy that Islam had spread throughout Arabia, the rule of polytheism and idolatry had come to an end throughout the Hijaz and all impediments in the way of the spread of Islam had been removed.

The Muharram moon of the 11th year of migration was about to be sighted in Madina when two persons came there from Yamamah and brought a letter for the Prophet from Musaylimah, who later became known as Musaylimah Kazzab (viz. Musaylimah, the Liar).

One of the secretaries of the Prophet opened the letter and read it over to him. The letter showed that a man known as Musaylimah claimed to be a prophet in Yamamah. He claimed to be a partner of the Prophet in the prophethood and desired by means of the said letter to inform the Prophet about this.

The text of Musaylimah's letter has been preserved in the books of biography and Islamic history. The phraseology of the letter shows that the writer wants to imitate the manner of the Holy Qur'an. However, this imitation has made his letter so insipid, degraded and worthless that his other usual sentences are far better than it.

In his letter he wrote to the Prophet thus: "I have been made your partner in the matter of prophethood. Half of the land belongs to us and the other half belongs to Quraysh. However, Quraysh do not act justly".

When the Prophet came to know about the contents of the letter he turned to those, who had brought it and said: "If you had not been the ambassadors and messengers I would have ordered you to be put to death. When you had already embraced Islam and acknowledged my prophethood, why did you follow such a blockhead and give up the sacred religion of Islam? The Prophet called his secretary and dictated a brief but pithy and strong reply. Here is the text of the Prophet's letter:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

This is a letter from Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah to Musaylimah, the Liar. Peace be upon the followers of guidance. The earth belongs to Allah and He gives it to those pious servants of His, whom He wishes. And the pious persons meet a good end.1

A Short Biography Of Musaylimah

He was one of those persons, who came to Madina in the tenth year of migration and embraced Islam. However, after his return to his birthplace he himself claimed to be a prophet and some simple-minded and also some fanatical persons responded to his call. His popularity in Yamamah was not a manifestation of his real personality.

Some people had gathered round him knowing that he was a liar and their logic was this: "A liar of Yamamah is better than a truthful person of the Hijaz". This sentence was uttered by one of the supporters of Musaylimah when he asked him: "Does an angel descend on you?" He said: "Yes. Its name is Rahman". The man asked: "Is that angel in light or in darkness?"

Musaylimah replied: "In darkness". The man said "I testify that you are a liar. However, a liar of the Rabi'ah tribe of Yamamah is better than a truthful person of the Mazar tribe of the Hijaz" (By the truthful person of Mazar he meant the Prophet of Islam.)

It cannot be gain said that this man claimed to be a prophet and gathered some persons round him. However, it is not at all established that he planned to contend with the Holy Qur'an, and the sentences and verses which have been quoted in the historical texts as examples of his contention with the Qur'an cannot be the logic and wording of an eloquent person like Musaylimah, because his usual words and sentences carry great firmness and self-possession.

In view of this it may be said that whatever has been attributed to him is like the sentences which have been attributed to his contemporary Aswad bin Ka'b 'Unsi who claimed to be a prophet in Yemen simultaneously with Musaylimah2 and it is not improbable that all these may be mere embellishments, in both the cases, resorted to with some specific motives.

The reason for holding this view is that the Holy Qur'an possesses such an unusual greatness and eloquence that nobody can pick up courage to think of contending with it and every Arab knew clearly that it was humanly impossible to imitate.

After the demise of the Prophet campaign against the apostates was the first action of the Islamic Caliphate. Hence, the zone of Musaylimah's influence was besieged by the forces of Islam.

When the siege was tightened and the eventual defeat of this pretender became evident some of his simple-minded friends said to him: "What has happened to the occult help and support which you had promised us? Musaylimah replied: "There is no news about occult law and help. It was a false promise which I gave you. However, it is incumbent upon you to defend your honour and greatness".

However, defence of honour and greatness was of little avail! Musaylimah and a group of his friends were killed within the precincts of a garden and the false prophethood met the end it deserved.

The very sentence translated above shows that he was an eloquent speaker and it also shows that he is not at all the speaker of those insipid sentences, which history has attributed to him, as specimens of his contention with the Holy Qur'an.

Apprehension Of Rome

Although the appearance of such impostors to prophethood in different parts of Arabia constituted a danger for Islamic unity, the Prophet was more worried about the Romans, who held Syria and Palestine as a part of their colonies, because he knew that the able and competent Governors of Yamamah and Yemen would be able to deal with the impostors to prophethood.

Hence, Aswad Unsi, the second impostor during the time of the Prophet was killed, as a result of the measures adopted by the Governor of Yemen, only one day before the Prophet breathed his last.

The Prophet was sure that the powerful Rulers of Rome, who were watching the ever increasing influence of the Islamic Government, would be disturbed as Christianity has been losing its influence in Arabia and Islam having obliged some Christians to pay tribute to the Islamic Government. He had been apprehending very seriously the danger from the side of Romans for quite some time.

It was for this very reason that in the eighth year of Migration he sent an army to the territory of the Romans under the command of Ja'far bin Abi Talib, Zayd bin Harith and Abdullah Rawaha, and in this encounter all the three commanders were killed and the army of Islam returned to Madina, as a result of the management of Khalid, without achieving victory.

When the news of the intended attack upon the Hijaz by Romans spread in Madina in 9 A.H. the Prophet proceeded to Tabuk personally at the head of 30,000 strong army and, returned to Madina without fighting and without encountering the enemy.

