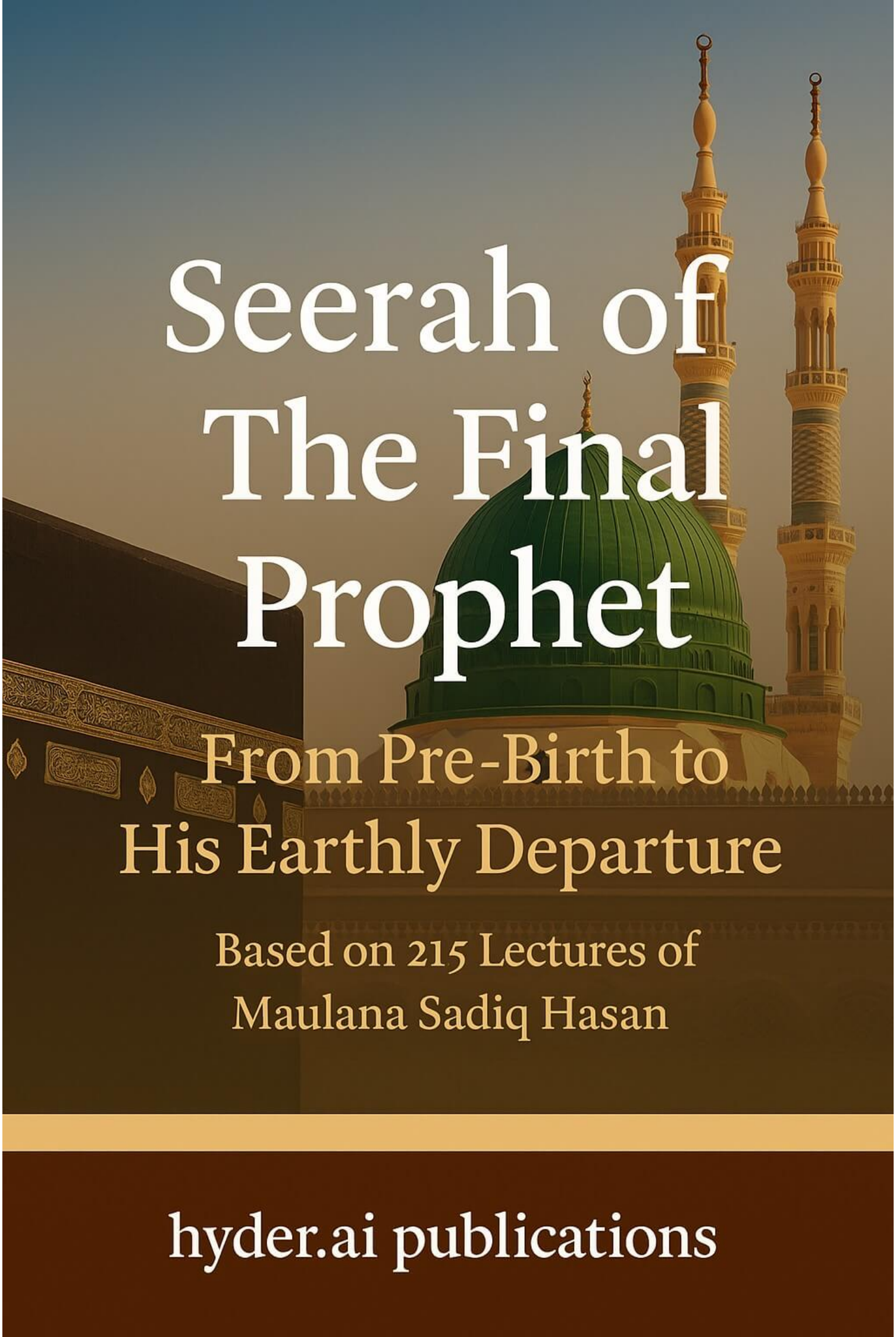


Seerah of The Final Prophet

From Pre-Birth to His Earthly Departure

Based on 215 Lectures of
Maulana Sadiq Hasan

hyder.ai publications

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From Pre-Birth to His Earthly Departure

By

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Based on 215 Lectures of Maulana Sadiq Hasan

Karachi, Pakistan

hyder.ai publications

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About This Book

Seerah of The Final Prophet presents a series of lectures in book form using modern technology. The content is based on 215 lectures delivered by **Maulana Sadiq Hasan** in **Karachi, Pakistan**.

The entire process was created and managed by **Raza Merchant**, including the development of the AI models used to generate this book. From technical design to narrative output, every step was built specifically for this purpose.

The process involved the following steps:

1. **Audio Extraction**
   Video recordings of the lectures were processed to extract clear audio.
2. **Audio Enhancement**
   The extracted audio was cleaned to reduce background noise and improve clarity.
3. **Transcription**
   Custom developed automated speech recognition tools were used to transcribe the audio into text.
4. **Corpus Compilation**
   All transcripts were combined into a single dataset for analysis.
5. **AI Modeling and Structuring**
   An AI model analyzed the full content, identified major themes, and reorganized the material into chapters. This is not a sequential rendering of the lectures. Instead, the AI grouped related concepts into thematic sections.

This book is not a scholarly or officially verified religious source. While

care has been taken to maintain the meaning and tone of the lectures, the use of AI may result in occasional errors or omissions. Readers are encouraged to refer to the original lectures or consult qualified scholars for clarification.

Feedback and suggestions to improve this work are welcome. For comments or corrections, please contact: `feedback@hyder.ai`

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Chapter 1

Setting the Stage: Principles of Sira and the Early Ancestors of the Prophet

This sacred biography of Prophet Mohammad (s) commences with a foundational understanding of the principles that will govern its narrative. Every event, every moment of the Prophet's blessed life serves as a source of divine guidance for humanity. However, it is crucial to recognize that the *Sira* (biography) of the Prophet, rich as it is in historical detail, must be approached with jurisprudential clarity. An action or event from the Prophet's life, observed in isolation, does not automatically translate into a universal legal ruling or a *sunnah* (practice) for all times. The divine law (*Sharia*) was revealed gradually, and what may have been permissible or even practiced in the early stages of Islam might have later been abrogated or clarified by subsequent divine commands. For instance, while one might hear of the Prophet's multiple marriages or early interactions, it is the comprehensive body of Islamic law (*fiqh*) that delineates what is permissible or obligatory for the *Ummah*. Similarly, historical accounts, such as the celebratory singing upon the Prophet's arrival in Medina, must be understood within their specific context, not as a blanket permission for practices that were later prohibited by God. Any narrative or *ha-*

dith that undermines the exalted status, dignity, or infallibility of Prophet Mohammad (s) or his pure household (**Ahlulbayt**) will be deemed fallacious, irrespective of its supposed authenticity in certain collections. Such accounts will either be explicitly refuted where necessary or, more often, simply overlooked.

To fully grasp the intricate tapestry of the Prophet's life, particularly the prolonged and profound animosities he faced, it becomes imperative to delve into the history of his ancestors, stretching back four or five generations before his birth. This approach illuminates the roots of the opposition from certain factions in Mecca, who inherited their hatred for the Prophet's family, and similarly, the deep-seated malice of the Jews in Medina, whose enmity also predated the Prophet's arrival.

The journey of this blessed lineage begins not on Earth, but in the primordial realm. At a time when nothing existed save the eternal and everexistent Being of God, the Almighty created a resplendent light—the **Noor** of the Infallibles (Prophet Mohammad and his Imams). This divine light traversed countless epochs, passing through various stages of creation, guiding the formation of the heavens and Earth, the *Arsh* (Throne) and the *Kursi* (Footstool), and myriad other creations, until the universe took its present form. This sacred **Noor** was then meticulously transferred through a succession of righteous prophets, safeguarding its purity and purpose. It was passed from Prophet Adam (as) to his noble descendants, including Prophet Ibrahim (as), and subsequently through his illustrious son, Prophet Ismail (as). As the Holy Qur'an states, this **Noor** continually transferred through the pure loins of generations, ensuring its sanctity.