In view of all this the Prophet apprehended very serious danger and for this reason he organized, after return to Madina, an army consisting of the Muhajirs and the Ansar, which included distinguished persons like Abu Bakr, Umar, Abi 'Ubaydah, Sa'd Waqqas etc. In fact he ordered that all those Muhajirs

who had migrated to Madina earlier than others should participate in this battle.3

In order to arouse the religious sentiments of the Muslim warriors the Prophet fastened a standard for Usamah with his own hands4 and gave him the following instructions:

"Fight in the name of Alllah and in His path. Fight against the enemies of Allah. Attack the people of Unba5 early in the morning and cover this distance so quickly that you and your soldiers should arrive at that place before the news of your march reaches there".

Usamah gave the standard to Buraydah and fixed Jurf6 to be his camping-place so that the Muslim soldiers might arrive there in groups and then all might depart at a fixed time.

The Prophet had two things in view while he selected a young man to be the head of the army and placed the elders from amongst the Muhajirs and the Ansar under his command; firstly he wanted to compensate Usamah for the calamity which had befallen him on account of his having lost his father in the Battle of Mutah and to exalt his personality; secondly he wished to revive the law of distribution of work and position on the basis of personality and ability, and wanted to make it clear that public offices and situations demand nothing except ability and skill and have nothing to do with age, so that capable young men might prepare themselves for important public responsibilities and should know that in Islam status and office have a direct link with ability and skill and not with years and age.

Islam is strict discipline in accordance with the Divine teachings; and a real Muslim is he, who submits before Allah's orders like a soldier on the battlefield, and accepts those orders sincerely-whether they result in his benefit or in his loss, and whether they are according to his wishes or against them.

Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, defines the reality of Islam in a brief but very pithy sentence. He says: IsIam is nothing except submission to its orders".7

Some persons resort to discrimination in the matter of rules and regulations of Islam, and whenever they find them to be opposed to their personal wishes, they at once raise objections and try to find some pretext to divest themselves of their obligations. These people lack Islamic discipline, and do not possess the real spirit of submission, which is the basis and root of Islam.

The commandership of the young man, Usamah bin Zayd, whose age did not then exceed twenty years,8 is a clear proof of what we have said above, because his status annoyed a number of the companions, who were much older than he. They began to sneer and object and utter words which showed lack of military discipline and absence of the spirit of submission to the orders of the Supreme Commander of Islam (i.e. the Prophet).

Their main objection was that the Prophet had appointed a young man as the commander of senior companions.9 They were, however, not aware of the greater interests involved in the matter as explained by us in the foregoing lines, they assessed it in accordance with their limited wisdom and

personal interests.

Notwithstanding the fact that they felt clearly that the Prophet was endeavouring to mobilize this army, some mysterious hands were delaying its departure from the camping-place at Jurf and were plotting evil designs.

The next day after the Prophet fastened the standard of war for Usamah, he fell sick with high fever and headache. This ailment continued for some days and eventually resulted in his tragic demise.

The Prophet became aware, during his illness, that the movement of the army from the camping-place was being obstructed, and some persons were sneering at the commandership of Usamah. This annoyed him immensely and with a towel on his shoulder and a piece of cloth tied to his head, he went into the mosque so that he might speak to the Muslims from near and warn them with regard to the violation of his orders.

While he had high temperature, he mounted the pulpit and, after glorifying the Almighty Allah, spoke thus: "Yes, O people! I am very sad on account of delay in the departure of the army. It appears that the commandership of Usamah has been disliked by some of you, and you have started raising objections.

However, your objections and disobedience is nothing new. Previously you criticized the commandership of Usamah's father Zayd. I swear by Allah that he was fit for this office and his son is also fit for it. He is dear to me. O people! Be good to him, and, also, recommend to others that they should be good to him. He is one of your good ones".

The Prophet finished his sermon at this juncture, dismounted from the pulpit and went into bed with a high fever and a heavy body. He repeatedly recommended to the senior companions, who came to enquire after his health "Make Usamah's army move".[10] And at times he said: "Equip Usamah's army" or "Send Usamah's army".

The Prophet was so keen for the departure of Usamah's army that while he was bed-ridden on account of illness, asked his companions to equip Usamah's army for departure, he also cursed those, who wished to separate themselves from the army and to stay on in Madina.[11]

These recommendations led to the elders from amongst the Muhajirs and the Ansar coming to see the Prophet to bid him farewell and then willy nilly leave Madina to join the army of Usamah at the camping-place of Jurf.

During the two or three days when Usamah was busy arranging the preliminaries of the march, news about the serious condition of the Prophet were reaching from Madina and weakened the determination of the people to depart, until, on Monday the commander of the army came to bid farewell to the Prophet and noticed some improvement in him.

The Prophet asked him to proceed to his destination as early as possible. He returned to the camping-

place and issued orders for the march of the army. The army had not yet left Jurf (the camping-place) when news reached from Madina that the Prophet was on the brink of the grave.

Some persons, who had delayed the departure of the army for sixteen days on different excuses, made the serious condition of the Prophet a pretext and returned to Madina, and others also followed suit. Thus one of the earnest desires of the Prophet could not be fulfilled during his lifetime on account of the indiscipline of some of the officers of the army.[12]

A Lame Excuse

It is not possible to explain away such a mistake on the part of some of those companions who later held the reins of the Caliphate and assumed the title of the Caliph of the Prophet! Some scholars of Ahl Sunnat have endeavoured to explain away their disobedience in various ways. For the perusal of their unfounded apologies, refer to the books entitled al-Muraji'at[13] and al-Nass wal Ijtihad.[14]

Seeking Forgiveness For Those Burled In Baqi

Some of the biographers have stated thus: "On the day the Prophet's temperature became very high and he was confined to bed, he went to the graveyard of Baqi at midnight, accompanied by his servant Abi Muwayhabah[15] to seek forgiveness for those buried there.

Some historians believe that on the day the Prophet felt unwell he caught the hand of Ali and proceeded to the graveyard of Baqi along with a group of persons, who were following them, and said to those accompanying him: "I have been ordered by Allah to seek forgiveness for the people of Baqi".

When he set his foot in the graveyard he greeted those buried there, and spoke thus: "I send my greetings to you, who are buried under earth. May the condition in which you are, be happy and wholesome for you. Disturbances have appeared like the parts of a dark night and are united with one another". Then he sought forgiveness for the people of Baqi.

Thereafter he turned to Ali and said: "The key of the treasures of the world and prolonged life in it has been presented to me and I have been given a choice between them and meeting Allah and entry into Paradise but I have preferred meeting Allah and entry into Paradise. (As quoted by the narrators of Tabaqat etc. he turned his face to Abi Muwayhabah)

"The Archangel Jibreel used to present the Qur'an to me once every year, but this year he has presented it to me twice. There can be no reason for this except that the time of my departure has drawn near".[16]

The people, who see this world with material eyes only, and do not consider the aim of creation to be anything beyond matter and its manifestations, may perhaps entertain doubts in this regard and may say to themselves: "How can one contact the souls and converse with them and how can one become aware of the time of one's own death?"

However, the people, who have disavowed materialism and believe in the existence of a soul independent of the elemental body, do not at all deny contact with the souls and consider it to be something possible and real.17723

A Prophet, who is connected with the world of revelation and other worlds independent of matter, and who is free from mistakes, can certainly give information regarding Allah's will about his death.

1. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol.II, pp. 600–601.
2. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 599.
3. Seerah–i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 642 and al–Nass wal Ijtihad (page 12) by Sharafuddin 'Amili.
4. According to the historical sources of Ahl sunnat the standard was fastened on the 26th of Safar and as, according to them, the death of the Prophet took place on the 12th of Rabiul Awwal; hence all the events which the readers will peruse are likely to have taken place during a period of sixteen days. However, as the Shi'ah scholars, following the descendants of the Prophet consider the date of his death to be 28th Safar, it would be necessary that these events should have taken place some days earlier than 28th Safar.
5. It is a strip of land in the region of Balqa in Syria and is situated between 'Asqalan and Ramlah near Muta'.
6. It is an extensive place three miles away from Madina towards the side of Syria.
7. Nahjul Balaghah, Kalimat–i Qisar, (saying No. 125).
8. Some of the biographers like Halabi have mentioned his age to be 17 and according to some others he was 18. However, all are agreed that his age at that time did not exceed 20.
9. Tabaqat–i Ibn Said, vol. II, page 120.
10. Tabaqat–i Ibn Sa'd, vol. II, page 190.
11. al–Milal wan Nahl by Shahristani, Fourth Preface page 29 and Sharh–i Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. II, page 20.
12. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 190.
13. al–Muraji'at, pages 310 – 311.
14. al–Nass wal Ijtihad, pp. 15 – 19.
15. Some say that he was accompanied by Abu Rafe' or by Burayrah, the servant of A'isha (Tabaqat, vol. II, page 204).
16. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 204 and Bihar, vol. XXII, page 466.
17. However, as has also been stated in discussions relating to contact with the souls, it is not proper to listen to every claimant.

The last chapter of the life of the Prophet of Islam, when he was confined to bed, is one of the most delicate and subtle chapters of the history of Islam. In those days the Muslims were passing through very tragic moments.

Open disobedience on the part of some companions and their refusal to join the army of Usamah was an evidence of a series of underground activities and the earnest determination of the persons concerned that after the demise of the Prophet they would take possession of the governmental and political affairs of Islam, and would push back the person, who had been formally appointed on the day of Ghadir as the successor to the Prophet.

The Prophet also knew to some extent their intentions and, in order to neutralize their activities, insisted that all the senior companions should join the army of Usamah and should leave Madina as early as

possible to fight against the Romans.

However, in order to put their own plans into operation, the political jugglers excused themselves from joining Usamah's army on various pretexts and even prevented the army from marching off, so much so that the Prophet passed away but the army of Islam did not depart from Jurf (camping-place at Madina) and returned to Madina after sixteen days. Their detention was due to the death of the Prophet.

Thus the desire of the Prophet that on the day of his death Madina should be free from political mischief-makers, who might indulge in activities against his immediate successor, was not fulfilled. They did not only fail to leave Madina but endeavoured to forestall every action, which could possibly confirm the position of Ali as the uninterrupted successor of the Prophet and to prevent the Prophet, by different means, from talking on this subject.

The Prophet came to know about the shocking actions, and secret activities of some of their daughters, who happened to be his wives. In spite of the fact that he was suffering from high fever, he entered the mosque, stood by the side of the pulpit, turned his face to the people and said with a loud voice which could be heard even outside the mosque:

"O people! The mischief has been sparked off and rebellion has appeared like the pieces of a dark night. You have no excuse against me. I did not declare lawful anything except that which the Qur'an declared lawful and did not declare unlawful anything except that which the Qur'an declared unlawful.1

This sentence shows the Prophet's grave anxiety about the future and about the fate of Islam after his own death. What did he mean by the mischief which had been sparked off? Could it be anything other than the mischief and dispersion which was created after the death of the Prophet and its flames have not yet extinguished but continue to flare up?