A pivotal moment in this sacred lineage occurred with Prophet Ibrahim (as). Commanded by God, he left his beloved wife Hajar and their infant son Ismail (as), who carried the prophetic **Noor** within him, in a desolate, barren valley in Hijaz—the very site that would become Mecca. This was

a wilderness, devoid of water and vegetation. Hajar, upon realizing her husband was leaving them in such a formidable place, repeatedly questioned if this was by divine command. Upon Ibrahim's affirmation, she submitted, trusting completely in God.

As time passed, baby Ismail suffered from intense thirst. In desperation, Hajar frantically searched for water, running seven times between the two nearby hills of Safa and Marwa. It was during her seventh return, as she rushed towards her son, that a miraculous spring erupted from beneath Ismail's heel—the blessed well of **Zamzam**. Birds, drawn by the water, gathered at the site, which in turn attracted nomadic tribes. Among them was the Banu Jurhum, who sought permission from Hajar to settle there. This event marked the beginning of Mecca's transformation from a barren valley into a nascent settlement.

Over generations, the descendants of Ismail (as) prospered and held authority in Mecca, maintaining the custodianship of the **Kaaba**, the House of God built by Ibrahim and Ismail. However, this period also saw the rise of animosity rooted in religious differences. As the descendants of Ismail (as) adhered to monotheism, they became targets of tribal envy and conflict, gradually losing their power and the honorific duties associated with the **Kaaba**. Their revered positions, including the keys to the **Kaaba**, the provision of food and water to pilgrims, and the sacred banner of Mecca, were gradually usurped by other tribes.

It was in this period of decline that Qusayy, an ancestor of Prophet Mohammad (s), emerged as a pivotal figure. He meticulously gathered his scattered family and kin, restoring their lost prestige and reclaiming the sacred duties associated with the **Kaaba**. His remarkable feat of reuniting the fragmented descendants of Ismail (as) earned him the title "**Quraish**" (meaning "gatherer" or "uniter"). Qusayy is also credited with formally organizing Mecca into a structured city, encouraging people to build their

homes around the **Kaaba** in an orderly fashion. Furthermore, he established the *Dar al-Nadwa*, a consultative assembly where tribal leaders could gather, discuss, and resolve their affairs—an early concept of a parliament or council.

Following Qusayy, the lineage continued through Abd Manaf, who inherited these sacred responsibilities and the **Noor** of prophethood. Abd Manaf had four sons. Among them, a notable incident occurred with two twin brothers born conjoined, reportedly by their foreheads or a foot attached to a forehead. In an era without modern medical interventions, a sword was used to separate them. This traumatic event was accompanied by a prophecy that animosity and bloodshed would forever persist between the descendants of these two brothers. One twin was named Hashim, who later became famous by his epithet, while the other was Abd Shams, whose son Umayya would later become the patriarch of the Banu Umayya clan, a significant adversary to the Prophet's lineage.

Hashim, originally named Amr, earned his renowned title due to his extraordinary generosity. During a severe famine in Mecca, he famously slaughtered his own camels, prepared bread, and soaked it in broth, feeding the entire population of Mecca until the famine subsided. This act of breaking bread (*hashm*) earned him the enduring name Hashim. He also pioneered the practice of establishing large leather containers (similar to modern water tanks) around the **Kaaba** to collect rainwater, ensuring pilgrims had access to water during the Hajj season.

Carrying the sacred **Noor** of prophethood in his forehead, Hashim was acutely aware of his responsibility to ensure its proper transmission. He married numerous noble women from respected families across Arabia, including those in Medina, seeking the woman destined to bear the next link in the prophetic chain. Despite having several children, the **Noor** remained in his forehead, signaling that its appointed vessel had not yet

been found. Distressed, Hashim supplicated at the **Kaaba**, seeking divine guidance. In a dream, he received a divine message: the chosen woman was Salma, the daughter of Amr, the chief of the Banu Najjar tribe in Medina.

Hashim, filled with joy, gathered his kinsmen and embarked on a journey to Medina. Upon their arrival, they met with Salma's father, who informed them that Salma was at a local fair, a marketplace where the Jewish community resided and held an annual exhibition. As Hashim and his companions proceeded to this fair, their attention was drawn by the sight of Hashim's magnificent tent, made from expensive camel wool. The Jewish residents, observing Hashim, immediately recognized the signs of the Last Prophet in his countenance, as foretold in their own scriptures. A conspiracy to assassinate Hashim was immediately hatched, but divine providence protected the sacred **Noor** from their sinister designs. This initial encounter marked the beginning of a profound and enduring animosity between the Jewish tribes of Medina and the Prophet's blessed lineage, setting the stage for future conflicts that would unfold during the Prophet's life.

The intricate details of this conspiracy, the unfolding of Hashim's life, and the subsequent generations leading to the Prophet's birth will be explored in forthcoming chapters.

Chapter 2

The Dawning Light: Hashim's Marriage and Abdul Muttalib's Early Trials

The narrative of Prophet Mohammad's **Sira** continues to unfold, revealing the intricate tapestry of events and divine foresight that preceded his blessed advent. As we delve into the lives of his revered ancestors, it is crucial to remember that these are not mere historical anecdotes but integral parts of the sacred lineage, each event illuminated by the **Noor** of prophethood it carried.

Having established his prominence in Mecca through unparalleled generosity and wisdom, Hashim, the bearer of the prophetic **Noor**, meticulously sought the woman destined to be the next link in the sacred chain. Guided by a profound dream, he journeyed to Yathrib, the city that would later be known as Medina. He was accompanied by his younger brother, Muttalib, whose unwavering loyalty was a stark contrast to the distant relations maintained with his other brothers, Abd Shams and Nawfal.

Upon arriving in Medina, Hashim sought out the esteemed Banu Najjar tribe, known for their nobility and integrity, for the hand of Salma, daughter of their chief, Umar. Salma, a woman of independent spirit and

wisdom, was not at home but attending a vibrant fair held in the Jewish quarter, near the settlements of Banu Qaynuqa. Hashim, accompanied by Muttalib, decided to proceed to the fair. His majestic presence and striking beauty instantly commanded attention. Shopkeepers left their stalls, and fair-goers paused their amusements, all eyes drawn to this radiant young man from Mecca.

When Salma's gaze met Hashim, his nobility, charm, and beauty deeply impressed her. She soon sent a message through her companion, expressing her interest in the proposal. Though she remained silent, her father understood her acceptance. However, a whisper of doubt soon troubled Salma. A malevolent entity, in the guise of an old man, approached her, casting aspersions on Hashim, portraying him as one who married frequently and divorced readily. This demonic whispering aimed to sow discord and prevent the sacred union.

Later, the same entity approached Salma's father, Umar, attempting to sway him to demand an exorbitant *mahr* (dowry), hoping to deter Hashim. During the negotiations, as Hashim presented the *mahr*, Muttalib, demonstrating the unity of their lineage, stepped forward and offered even more: precious red and black camels, a thousand *mithqals* of gold, slaves, exquisite Egyptian cloth, and Yemeni shawls. This generous offering delighted Umar, but the devil persisted in his suggestions for more. Finally, angered by the continuous, unjustified demands, Umar rebuked the whispering figure, exclaiming that he was attempting to sow dissension.