Bring A Pen And An Ink-Pot So That I May Write A Will

The Prophet was aware of the activities which were in the offing outside his house, to take possession of the caliphate. In order to check the deflection of the caliphate from its real pivot and the appearance of differences and disputes he decided to affirm the Caliphate of Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, and the position of Ahl al-Bayt in writing so that the document in question might serve as a clear-cut evidence on the subject of caliphate.

One day, when the senior companions came to enquire about his health, he lowered his head a little and reflected for some time. Then he said to them: "Bring me a sheet of paper and an ink-pot so that I may write something for you, after which you will never be misguided".2

At this moment the Second Caliph broke the silence and said: "Sickness has overpowered the Prophet. The Qur'an is with you. The Divine Book is sufficient for us".

The view expressed by the Caliph became the subject of discussion, some persons opposed him and said: "The orders of the Prophet must be obeyed. Go and bring him pen and paper so that whatever he has in mind should be recorded". Some others took the side of the Caliph and prevented the procurement of pen and ink. The Prophet was extremely annoyed on account of their dispute and presumptuous words and said: "Get up and leave the house". (Be off from here).

After narrating this incident Ibn Abbas says: "The greatest calamity for Islam was that the discord and dispute of some companions prevented the Prophet from writing the deed which he intended to write".3

This historical event has been quoted by a number of Sunni and Shi'ah traditionalists and historians, and from the viewpoint of a critical study of tradition they consider it as falling under the category of the authentic and correct reports.

The point, which needs attention is that the Sunni traditionalists have quoted only the purport of the words of Umar and have not reproduced his presumptuous remarks. Evidently they have refrained from quoting the original remarks not because reproduction of such presumptuous remarks amounts to taking liberty with the Prophet but have altered the words of the Caliph with a view to protecting his position, so that the posterity might not form an adverse view about him on coming across such insulting remarks of his. Hence when Abu Bakr Jauhari, author of al-Saqifa, reaches at this point in his book he says, while quoting the remarks of Umar: "Umar said something the purport of which is that the sickness had overpowered the Prophet".4

However, when some of them wish to quote the text of the remarks of the Caliph, they refrain, with a view to protecting his position, from mentioning his name clearly and write only this: "And they said: The Prophet of Allah has spoken in a delirious state of mind".5

It is an admitted fact that whosoever utters such an indecent and repulsive sentence cannot be forgiven, because, as clearly mentioned by the Qur'an the Prophet was immune from every kind of mistake and whatever he said was revealed to him.

The dispute of the companions in the presence of the infallible Prophet was so repugnant and annoying that some of his wives, who were sitting behind a curtain, asked, by way of objection, as to why his orders were not being obeyed. In order to silence them the Caliph replied: "You women are like the companions of Prophet Yusuf. As and when the Prophet falls ill you shed tears and when he regains health you rule over him".6

Although some fanatics have apparently coined excuses for the Caliph having opposed the demand of the Prophet7 they have condemned him from the standpoint of logic, and have considered his remark (The Book of Allah is sufficient for us) to be baseless. All of them have admitted it very clearly that the Sunnah of the Prophet is the second pillar of Islam and the Book of Allah cannot at all relieve the Muslim Ummah from the need of the Prophet's Sunnah.

It is, however, surprising that Dr Haykal, the author of the book Hayat-i Muhammad has undertaken to side with the Caliph by way of a hint and writes: "After this event Ibn Abbas believed that on account of not writing what the Prophet wanted to be written the Muslims had lost something important but Umar stuck to his view, because Allah says in the Qur'an:

*We have neglected nothing in the book.*8

If, however, he had studied the preceding and succeeding words of the verse he would not have explained it in such an unjustified manner and would not have risen in support of the Caliph against the clear-cut words of the infallible Prophet, because the meaning of the word 'book' in the said verse is the creation and the pages of existence and the various species in the world of existence are different pages of the book of creation and these innumerable pages give shape to the book of creation. Here is the text of the verse:

All the beasts on land and flying birds have different communities just as you* (*men*) *have. We have not neglected anything in the book. They will be brought into the presence of their Lord. (**Surah al-An'am, 6:39**)

As the words preceding the sentence under consideration relate to the animals and the birds and the words succeeding it relate to the Day of Resurrection it can be said definitely that in this verse the meaning of the word book, from which nothing has been left out, is the book of creation.

Besides this, even if we admit that what is meant by the word book in this verse of the Qur'an is the Qur'an itself even then, as specified by the Qur'an itself, it is an admitted fact that it can be understood only in the light of the hadith and the guidance of the Prophet of Islam. The Holy Qur'an says:

Whom we had sent with miracles and revelations,

'Ask those who know about the Books, if you do not know about this'. We have revealed the Qur'an to you, so that you may explain to mankind what has been revealed to them and so that perhaps they will think. (**Surah al-Nahl, 16:44**)

In this verse it has not been said: "You may read to mankind". The words used are: "You may explain to mankind". Hence even if the Book of Allah be sufficient for mankind it stands in great need of explanation by the Prophet.

If the Muslim ummah could really dispense with such a document (i.e. the one which the Prophet proposed to write) why should Ibn Abbas have said the following words, while tears were trickling down his cheeks: "What a painful day was Thursday; when the Prophet said: "Bring me a shoulder-bone and an ink-pot or a paper and an ink-pot so that I may write something for you and you may not be misguided in future"; some persons said "The Prophet is....."9

How can it be said that in spite of the sentiments expressed by Ibn Abbas and the insistence made by

the Prophet himself, the Qur'an has enabled the Muslim Ummah to dispense with the will in question. And as the Prophet did not succeed in dictating such a will, can it be guessed by means of any definite indications as to what he intended to record in his will?

What Did The Will Aim At?

One of the best method of explaining the verses of the Qur'an, which even now commands the attention and favour of the research scholars and the ulema of the present times, is that the brevity and the ambiguity of a verse which may have been revealed on a subject, may be removed by means of another verse on the same subject, which may, from the point of view of expression, be more clear than the former one. In the terminology of exegesis, it is called explaining one verse with the help of another.

This method is not peculiar to the explanation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an; it applies to the Islamic traditions as well and the ambiguity of one hadith can be removed with the help of another tradition, because our great leaders have given emphatic and repeated directions on delicate and appreciable matters, the expression of which with regard to the aim is not identical and at the same level. Sometimes the aim has been expressed clearly and at another time it has been considered advisable only to allude to it.

As has been stated above the Prophet, while confined to bed, asked his companions to bring him pen and paper so that he might dictate a will and the same should be recorded. He also told them that the will would ensure their not going astray at anytime. (As is clear, the reason mentioned by the Prophet for writing the will was that people might not go astray). Later, on account of differences between those present, the Prophet abandoned the idea of writing the will.

It may possibly be asked: "On what subject did the Prophet want to write a will?" Reply to this question is quite clear, because, keeping in view the basic facts mentioned at the beginning of this discussion, it must be said that the aim of the Prophet in writing the will was nothing except confirming the Caliphate and succession of Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, and making it obligatory for the people to follow the members of his household.

This conclusion can be arrived at by studying the Hadith Thaqalayn which has been accepted by the Sunni and the Shi'ah traditionalists unanimously, because he spoke thus with regard to the will which he wanted to execute: "I am writing this document to ensure that you do not go astray after me".

And in the Hadith Thaqalayn also he used identical words and insisted that the people should follow the two Siqls (weighty or precious things viz. the Holy Qur'an and his progeny) so that they might not go astray after him. Here is the text of the Hadith Thaqalayn:

I am leaving two weighty (valuable) things amongst you. So long as you follow both of them you will not go astray. These two valuable things consist of the Book of Allah (the Qur'an) and my progeny and Ahl

al-Bayt".

Can it not be concluded from the wording of these two traditions, and the similarity present in them, that the aim of the Prophet in asking for pen and paper was to record the contents of the Hadith Thaqalayn in a more clear manner and to confirm the rulership and direct caliphate of his successor, which had been announced verbally on the 18th of Zil Haj when the Iraqi, the Egyptian and the Hijazi pilgrims were parting company (at Ghadir Khum).

Furthermore, the strong opposition of one, who immediately after the demise of the Prophet constituted a consultative body in Saqifah bani Sa'idah for the selection of a caliph and made his old friend a candidate for it in a special manner and the latter's nominating him as a caliph in violation of all principles, perhaps in recompense for his help, shows that there were indications in the gathering and into the speech of the Prophet that he wanted to dictate something about the caliphate and the rulership of the Muslims. He, therefore, strongly opposed the bringing of pen and paper, for otherwise there was no reason why he persisted so much that the pen and the paper should not be brought.

Why Did The Prophet Not Persist In Writing The Will?

Why did the Prophet not exercise his power to write the will when, in spite of the opposition by some persons, he could very well call his secretary and dictate the same to him?

The reply to this question is also clear. If the Prophet had persisted in writing the will, they, who were saying that illness had overpowered him, would have persisted more in their impoliteness and their supporters would also have given publicity to this view and endeavoured to prove their viewpoint. In that case, besides the fact that impoliteness towards the Prophet would have spread and continued, the will, too, would have lost its value.

Hence, when some persons in order to make amends for the ill treatment, asked the Prophet, whether they might bring pen and paper he was much disturbed and said: "After all that has been said, do you want to bring pen and paper? I recommend only that you should behave well with my progeny". Having said this he turned his face from those present and they too got up and dispersed. Only Ali, Abbas and Fadl remained there.[10]

Making Amends For The Matter

Although the open opposition by some companions made the Prophet abandon the writing of the will, he made his object known in another manner. History testifies that while he was very seriously ill he placed one hand on the shoulder of Ali and the other on the shoulder of Maiymunah, his slave-girl, and proceeded towards the mosque. In spite of severe pain and inconvenience he made himself reach the pulpit and mounted it. Tears trickled from the eyes of the people and perfect silence prevailed over the mosque. People were waiting to hear his last words and recommendations.

The Prophet broke the silence of the gathering and said: "I am leaving two valuable things amongst you". At this moment a man stood up and asked: "What is meant by two valuable things?" Then he added: "One of them is the Qur'an and the other is my progeny".11

Ibn Hajar Askalani has given another version of making amends for the matter and it is not incompatible with the former. He says: "One day, while the Prophet was unwell and his bed was encircled by his companions, he turned his face towards them and said: "O people! The time of my death has arrived and I will be leaving you soon. Be it known to you that I am leaving the Book of Allah and my progeny and Ahl al-Bayt amongst you . Then he held and raised the hand of Ali and said Ali is with the Qur'an and the Qur'an is with Ali and they will not separate from each other till the Day of Resurrection".12

The Prophet had narrated Hadith Thaqalayn on different occasions and in various ways, before he fell ill and had drawn the attention of the people to these two weighty things but the fact that, even when bed-ridden, he once again gave attention to the correlation between the Book and his progeny and stressed their importance before the same persons, who had opposed his writing the will, would make one believe that the object of this repetition was to make amends for the non-execution of the will.13

Distribution Of Dinars

The policy of the Prophet with regard to public treasury (Baytul Mal) was that at the very earliest opportunity he distributed its property amongst the needy persons and refrained from keeping the contents of the treasury in custody for a long time. Hence, when he was confined to bed, and some Dinars were lying with one of his wives, he asked her to bring them to him.