It was at this critical juncture, as Hashim and Muttalib were leaving the fair, that the deep-seated animosity of the Jewish community manifested. Recognizing the undeniable **Noor** of the Last Prophet on Hashim's forehead—a light their scriptures had foretold—they saw this union as a direct threat to their religious prominence. They plotted to assassinate Hashim on the spot. Armed with swords, a large group of Jews launched a sur-

prise attack. Hashim and Muttalib, though outnumbered, bravely defended themselves, eliminating many of the attackers. The remaining Jews, realizing the extraordinary power and divine protection accompanying Hashim, fled in terror. Witnessing this display of courage and the divine presence, Umar apologized to Hashim for the disturbance in his city, reaffirming his daughter's acceptance of the marriage.

The marriage was agreed upon with two significant conditions proposed by Salma and her father. Firstly, upon the birth of their child, Salma was to return to Medina for the delivery, desiring the event to occur within her family's protective embrace. Secondly, and critically, if circumstances decreed that Salma remain in Medina after the birth, the child would stay with her, under her guardianship, and not be taken back to Mecca with Hashim. Hashim, understanding the profound wisdom and protection embedded in these conditions, readily agreed. This foresight ensured that the child, destined to be the next link in the blessed chain, would grow up in the secure and nurturing environment of Medina when the time came.

Shortly after their marriage, Hashim embarked on an essential trade journey to Ghazza (Gaza) in Palestine. During his absence, Salma gave birth to a son in Medina, whom she named Amr. However, due to a few white hairs visible in his otherwise youthful head—a rare sign of wisdom—he was affectionately nicknamed *Shaybat al-Hamd*, "the one with white hair worthy of praise." This child was none other than the future Abdul Muttalib, whose life would be marked by significant trials and a deep connection to the **Kaaba**.

Tragically, Hashim fell ill and passed away in Ghazza, leaving Salma widowed and *Shaybat al-Hamd* fatherless at a young age. News of Hashim's demise brought deep sorrow to Mecca, but Muttalib, engrossed in managing the affairs of the city and family, was initially unaware of his nephew's

birth and residence in Medina. Seven years passed, during which *Shaybat al-Hamd* grew into an exceptionally gifted and intelligent child in Medina, renowned among his peers.

One day, a Meccan visiting Medina recognized *Shaybat al-Hamd*'s striking resemblance to Hashim and his remarkable qualities. He returned to Mecca and informed Muttalib. Upon hearing about his brother's son, Muttalib immediately set out for Medina with some relatives and servants, driven by a powerful desire to bring his nephew home. As they approached Medina, Muttalib spotted a group of children playing with arrows outside the city. Among them, he instantly recognized his nephew, *Shaybat al-Hamd*, whose unique demeanor and sharp intellect distinguished him from the others.

Muttalib embraced *Shaybat al-Hamd* and introduced himself as his uncle. The boy, initially surprised, recognized his uncle from Hashim's descriptions. Muttalib then sought Salma's permission to bring *Shaybat al-Hamd* back to Mecca. Salma, remembering the conditions of her marriage, initially hesitated, but Muttalib gently persuaded her, highlighting the immense future and honor awaiting *Shaybat al-Hamd* as the future leader of Mecca and guardian of the **Kaaba**, a destiny that could only be fulfilled there.

As Muttalib journeyed back to Mecca with *Shaybat al-Hamd*, a calculated decision was made. To shield the boy from the persistent animosity of the Jews, who were still seeking to harm the bearer of the prophetic **Noor**, Muttalib introduced him to the Meccans as his *'Abd* or "servant"—a term of endearment signifying a profound and intimate connection, rather than a literal slave. This clever ruse led to the boy being universally known as "Abdul Muttalib," the "servant of Muttalib," a name that quickly spread throughout Mecca and became synonymous with his identity. Though the Jews continued to seek the child known as *Shaybat al-Hamd*, they could

not locate him under his new, widely adopted name.

However, challenges for Abdul Muttalib were far from over. Soon after their return, Muttalib passed away. Young Abdul Muttalib, then around fourteen, found himself under the guardianship of his uncle, Nawfal, the same brother whom Hashim had left behind during his journey to Medina. Nawfal, driven by greed, swiftly seized Abdul Muttalib's inherited wealth and, critically, his share of the wells – a vital resource in arid Mecca.

In his distress, Abdul Muttalib dispatched a message to his maternal uncles, the Banu Najjar, in Medina, appealing for help. His uncle promptly arrived in Mecca, accompanied by a formidable force. Confronting Nawfal, Abdul Muttalib's uncle sternly demanded the return of his nephew's rightful inheritance and access to the wells. Overwhelmed by the strong display of support, Nawfal had no choice but to comply, restoring Abdul Muttalib's rights.

Recognizing the vulnerability of being far from his maternal kin and the constant threat from those who sought to harm the **Noor**, Abdul Muttalib demonstrated remarkable foresight and political acumen. He sought a strong local alliance within Mecca. His choice fell upon the Banu Khuza'a, a powerful and historically significant tribe that had once held sway over Mecca before Qusayy, Abdul Muttalib's great-grandfather, reasserted the Quraish's authority. This strategic alliance was solidified, and Banu Khuza'a pledged unwavering support to Abdul Muttalib, a covenant that would prove invaluable not only for him but also, centuries later, for his grandson, Prophet Mohammad, during the *Fath Makkah*.

The Jews, relentless in their pursuit of the **Noor**, continued to plot against Abdul Muttalib. Their attempts to extinguish this divine light would soon lead to another extraordinary and divinely orchestrated event: Abdul Muttalib's vow and the near-sacrifice of his beloved son, Abdullah, which

marked yet another pivotal moment in the lineage of the Prophet. This significant event, a testament to faith and divine intervention, awaits its detailed telling.

Chapter 3

The Resolute Grandfather: From Zamzam to Sacrifice

The profound narrative of Prophet Muhammad's blessed life, or ***Seerat***, is not merely a sequence of events tied to his earthly presence. Its foundations were meticulously laid long before his birth, woven into the very fabric of history through his esteemed ancestors. From the trials faced by Prophet Ibrahim and his descendants to the ongoing conflicts between the Banu Umayya and the Jews in Medina, the stage was set for the advent of the final Messenger of God. This intricate tapestry of divine providence and human interaction reveals that the lineage from which the Prophet emerged was steeped in significant challenges and miraculous interventions, culminating in the pivotal role of his grandfather, *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib.

Abdul Muttalib held an unparalleled position of honor, authority, and respect within Mecca. His wisdom and stature commanded such reverence that even in a society where tribal loyalties were paramount, his word often transcended customary divisions. He was not merely a tribal chief; he was a figure of profound spiritual foresight, upon whose forehead shone

the divine light of Prophethood—the very ***Noor-e-Risalat*** that had been passed down through generations, from Prophet Hashim and his forebears. This light, an undeniable mark of future prophethood, was visible to those with spiritual insight and served as a constant reminder of the sacred destiny awaiting his lineage.

Yet, his pre-eminence was not without challenge. His family, the Banu Hashim, often found themselves in rivalry with other powerful clans, particularly the Banu Umayya, led by Harb ibn Umayya. A notable incident underscored Abdul Muttalib's unwavering commitment to justice. A wealthy Jewish neighbor of Abdul Muttalib's was attacked and robbed by young men instigated by Harb, who hoped to cause discord between the two powerful families. Abdul Muttalib, known for his protection of the oppressed and his strict adherence to justice, even against his own relatives, demanded that Harb surrender the culprits. Harb, however, refused, further escalating the tension. The dispute was ultimately brought before an arbiter, who ruled unequivocally in favor of Abdul Muttalib, affirming his righteous standing and the profound respect he commanded within the community. This triumph further solidified his authority and demonstrated God's support for his just leadership.