When the Dinars were placed before him he took them in his hand and said: "How will Muhammad expect anything of Allah if he meets Him and has these with him?" Then he ordered the Commander of the Faithful to distribute the money among the poor.14

The Prophet Is Annoyed On Account Of The Medicine Given To Him

During her stay in Ethiopia Asma' daughter of 'Umays, who was a near relative of the Prophet's wife, Maiymunah, had learnt the composition of a medicine which was the juice of some herbs. She imagined that the Prophet was suffering from pleurisy and in Ethiopia this ailment was treated with the said syrup.

When the Prophet's condition was very serious and he was suffering from acute pain, she dropped some of that medicine in his mouth. When the condition of the Prophet improved somewhat, and he came to know about the incident he was very much displeased and said: "Allah does not at all make his Prophet suffer from such an ailment".15

Last Farewell To Friends

During the period of his illness the Prophet used to come to the mosque sometime or other, and offered prayers along with the people, and also talked on some matters. On one of those days he arrived in the mosque, while he had tied a piece of cloth on his head, and Ali and Fadl bin Abbas had placed their hands under his arm-pits, and he was walking with dragging feet. He mounted the pulpit and began to speak, saying: "O people! The time has arrived when I should leave you. If I have made a promise with anyone I am prepared to fulfil it, and if I owe something to somebody, he should speak out, so that I may make payment to him".

At this moment a man stood up and said: "You promised me some time back that if I married, you would help me with money". The Prophet ordered Fadl to pay the required amount to him immediately. Then he dismounted the pulpit and went home.

Thereafter he came to the mosque again on Friday (i.e three days before his death) and began to speak, and said *inter alia:* "Whoever has any right over me should get up and mention it, for punishment in this world is lighter than the punishment on the Day of Judgement."

At this moment Sawadah bin Qays stood up and said: "At the time of return from the Battle of Ta'if, when you were riding a camel, you raised your scourge to hit your animal, but by chance it struck my belly. I now want to take revenge".

The offer made by the Prophet was not a mere formality for he was seriously inclined to compensate others even for those rights, which are not usually cared for by the people.16 He therefore, ordered the same scourge to be brought from his house.

Thereafter he pulled up his shirt so that Sawadah might take revenge. The companions of the Prophet were watching the scene with grieved hearts, and with tears in their eyes, and were awaiting as to where the matter would end, and whether Sawadah would actually take revenge.

However, they suddenly saw Sawadah kissing the belly and chest of the Prophet. At this moment the Prophet prayed for him and said: "O Allah! Forgive Sawadah in the same manner in which he has forgiven the Prophet of Islam".17

1. Seerahi Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 654 and Tabaqat-i Ibn Sa'd, vol. 2, p. 216.
2. Evidently what was meant was that the Prophet might dictate the deed and one of his secretaries might write it out, because the Prophet had never held a pen in his hand or written anything.
3. Sahih Bukhari, Kitabul 'Ilm, vol. I, page 22 and vol. II, page 14; Sahih Muslim, vol. II, page 14; Musnad Ahmad, vol. I, page 325 and Tabaqat-i Kubra, vol. II, page 244.
4. Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah, Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. II, page 20.
5. Sahih Muslim, vol. I, page 14 and Musnad Ahmad, vol. I, page 355.
6. Kanz al-Ummal, vol. III, page 138 and Tabaqat, vol. II, page 244.
7. The late Allamah Mujahid Sharfuddin has collected all these excuses his book entitled al-Muraji'at and refuted them in a

decent manner.

8. Hayat-i Muhammad, page 475.

9. Musnad Ahmad, vol. I, page 355.

10. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXII, page 469, quoted from al-Irshad by Shaykh Mufid and A'lamul Wara' by Tabrsi.

11. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXII, page 476, quoted from Majalis by Mufid.

12. al-Sawaiq, Chapter 9 of Part 2, page 57 and Kashful Ghummah, p. 43.

13. The Hadith Thaqalayn is one of those traditions which are unanimously accepted by the Sunni and the Shi'ah traditionalists, and it has been narrated by the companions of the Prophet in sixty different ways. Ibn Hajar Askalani writes: "The Prophet invited the attention of the people to the correlation between the Book and his progeny on different occasions like the day of Arafah, the day of Ghadir, on return from Ta'if, and even while he was confined to bed. (al-Sawaiq al-Muhriqah, page 136). The late Mir Hamid Husayn of India has allocated a part of his book to the narration of authorities for the Hadith Thaqalayn. It has been published recently in Isfahan in six volumes. In the year 1374 A.H. a tract about this hadith was published by the Darut Taqrib Foundation (Egypt). Its importance from the viewpoint of authorities and the esteem shown to it by the traditionalists in different eras of Islamic history have been quoted in it briefly.

14. Tabaqat-i Kubra, vol. II, page 238.

15. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 236.

16. Manaqib-i Al-i Abi Talib. vol. I. page 164.

17. Furthermore, as the Prophet did not hit Sawadah's body intentionally he had no right to take revenge, but the act could be compensated by payment of 'diya' money (prescribed compensation). In spite of this the Prophet decided to meet his demand.

Madina was totally engulfed in confusion and anxiety. The companions of the Prophet had gathered round his house with tearful eyes and grieved hearts. The reports which were pouring out from the house showed that his condition was extremely serious, and there was very little hope of his recovery. This showed that only a few moments of his precious life were left.

A number of the companions of the Prophet were desirous of seeing him from near, but his serious condition would not permit that anyone except the members of the family should visit the room in which he was lying.

The honoured daughter and the only souvenir of the Prophet viz Lady Fatimah was sitting beside her father's bed. She was looking at his sacred face and could see that the perspiration of death was flowing down his face and forehead. With a heavy heart, tearful eyes, and choked throat, she was reciting the following verse which Abu Talib had recited in praise of the Prophet : "The luminous face in whose honour rains are sought from the clouds. The person who is the asylum for the orphans and the guardian of the widows".

At this moment the Prophet opened his eyes and said to his daughter in a low voice: "This is a verse which Abu Talib recited about me. It will, however, be better if, instead of the same, you recite this verse of the Holy Quran:

Muhammad is but a messenger. The messengers have already passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dies or is slain, you will turn back on your heels? He who turns back does no hurt

to Allah, and Allah will reward the thankful. **(Surah Ale Imran 3:144)**[1]

The Prophet Speaks To His Daughter

Experience shows that on account of excessive preoccupations the sentiments of big personalities with regard to their children become dim, because absorption in world affairs keep them so busy that their sentiments for their children remain suppressed.

However, great spiritual personalities are an exception to this rule. Notwithstanding their great targets and universal ideals and ever-increasing activities they possess such extensive and great souls that inclination towards one part does not keep them from the other parts.

The Prophet's love for his only child was one of the most sublime manifestations of human sentiments, so much so that he never proceeded on a journey without saying farewell to his daughter and when he returned from a journey he first of all went to see her. He accorded her great respect as compared with his wives and used to tell his companions: "Fatimah is a part of my body. Her pleasure is my pleasure and her anger is my anger." [2]

Whenever the Prophet saw Fatimah he was reminded of Khadijah, the most pious and most kind woman of the world who endured extraordinary hardships and spent her enormous wealth in the path of the sacred mission of her husband.

Throughout the period of the Prophet's illness Fatimah remained by the side of his bed and was not away from him even for a moment. Suddenly the Prophet made a sign to her asking her to speak to him. The Prophet's daughter bent a little, brought her head near him and conversed with him in low tones.

The persons who were present round the Prophet's bed did not become aware of what they talked about. When the Prophet ceased talking, Lady Fatimah wept bitterly. However, soon after this the Prophet made a sign to her again and spoke to her in low tones.

This time she raised her head in a happy mood and with smiling lips. Those present were surprised to observe these two antithetical conditions at one and the same time and they requested Fatimah to inform them of her conversation with the Prophet. She replied: "I am not going to divulge the secret of the Prophet of Allah ".

After the passing away of the Prophet, Fatimah informed them of the factual position on account of the insistence of A'isha and said: "In the first instance my father informed me about his death and stated that he was not likely to recover from his illness.

Hence, I began weeping. However, when he talked to me for the second time he told me that I would be the first person from amongst his Ahl al-Bayt who would join him. This made me happy and I understood that I would be joining my dear father very soon".[3]

Brushing The Teeth

The Prophet used to brush his teeth before going to sleep at night and after waking up in the morning. The tooth-brush of the Prophet consisted of a piece of Arak wood which is very useful for strengthening the gums, cleansing the teeth and removing the particles of food from them. One day Abdur Rahman, brother of A'isha, came to enquire about the health of the Prophet.

He was then holding a fresh and green piece of branch in his hand. A'isha understood from the looks of the Prophet that he wished to brush his teeth with that branch. She, therefore, took the branch from her brother immediately and gave it to the Prophet, who brushed his teeth with it.4

Recommendations Of The Prophet

While he was confined to bed the Prophet attached great importance to reminding the people of the obligatory matters and in the last days of his illness he strongly recommended the offering of prayers and good treatment of the slaves. He said: "Behave well with your slaves, be careful about their food and dress, speak gently with them and make sociability the business of your life".

One day Ka'b Ahbar asked the Second Caliph "What did the Prophet say just before his death?" The Caliph pointed to the Commander of the Faithful, who was also present in the meeting, and said: "Ask him". Ali said: "While the head of the Prophet was resting on my shoulder, he said: "Prayers. Prayers." Ka'b Ahbar then said: "This has been the way of the previous Prophets also".5

During the last moments of his life the Prophet opened his eyes and said: "Call my brother so that he may come and sit by my side. All those present understood that he meant no one other than Ali. Ali sat by the side of his bed but felt that he wanted to rise from his bed. He, therefore lifted the Prophet from his bed and made him rest on his own chest.6

Soon afterwards signs of death began to appear in his sacred body. Some one asked Ibn Abbas: "In whose lap did the Prophet breathed his last?" Ibn Abbas replied: "The Prophet departed while his head was in the lap of Ali." That person added: "A'isha claims that when the Prophet breathed his last his head was resting on her bosom. Ibn Abbas contradicted her claim and said: "The Prophet breathed his last in the lap of Ali and Ali and my brother Fadl bathed his body."7

In one of his sermons Imam Ali has mentioned this matter in these words: "The Prophet breathed his last when his head was on my chest. I bathed his body while the angels were assisting me".8

A number of the traditionalists have quoted that the last sentence which the Prophet uttered before breathing his last was: "No. With the Divine Companion" . It appears that at the time of his last breath the Archangel Jibreel gave him the option either to recover from the illness and return to this world or the Angel of Death might take out his soul and he might proceed to the next world, and lead his life there

along with the persons, who have been alluded to in this verse:

These are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the Prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and they are the best friends that one can have. **(Surah al-Nisa, 4:69)**

The Prophet uttered the above sentence and passed away.9

The Last Day

The sacred and sublime soul of the Messenger of Allah ascended the Paradise on Monday the 28th of Safar.10 A Yemen sheet was spread over his sacred body and it was placed for a short period, in a corner of the room. From the wailings of the women and the cries of the near ones of the Prophet, the people outside the room knew that he had breathed his last. Soon afterwards the news of his death spread throughout the city.