One of the most extraordinary episodes in Abdul Muttalib's life was the rediscovery of the Well of Zamzam. Centuries earlier, after the tribe of Jurhum had been defeated, they had filled the well with earth and buried its treasures—two golden deer and several swords and pieces of armor—concealing its location entirely. For generations, the holy well, the source of sustenance for pilgrims, remained lost. Through a series of profound dreams, Abdul Muttalib was divinely instructed to dig for the well. Initially, the instructions were cryptic, mentioning names like "Tayba," "Barrah," and "Maghloona," causing him much perplexity. However, the recurring dreams eventually clarified the instruction: he was to dig for Zamzam.

Despite not knowing its exact location, divine guidance led him. He was told to look towards the Kaaba, at the spot where a crow would peck and ants would gather. Accompanied by his only son at the time, Harith, he began to dig. Their efforts were met with skepticism and outright opposition from other Quraish tribes, who mocked his endeavor and later claimed a share in the well, arguing it was common property within Mecca. Abdul Muttalib, however, stood firm, asserting that this was a divine trust granted exclusively to him. As they dug deeper, the golden deer and the ancient swords were unearthed, confirming the divine truth of his dreams. He decreed that the golden deer would be dedicated to the Kaaba, while the swords would be kept as a sacred trust.

These retrieved swords held a powerful prophetic significance. Through divine visions, Abdul Muttalib understood that they symbolized the future of his lineage: twelve swords for the twelve divinely appointed Imams who would descend from him, and a thirteenth, distinct sword for the final Imam, the twelfth Imam, whose advent would be marked by the re-emergence of this very sword. This profound revelation underscored the sacred destiny of his family, linking it directly to the chain of prophethood and divine succession. During the digging, Abdul Muttalib also encountered a *ghoul* or jinn, which he bravely repelled with one of the unearthed swords. This encounter, described in traditions, is understood as a symbolic premonition of the challenges and battles the final Imam would face.

During the arduous task of excavating Zamzam, Abdul Muttalib made a vow to God: if he were granted ten sons to assist him in his monumental task, he would sacrifice one of them in God's path. Years later, God fulfilled his wish, and Abdul Muttalib became the father of ten sons, the youngest and most beloved being Abdullah, upon whose forehead the luminous ***Noor-e-Risalat*** shone most brilliantly. Fulfilling his vow, Abdul Muttalib gathered his sons and, through the casting of lots, Ab-

dullah's name was repeatedly chosen. The family was plunged into deep distress, especially Abdullah's mother and his elder brother, Abu Talib, who offered himself in Abdullah's place. The presence of the divine light on Abdullah's forehead intensified their anguish, knowing the immense spiritual significance of the child chosen for sacrifice.

Seeking a solution, Abdul Muttalib consulted a wise *kahina* (soothsayer) in Medina. She advised a unique alternative: casting lots between Abdullah and a specified number of camels. If the lot fell on Abdullah, they would increase the number of camels and re-cast, continuing until the lot fell on the camels. This process was repeated, with the number of camels increasing by ten each time, until finally, at one hundred camels, the lot fell upon them. Abdul Muttalib joyfully sacrificed the hundred camels, saving Abdullah's life. This momentous event led Prophet Muhammad (s) to later declare, "I am the son of two sacrifices," referring to his father Abdullah and his ancestor Prophet Ismail, both of whom were spared from sacrifice through divine intervention.

Following these extraordinary events and divine signs, Abdul Muttalib, guided by a vision, arranged the marriage of his beloved son Abdullah to a virtuous lady. The ***Noor-e-Risalat*** that had graced Abdul Muttalib's forehead for decades now visibly transferred to Abdullah's, a clear sign of the imminent birth of the final Prophet. This transfer of the sacred light marked another crucial step in the unfolding divine plan, preparing the world for the arrival of the most honored of creation.

Chapter 4

The Carrier of Prophetic Light and His Sacred Union

The journey into the blessed *Seerat* of Prophet Muhammad (s) extends far beyond the immediate events of his birth, delving into the profound tapestry of circumstances and divine interventions that shaped his lineage and the world into which he would arrive. While our focus remains firmly on the Messenger of Allah, understanding the pivotal roles played by his esteemed forefathers is essential, as their lives were intrinsically linked to the unfolding divine plan. We have explored the unparalleled stature of *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib, his unwavering commitment to justice, and the miraculous rediscovery of the Well of Zamzam, a testament to divine guidance and his fortitude in the face of opposition.

As Abdul Muttalib continued his arduous task of re-excavating the sacred well, a scene akin to that of Prophet Nuh building his ark unfolded. Just as Nuh faced ridicule and isolation from his people, Abdul Muttalib found himself alone in his monumental endeavor to restore Zamzam for the pilgrims, with no one willing to assist. In a moment of profound solitude and desperation, clinging to the curtains of the Holy Kaaba, he made

a solemn vow to Allah: if granted ten sons who would stand by him, he would sacrifice one of them in Allah's name. This desperate plea was answered, and Allah blessed him with a burgeoning family.

Indeed, after the rediscovery of Zamzam, the blessings poured forth upon Abdul Muttalib's household. His family grew to include ten sons and six daughters, and his authority and reverence in Mecca ascended to new heights. The entire city acknowledged his leadership, and despite initial attempts by some to challenge his ownership of Zamzam, all opposition ultimately yielded to his wisdom and divinely-backed authority. He became, in essence, the undisputed ruler of Mecca.

It was during this period of growing prosperity and influence that an event of monumental significance occurred: the transfer of the ***Noor-e-Risalat*** (Prophetic Light). This divine light, which had previously shone brightly on Abdul Muttalib's forehead, now manifested itself upon his youngest and most beloved son, Abdullah. This transition marked the imminent arrival of the Final Prophet, and with it, a new chapter in the divine narrative began to unfold.

The presence of the ***Noor-e-Risalat*** on Abdullah's forehead did not go unnoticed. Among the Jewish communities, particularly those in the region of Sham, ancient prophecies and scriptures, passed down from prophets like Yahya, spoke of a final prophet who would appear. They understood that the *Noor* on Abdullah was a clear sign, a harbinger of this great coming. Consequently, these Jewish groups, who had resided in Mecca awaiting the Prophet's birth, began to observe Abdullah closely, harboring a desire to prevent the fulfillment of these prophecies by any means necessary, including his elimination.

Abdullah, endowed with extraordinary beauty and grace, spent his youth under divine protection. He often recounted vivid dreams to his father, Abdul Muttalib, describing a light that would emanate from his head,

split into two, travel great distances, and then reunite, returning to his head, illuminating the Kaaba. Abdul Muttalib, recognizing the spiritual significance, assured his son that these were prophecies of a coming blessing.

However, Abdullah's existence was also fraught with peril. One day, while hunting outside Mecca, he was ambushed by a group of Jews, disguised as merchants, who intended to assassinate him. As they advanced with their swords, a miraculous event occurred. A blinding light emanated from Abdullah, forming an impenetrable barrier between him and his attackers. Their swords fell from their hands, and they were utterly repelled, scattered by the divine protection. Abdullah emerged unharmed, a testament to Allah's safeguarding of His chosen vessel.

News of this miraculous escape, and the distinct light surrounding Abdullah, soon reached other noble families in Mecca. Among them was Wahb ibn Abd Manaf, the respected leader of the Banu Zuhrah tribe, who was Abdul Muttalib's cousin and a man of great foresight. Wahb witnessed Abdullah's bravery and the divine light that protected him. His wife, Barrah bint Abdul Uzza (Amina's mother), upon seeing Abdullah, was so struck by his grace and the *Noor* upon his forehead that she felt an irresistible urge to propose a marriage alliance between her daughter, Amina, and Abdullah, despite Abdullah having declined many prestigious proposals from royalty and chieftains.

Driven by an inexplicable spiritual conviction, Barrah approached Abdul Muttalib, conveying her desire for a union between their families through Amina and Abdullah. Abdul Muttalib, himself a recipient of divine inspirations and prophecies, immediately recognized the profound significance of this proposal. He acknowledged the nobility of the Banu Zuhrah and wholeheartedly agreed to the marriage, as did Abdullah, who, for the first time, accepted a matrimonial proposal.

The sacred union between Abdullah and Amina was consecrated. After the marriage, Abdullah returned to live with his father, Abdul Muttalib, and his new bride, Amina, in their blessed home. The marriage was celebrated with a grand *walima* (feast), marking a joyous occasion for the entire family and the community.

It is worth noting, as a testament to the purity of his lineage, that the Prophet Muhammad (s) later visited the graves of his blessed parents. Narrations attest that Prophet Muhammad (s), long after the advent of Islam, visited the grave of his father, Abdullah, in Medina, and his mother, Amina, in Abwa (a location between Mecca and Medina where she passed away). At these sacred sites, the graves miraculously opened, and both Abdullah and Amina, in response to the Prophet's query, bore witness to the Oneness of Allah and affirmed his prophethood. This bears profound theological significance, affirming that Prophet Muhammad's parents were indeed believers on the Abrahamic faith, upholding the tenets of *Tawhid* and prophethood.

Two months after his marriage to Amina, Abdullah embarked on a trading journey to Syria, a common practice for the Quraish. While on his journey, in the sacred plains of Arafat, he experienced another divine manifestation. A miraculous spring of water emerged from the earth, offering pure, sweet, and fragrant water that resembled Zamzam. This extraordinary event was a further sign of the divine favor upon Abdullah, signifying the purity and blessings he carried within him. He returned from this journey, only for life's events to take an unexpected turn, leading to his eventual demise, paving the way for the ultimate fulfillment of the divine prophecies.

Chapter 5

The Illumination of Amina's Womb and Prophetic Anticipation

The narrative continues from the sacred union of Abdullah and Amina. Shortly after their blessed marriage, on a Friday morning, which was also the fourteenth night of Jamadi al-Akhir, Abdullah, accompanied by his father Abdul Muttalib and other relatives, journeyed to Mecca. During this journey, at a particular location, Abdullah experienced a profound miracle. He saw a spring of water gushing forth, its liquid sweeter than honey, colder than ice, and more fragrant than musk. Astonished, he drank from it and recounted the experience to his father. Abdul Muttalib, recognizing the divine sign, smiled and explained that a similar phenomenon had occurred with him at the same spot, signifying that a significant event was about to unfold. This miraculous manifestation affirmed that the ***Noor-e-Risalat*** (Prophetic Light), which had previously shone on Abdullah's forehead, was now transferred, indicating the imminent sacred pregnancy of Sayyida Amina.

Indeed, shortly thereafter, Sayyida Amina became pregnant with the blessed Prophet Muhammad (s). This pregnancy was unlike any other, immedi-

ately ushering in a series of extraordinary events across the world, particularly in Mecca. The city, which had previously known hardship and scarcity, suddenly experienced an unparalleled era of prosperity. This year became known as ***Aamul Khair***, the "Year of Goodness," a period of abundant blessings, comfort, and ease. People who once wore worn-out garments for years now found themselves in a state of unexpected affluence, a testament to the profound spiritual transformation initiated by the presence of the Prophet's light.

Even before the Prophet's birth, his advent was anticipated by various communities. Among them were groups of Jews, who, guided by ancient prophecies in their scriptures, migrated from distant lands to an area between Ayr and Uhud—the future site of Medina, then known as *Yathrib*. These Jewish communities settled there, specifically the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, patiently awaiting the arrival of the promised Last Prophet.

One remarkable historical account from this period involves Tubba'a, the formidable King of Yemen. Driven by ambition and a desire to expand his dominion, Tubba'a set out with a large army to conquer *Yathrib*. Upon besieging the city, he found himself facing a determined and inexplicable resistance from its inhabitants, the Jews. Despite their limited resources and small numbers, the Jews of *Yathrib* displayed an unshakeable resolve. When questioned about their audacity, they declared their certainty that Tubba'a could never conquer their city, for it was destined to be the abode of the Final Prophet, and its first ruler would be none other than he. They articulated that no ruler could subjugate this city before the arrival of this Prophet. Tubba'a was struck by their profound conviction. He listened to their detailed prophecies concerning the coming Prophet, his attributes, and his mission. Deeply moved, Tubba'a abandoned his conquest, embraced the belief in the future Prophet, and instructed his people to await his advent and support him. He even penned a letter, preserving it through generations, expressing his faith in the Prophet yet to be born

and his hope for the Prophet's intercession on the Day of Judgment. This letter was eventually delivered to Prophet Muhammad (s) himself during his time in Medina, who expressed great appreciation for Tubba'a's foresight and faith.

The era preceding the Prophet's birth was also characterized by a widespread prevalence of *kahana* (soothsaying) and magic. Shamans, sorcerers, and soothsayers claimed to possess knowledge of the unseen, often through contact with *jinn* or devils, who would relay snippets of information overheard from the lower heavens. Before the birth of Prophet Muhammad (s), and even before the birth of Imam Ali (s), devils had the ability to ascend to the lower four heavens. They would eavesdrop on conversations among angels, gathering news of divine decrees and future events, which they would then relay to their human contacts.

Among the most renowned soothsayers of that time was a man named Shaqq, from Syria. He was a peculiar figure, described as a mere piece of flesh with a head and neck, lacking bones in his torso, making him easily pliable. Despite his physical form, Shaqq was renowned for his extraordinary accuracy; every prediction he made proved true, earning him immense wealth and status. He was so esteemed that he would recline on a bed of palm branches, attended by servants, who would even carry him to the nearest mountain once a month for his divinations. While some information came from *jinn*, Shaqq also relied on celestial observations.

The night of the Prophet's conception—the 14th of Jamadi al-Akhir—was marked by an unprecedented celestial event. A brilliant star appeared in the heavens, illuminating the entire sky. Shaqq, resting in his dwelling, heard an immense sound, and witnessing the sky ablaze with light, immediately understood its profound significance. While ordinary people hid in fear, Shaqq, accustomed to interpreting celestial changes, ordered his servants to carry him to a nearby mountain for a clearer view.

From there, he beheld a light unlike any he had seen, radiating from the direction of Hijaz (Mecca and Medina). This profound phenomenon deeply troubled him, realizing that it signaled the birth of the prophesied messenger from Banu Hashim—a figure whose arrival would change the course of history, even though the Banu Hashim had not previously held such prominence.

Shaqq immediately dispatched messages to all other renowned soothsayers and diviners across the world, seeking an explanation. Yet, no one could provide a satisfactory answer, admitting that they had witnessed the light but could not ascertain its source or meaning. A response finally arrived from Yemen, from a woman named Zarqa, a queen known for her profound knowledge in *kahana* and magic, whose status rivaled Shaqq's. Her letter informed Shaqq that she too had witnessed the light and confirmed its source as Mecca, advising him to travel there.

Driven by this revelation, Shaqq set out for Mecca with his retinue. Upon entering the city, he was met by some of its prominent leaders, including Utba, Shayba, Abu Jahl, and Walid. Expecting deference, Shaqq was instead met with disdain, as he inquired about a specific person belonging to Banu Hashim—a family these leaders deeply resented. Ignoring their hostility, Shaqq proceeded to the Kaaba, the center of Mecca. There, he found Abdul Muttalib and his son Abu Talib. Despite their skepticism towards *kahana*, they welcomed Shaqq as a guest of the Kaaba and invited him to their home.