For reasons which have not become clear so far the Second Caliph shouted outside the house that the Prophet had not died but had gone before Allah like Prophet Musa. He persisted on this very much and it was possible that he might have made some others share his views, but, in the meantime one of the companions11 of the Prophet read this verse before Him:

Muhammad is but a messenger. The messengers have already passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dies or is slain, would you then turn back to your pre-Islamic behaviour. **(*Surah* Ale Imran, 3:144)**

On hearing this verse he abandoned his claim and became tranquil.12

Imam Ali bathed the sacred body of the Prophet and shrouded him, as the Prophet had directed that his body should be bathed by one, who was nearest to him13 and such a person could be no one except Ali. Then he opened the Prophet's face while he was bitterly weeping, said, "O Prophet of Allah! I love you more than I have loved my parents. Your death put an end to the prophethood, to revelation, and to the messengers from the Lord. While death of other Prophets had not resulted in this way.

Your death caused a grief that every other grief was forgotten. The grief of your separation became common sorrow and everybody felt it. If you had not ordered us to be patient and not to lament and bemoan loudly, we would have kept weeping and lamenting ceaselessly, though all this lamenting could not have compared with the actual loses of your separation.

But death is an inevitable event, nobody can turn death back and nobody can stop it from coming. Please remember us before Allah". (Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon No. 23).

The first person who offered prayers for the Prophet was Imam Ali. Thereafter the companions came in groups and offered prayers and these rites continued till Tuesday noon. Thereafter it was decided that

the sacred body of the Prophet might be buried in the same house in which he had breathed his last. The grave was prepared by Abu 'Ubaydah bin Jarrah and Zayd bin Sahl and the obsequies were performed by Imam Ali with the assistance of Fadl and Abbas.

It was the most tragic event. That great personality who changed the very fate of humanity by his efforts and sacrifices and opened new pages for human civilization passed away.14

No doubt, when a fair-minded person studies various aspects of the personality of the Holy Prophet as a man, head of a family, a member of the society, a judge, an administrator, a teacher, a military commander and a guide, he comes to the conclusion that his all round perfection is a definite proof of his being a Divine Messenger. Human history has not witnessed any other person reaching a similar degree of perfection.

The Holy Prophet made wonderful contributions for the welfare of humanity at large. First, he himself acted upon the Divine Message and then he asked others to follow him.

He established the rights of the people when rights were being usurped; he administered justice when tyranny was rampant everywhere; he introduced equality when undue discrimination was so common; and he gave freedom to the people when they were groaning under oppression, cruelty and injustice.

He brought a message which taught man to obey and fear Allah only, and seek help from Him alone. His universal message covers all the aspects of human life including rights, Ounce, equality and freedom.

This is a message from which the mankind has once more been deprived. Why, then, should we not come again under its patronage so that humanity may be saved from destruction, and may achieve peace, progress and happiness.

1. Vide al-Irshad, Shaykh Mufid, page 98
2. Sahih Bukhari, vol. V, page 21.
3. Tabaqat-i Ibn Sa'd, vol. II, p. 247 and Kamil, vol. II, p. 219.
4. Tabaqat-i Ibn Sa'd, vol. II, page 234 and Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 654.
5. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 254.
6. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 263.
7. Tabaqat, vol. II, page 263.
8. Nahjul Balaghah.
9. A'lamul Wara' page 83.
10. All the Shi'iah traditionalists and the biographers of the life of the Prophet are agreed upon this date, and in Seerah Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 658, it has been quoted in the form of a statement.
11. According to Sahih Bukhari (page 7) it was Abu Bakr.
12. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. II, page 656.
13. Tabaqat, page 57.
14. After the Holy Prophet numerous difficulties cropped up in the path of his mission and the pursuance of his mission. The most patent among those was the question of the caliphate and the leadership of the Islamic society. Even before his passing away the signs of differences and dissensions could be clearly found among the Muslims. Notwithstanding the fact

that this is one of the most sensitive and important chapters of the history of Islam, it is beyond the scope of our present discourse. Hence we now bring our narrative to an end and are grateful to the Almighty Allah for this great blessing. (For further details refer Islamic Seminary Publications).

Source URL: https://www.al-islam.org/message-jafar-subhani

Links

[1] https://www.al-islam.org/user/login?destination=node/16394%23comment-form

[2] https://www.al-islam.org/user/register?destination=node/16394%23comment-form

[3] https://www.al-islam.org/person/ayatullah-jafar-subhani

[4] https://www.al-islam.org/organization/islamic-seminary-publications

[5] https://www.al-islam.org/library/early-islamic-history

[6] https://www.al-islam.org/library/prophet-muhammad

[7] https://www.al-islam.org/tags/biography-os-prophet-muhammad