Inside their abode, Shaqq performed a divination. He asked Abu Talib to place his hands over Shaqq's eyes. Upon doing so, Shaqq, astonished, questioned Abu Talib's lineage, claiming that his hands emanated signs of a distant, royal lineage rather than the known Banu Hashim. Abu Talib, amused, confirmed his lineage. Shaqq then revealed that these hands indicated the family where the Prophet, whose dominion would extend

over all creation until the Day of Judgment, was to be born. He further stated that this Prophet would have a supporter, a helper who would alleviate all his difficulties. As Abu Talib then called his younger brother, Abdullah, Shaqq's eyes fell upon him. Overwhelmed, Shaqq declared, "This is the one I have been seeking! Has a son been born to you?" Abdullah replied that no son had yet been born, but he was married to Amina.

Shaqq then requested to be taken to the marketplace. As news of Shaqq's arrival and his extraordinary predictions spread throughout Mecca, a large crowd gathered. When Shaqq finally addressed them, he proclaimed, "O people of Mecca! Rejoice! A great honor is destined for the family of Banu Hashim, an honor that will be revered until the Day of Judgment!" He elaborated on the Prophet's virtues and mission.

The Meccan leaders, particularly those from the hostile Umayyad clan, were indignant. They challenged Shaqq, demanding to know which woman would bear this Prophet. Shaqq instructed them to gather all the women of Mecca, promising to identify her. When the women were assembled, including Amina and Fatima bint Asad (Abu Talib's wife, mother of Ali), Shaqq began examining each woman, repeatedly stating, "No, this is not she." After all other women had passed before him, he finally identified Amina as the mother of the Prophet whose arrival would illuminate the universe, and Fatima bint Asad as the mother of the Prophet's great helper.

This declaration inflamed the opponents of Banu Hashim, particularly Abu Jahl and his allies, who threatened to harm Amina. However, divine intervention protected her. A fearsome voice boomed from the heavens, accompanied by lightning and thunder, proclaiming that no one could harm the chosen one or his mother, for the Protector of the Worlds had sent His guardian. The adversaries, terrified, fled in disarray.

Shaqq was urged by Abdul Muttalib and Abu Talib to return to their

home, but he respectfully declined, stating his intention to remain and await the Prophet's birth and declare his faith. However, he left soon after, convinced that his presence might endanger the family. While on his journey, Shaqq encountered Zarqa, the Queen of Yemen, who had traveled to Mecca for the same purpose. Zarqa, recognizing Shaqq, insisted he return with her.

Upon their return to Mecca, Zarqa's eyes fell upon Abdullah, and she recognized him from a past encounter in Yemen. Years prior, when Abdullah was on a trading journey in Yemen, Zarqa had seen the ***Noor-e-Risalat*** shining on his forehead from her palace window. Overwhelmed, she had offered him marriage and all her wealth, hoping to be the mother of the prophesied child. Abdullah, however, had firmly rejected her advances, stating that he belonged to a family that would rather perish than commit sin. Now, seeing Abdullah again, Zarqa was shocked to find the light no longer on his forehead. She questioned him, learning of his marriage to Amina. She then requested to meet Amina, expressing a strong desire to see the woman now graced by the divine light.

Despite initial hesitation due to Zarqa's past advances, Abdul Muttalib permitted the meeting, recognizing Zarqa as a respected guest. Amina, unveiled, entered the room. Upon seeing her, Zarqa immediately understood that the *Noor* had transferred to Amina's forehead. A wave of despair washed over Zarqa as she realized her opportunity was lost. Consumed by jealousy and frustration, she retreated, her mind consumed by a dark plot to assassinate Amina. Even her own *jinn* warned her against this path, but Zarqa remained determined. She intended to eliminate Amina, and by extension, the Prophet in her womb. However, the Protector of the Worlds, in His infinite wisdom and power, shielded Sayyida Amina and the unborn Prophet, thwarting Zarqa's malevolent intentions through even more miraculous means.

Chapter 6

The Blessed Dawn: Miracles Attending the Prophet's Birth

The previous chapters detailed the growing anticipation across Arabia, Syria, and Persia, with prophets and soothsayers predicting the imminent arrival of the Last Prophet. The land of Mecca itself thrummed with an inexplicable energy, signaling a monumental event. As the blessed months of Sayyida Amina's pregnancy culminated, the world prepared, albeit unknowingly, for the most significant birth in human history.

The consensus among scholars indicates that the Prophet Muhammad (s) was born on the **17th of Rabi' al-Awwal**. While some accounts mention the 12th, 9th, 10th, or 1st of Rabi' al-Awwal, the 17th is widely accepted by many notable scholars, particularly within the Shia tradition, with the exception of Shaykh Yaqub al-Kulayni, who recorded the 12th. The year of his birth is widely affirmed as **571 CE**, a year famously known as ***Aamul Fil*** (the Year of the Elephant). This designation stems from the momentous event when Abraha, the Abyssinian ruler of Yemen, marched with an army including elephants to demolish the Holy Ka'aba. This grand attack, providentially thwarted by divine intervention, solidified the year

as a landmark in Arabian history. Historical accounts place the Prophet's birth approximately forty-five days after Abraha's army was utterly vanquished, though some traditions suggest thirty or twenty days.

The early life of the Prophet was marked by significant transitions. His father, Abdullah, had passed away six months before his birth, leaving him an orphan even before he drew his first breath. His blessed mother, Sayyida Amina, nurtured him for approximately five to six years. Following her passing, the Prophet came under the guardianship of his illustrious grandfather, *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib, for three years. At the age of eight, upon the demise of Abdul Muttalib, the young Prophet was entrusted to the care of his uncle, Abu Talib, who provided unwavering protection and love until the Prophet reached adulthood.

The approach of the Prophet's birth intensified the signs of his advent throughout the known world. In Mecca, people sensed a profound shift in the spiritual atmosphere. From *Yathrib* (later Medina), Jewish scholars, well-versed in ancient prophecies, had settled, anticipating the coming of the final Messenger. In Syria, the news circulated through *Jahia*'s ancient scrolls, while in Persia, the palace of King Kisra, an unbeliever known for his justice, witnessed miraculous cracks in its walls, a testament to the seismic shift about to occur.

The night of the Prophet's birth, the **17th of Rabi' al-Awwal**, was a night of extraordinary wonders. In Persia, the grand fire temple of Fars, which had burned continuously for a thousand years, miraculously extinguished. The palace of Kisra, the Sasanian Emperor, was violently shaken, and fourteen of its towering battlements crumbled to the ground. The great Lake Sawa, revered for its vastness, suddenly dried up, while the River Samawa in Syria, long parched, gushed forth with water. Across the world, idols in temples and around the Ka'aba toppled. Soothsayers and magicians found their powers inexplicably diminished, their connections

to the *jinn* severed. Most strikingly, the *jinn* themselves were repelled from accessing the lower heavens, which they had previously frequented to eavesdrop on angelic conversations. A powerful light emanated from Mecca, so brilliant that it illuminated the distant palaces of Syria, visible to the awe-struck Meccans. Stars were seen falling, not as natural phenomena, but as celestial projectiles aimed at repelling the persistent *jinn* and devils.

Amidst these profound cosmic disturbances, Satan, the embodiment of evil, experienced an unprecedented state of despair. He summoned his offspring, demanding to know the cause of the earth-shattering events, yet none could provide an answer. Determined to uncover the truth, Satan himself attempted to ascend to the heavens, only to be violently repelled by a barrage of fiery projectiles hurled by angels. He then turned his attention to the earthly realm, attempting to enter the sacred precincts of Mecca, but found himself barred by angelic guardians, primarily Jibreel. Desperate, Satan called out to Jibreel, acknowledging their shared past in the heavens before the creation of Adam. He implored Jibreel to reveal the nature of this extraordinary event that had closed all traditional avenues to him. Jibreel revealed the momentous truth: "Satan, tonight is the night of the birth of the Master of the Prophets, Muhammad Mustafa (s)."

In a moment of astonishing audacity, Satan, knowing the Prophet's immaculate nature and his divine purpose, asked Jibreel: "Will I have any share in this newborn? Will I have any influence over him, or will I be able to mislead him?" Jibreel's response offered both a profound reassurance and a chilling warning. He affirmed that Satan would never have any power or influence over the Prophet. However, Jibreel added, "As for his *Ummah* (community), you will have no power over them as long as the love of *dunya* (worldly life) does not enter their hearts. But once the love of *dunya* takes root, even those who declare his prophethood and

follow the Imams will fall under your sway." Upon hearing this, Satan, though deprived of influence over the Prophet, found a grim satisfaction, realizing that his mission to mislead humanity was far from over.

Sayyida Amina herself recounted the miraculous nature of her pregnancy, noting its unusual ease and freedom from hardship, even amidst the immense sorrow of losing Abdullah. On the night of the Prophet's birth, while she was with Fatima bint Asad, her chamber was suddenly engulfed in a brilliant light, causing the room to seem to vanish, and she found herself gazing directly at the seven heavens. A pure white bird, an embodiment of divine spirit, touched her forehead, and as it receded, the intense light within the room diminished, allowing her to see her surroundings once more.

Then, four tall, tree-like women appeared, carrying crystal vessels filled with heavenly drinks. They greeted Sayyida Amina and offered her the blessed elixirs. After partaking of the heavenly draughts, she momentarily lost consciousness. Upon awakening, she beheld her newborn child, pristine and pure, already circumcised and with his umbilical cord cut. He lay prostrating on the ground, his left hand placed on the earth, and his right hand raised towards the sky. From his forehead emanated a dazzling light, so powerful that it illuminated the palaces of Yemen, the castles of Busra in Syria, and the royal residences of Iran, visible to Sayyida Amina and Fatima bint Asad. Sayyida Amina marveled, realizing that she had not felt the moment of birth.

At this auspicious moment, groups of angels descended from the heavens, offering greetings to the newborn and then ascending. Jibreel and Mika'il were present, holding pitchers of heavenly water. They washed the child, not for cleansing, as he was already immaculate, but to confer additional blessings and purity. A white cloud then enveloped the child, and a voice commanded it to take him across the world, introduc-

ing him to all mountains, forests, and seas, declaring him their Master, whose obedience was incumbent upon them.

When the cloud lifted, the child was seen lying in a cradle, holding three keys made of pearls: one symbolizing *nasr* (victory), another signifying control over *dunya* (worldly affairs), and the third representing *nubuwwah* (prophethood), signifying the finality of his mission and the cessation of prophethood after him. Another white cloud then descended, again enveloping the child, and a voice commanded to take him before all creatures—animals, birds, beasts, and *jinn*—to introduce him as their master, whose obedience was due. He was then seen holding a white handkerchief in his other hand, a symbol of his dominion over the world.

Placed before a pearl-studded tray, the child reached into its very center, where no pearls were present, signifying his divine choice of the Ka'aba. He was washed again with heavenly water. A third figure, identified as Ridwan, the guardian of Paradise, marked the space between the child's shoulders with the Seal of Prophethood using a ring, a profound physical sign of his unique spiritual station.

Outside Sayyida Amina's home, the entire city of Mecca was a spectacle of divine beauty. Abdul Muttalib's courtyard was adorned with a magnificent tent of red ruby, and banners fluttered from Abu Qubays mountain and the roof of the Holy Ka'aba. The Meccans, awoken by the celestial phenomena, gazed in wonder at the city's sudden, inexplicable adornment. Nearby, a Jewish scholar, restless and anxious, paced near the Ka'aba. He repeatedly questioned passersby about any recent births, dreading the news. He knew that if a child had been born in Mecca on this night, it would signify the end of prophethood among the Children of Israel and eternal humiliation for the Jews. His agitation underscored the profound awareness of this momentous event, even among those who would oppose the newborn Prophet. Meanwhile, Abdul Muttalib, the

venerable elder of Mecca, eagerly awaited the news from Sayyida Amina's chamber, unaware of the full magnitude of the divine blessings unfolding within.

Chapter 7

Premonitions Across Empires: The World Awaits the Prophet's Birth

The advent of the Noble Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings be upon him and his pure family, was not merely a local event but a cosmic occurrence, a pivotal turning point in the history of creation. From the moment the sacred ***Noor-e-Risalat*** settled within Sayyida Amina, the world was set into motion, preparing for the arrival of this unparalleled personality. The wisdom of the Almighty decreed that the birth of the Last Prophet would not be a secret or an obscure happening; rather, it would be announced and anticipated across the globe, ensuring that its significance resonated even before his blessed feet touched the earth.

Divine providence orchestrated events to convey this momentous news far and wide. Not only were the people of Mecca and the *Ahl al-Kitab* (People of the Book), including the Jews and Christians, made aware through ancient prophecies and visible signs, but the tidings also reached the two great superpowers of that era: the Roman Empire, ruled by Caesar, and the Persian Empire, ruled by Kisra.

In Syria, the heart of the Roman Empire, the renowned soothsayer Sateeh

had journeyed to Mecca, driven by the extraordinary light he observed emanating from Sayyida Amina on the night of the Prophet's conception. Having confirmed the momentous event, Sateeh returned to his homeland, his insights solidifying the awareness within the Roman realm that an extraordinary figure was about to emerge, one destined to end all earthly kingdoms.

Simultaneously, Zarqa, the Queen of Yemen and the most prominent female soothsayer of her time, also arrived in Mecca, having received information from Sateeh. Her purpose was sinister: driven by the same envy (*hasad*) that had previously caused her to plot against Abdullah, she now sought to harm Sayyida Amina, determined to extinguish the radiant ***Noor*** before it could fully manifest. As Sateeh was departing Mecca, he encountered Zarqa. Though he had previously conveyed through an intermediary that she would fail and be humiliated, her envy clouded her judgment.

Zarqa sought an audience with Sayyida Amina, which Abdul Muttalib, ever gracious, granted. Upon entering Sayyida Amina's chamber, Zarqa's first glance fell upon the radiant countenance of the blessed mother, and she instantly recognized the bearer of the ***Noor-e-Risalat***. Feigning affection and loyalty, Zarqa departed, but her heart burned with malicious intent. She knew, however, that directly harming Sayyida Amina within the secure confines of Banu Hashim's household was an impossible task. The family, though not yet outwardly manifesting Islamic law, possessed an inherent honor, dignity, and divine protection that made such an attack unthinkable. They were already accustomed to protecting the ***Noor*** from attacks on Hashim, Abdul Muttalib, and Abdullah. Now, with the ***Noor*** residing in Sayyida Amina, all hostility was directed towards her.

Zarqa devised a treacherous plan. She sought out Qatanah, a woman from the Khazraj tribe of Medina, who served as Sayyida Amina's adorn-

ment specialist. Qatanah, being from outside the Banu Hashim clan, was susceptible to temptation. Zarqa lured Qatanah to her chamber with promises of great reward. That very night, a *jinn* or *shaytan*, who had previously been giving Zarqa news from the lower heavens but had been blocked since the Prophet's conception, appeared to her. He warned Zarqa against attempting to harm the light, stating that he had received news that all attempts to extinguish it would fail, and that Zarqa herself would face disgrace. Yet, consumed by envy, Zarqa dismissed the warning, declaring her resolve to harm Sayyida Amina regardless of the consequences. This incident highlights the devastating nature of *hasad*, a sin so grave that it consumes good deeds just as fire consumes wood, as affirmed by the Prophet's narration regarding the love for Imam Ali (a).

The next morning, Zarqa instructed Qatanah to carry out the assassination. Qatanah went to Sayyida Amina's house, where the blessed mother, who was waiting for her, asked why she was late. Qatanah feigned busyness. After a short while, seeing Sayyida Amina engaged, Qatanah produced a dagger and lunged. But a miraculous intervention occurred: her hands began to tremble, Sayyida Amina seemed to vanish before her eyes, and a veil appeared to separate them. Three times Qatanah tried, and three times she was thwarted. On the third attempt, her hand was forcefully twisted, the dagger fell to the ground, and Qatanah let out a shriek. Sayyida Amina turned, instantly recognizing the dagger. Though no men of Banu Hashim were present, the women of the household, who revered Sayyida Amina and were aware of the blessed presence within her, rushed to her side. Qatanah, witnessing this failure, fled the house and quickly informed Zarqa, who immediately prepared to depart Mecca. Abdul Muttalib, learning of the failed plot, sent his servants to pursue Zarqa, but she had already joined Sateeh's caravan and left Mecca far behind.

Meanwhile, the Persian Empire too received its divine premonition. Kisra,

the Persian king, repeatedly dreamt of his magnificent palace, built on the banks of the Tigris River, collapsing, its fourteen battlements falling into the water. This dream, recurring three times, caused immense distress. His 360 court astrologers and soothsayers were summoned and tasked with interpreting the ominous dream within 24 hours, failing which they would face death. The chief soothsayer, an Arab from the Hijaz region, was particularly renowned. As the night progressed, all attempts at interpretation failed. The chief soothsayer, desperate, rode out into the desert. There, he witnessed a light rising from the Hijaz towards the heavens, and simultaneously felt as if his very feet were being pulled towards the Hijaz. He immediately understood the meaning of Kisra's dream: a great prophet had been born, one whose advent would bring an end to all earthly monarchies, including Kisra's own.

When the soothsayers reported to Kisra, they, fearing his wrath if they revealed the true meaning, fabricated a story. They claimed the initial construction of the palace was done at an inauspicious time, leading to the collapse. Kisra, desperate for a solution, accepted this, ordered the demolition of the faulty parts, and commanded a re-construction at an "auspicious" time. Eight months later, the construction was completed, coinciding with the Prophet's gestational age. But the moment Kisra sat on his throne in the rebuilt palace, it collapsed again, plunging him into the Tigris. Rescued near death, Kisra, enraged, demanded the true meaning. The soothsayers, realizing their lives were at stake, revealed that the dream signified the birth of a prophet from the Hijaz, nine months prior, who would bring an end to his and all other kingdoms.

At the same time, the chief priest of the Zoroastrians, called Maugah, had a disturbing dream: Arab camels and horses were crossing the border river between Arabia and Persia, entering Persian cities, and causing destruction. He immediately reported this to Kisra. As they spoke, news arrived that the sacred fire in their most ancient fire temple, which had

burned for a thousand years without interruption, had suddenly extinguished, and all attempts to rekindle it had failed.

These events further confirmed to Kisra that an extraordinary personality had been born. He immediately dispatched a wise and knowledgeable individual named Salsi to Yemen, who, after consulting Sateeh (who was on his deathbed), returned with the definitive prophecy: the time had come for mosques to replace all other houses of worship, for the Quran to supersede all other scriptures, and for a ruler to emerge who would hold eternal authority. Sateeh further prophesied that the remaining pieces of Kisra's palace would crumble, and the number of fallen battlements would correspond to the number of kings from Kisra's lineage who would rule before their empire's demise. He then spoke of the Imam's reappearance, a matter beyond the scope of this particular discourse, and then passed away.

Thus, the birth of Prophet Muhammad (s) was preceded by a series of global phenomena: Sateeh and Zarqa's prophecies in the Roman and Yemeni spheres, Kisra's dreams and the extinguishing of the sacred fire in Persia, and the constant divine protection of Sayyida Amina in Mecca. The world, through these signs and occurrences, was indeed prepared for the arrival of the greatest of all prophets.

Amidst these grand, global portents, the narrative of Prophet Muhammad's (s) own immediate family saw a poignant turn. Six months before his blessed birth, his father, Abdullah, was dispatched by Abdul Muttalib to Medina for trade and to visit his maternal relatives. Abdullah, known for his blessed countenance, was a welcome figure in Medina, where his mother and wife had family ties. While in Medina, Abdullah fell ill and, despite the care of his relatives, passed away at the tender age of 25. He was buried in a house near what is now the *Bab al-Salam* gate of the Prophet's Mosque. Though often overlooked in historical texts, ac-

counts from 1976 describe the miraculous discovery of his perfectly preserved body during construction, which was then discreetly reburied in an unknown location.

The news of Abdullah's passing brought immense sorrow to Mecca, especially to Abdul Muttalib and Abu Talib, who were deeply concerned with the protection of the *Noor-e-Risalat*. While the danger to Abdullah was now over, the focus of divine protection intensified around Sayyida Amina. Fatima bint Asad, Abu Talib's wife and a devoted figure, began to constantly attend to Sayyida Amina. Thus, the Prophet of Islam (s) was born an orphan, a profound initial trial, yet always under the ever-present care of Almighty God and His chosen guardians.

Chapter 8

The Beloved Child: Divine Providence in Early Childhood

The journey of Prophet Muhammad (s), from the celestial light of his inception to his physical birth, continued under the profound cloak of divine providence. Our previous discussions illuminated the miraculous circumstances surrounding his advent. Today, we turn our gaze to the earliest years of his blessed life, understanding how Allah Almighty meticulously orchestrated every detail to ensure His beloved Messenger's unparalleled purity and independence from human obligation, while also preparing the world for his unparalleled mission.

The Prophet's (s) early childhood unfolded within a precisely determined timeline. Born on the **17th of Rabi' al-Awwal** in the ***Aamul Fil*** (Year of the Elephant), he spent his initial months under the care of Sayyida Halima al-Sa'diya outside Mecca. Upon his return, he resided with his revered mother, Sayyida Amina, for approximately one year. Tragedy struck when he was six years old, as Sayyida Amina departed from this world. Her passing marked a significant transition, placing the young Prophet (s) under the loving guardianship of his esteemed grandfather,

Sayyiduna Abdul Muttalib, for the next two years. At the age of eight, Abdul Muttalib also passed away. From that tender age until his marriage at twenty-five, the Prophet (s) lived under the affectionate protection of his uncle, Abu Talib. Throughout these transitions, even when with Sayyida Halima, he would frequently visit his mother and grandfather, maintaining strong bonds.

A profound wisdom underlies these early events, particularly the Prophet's (s) early orphanhood. As articulated by the *Imam Ma'sum*, Allah Almighty ensured that no human being could ever claim to have rendered a service or placed an obligation upon the Prophet (s). This was a deliberate divine design, for the Prophet (s) was not sent to be a follower (*muti'*) of any mortal but rather the one to be followed (*muta'*) by all of humanity. His early life was thus shaped to eliminate any potential human dependency or claim of patronage. Imam Ma'sum states that the passing of his parents in his infancy was precisely to ensure that when he reached maturity, there would be no worldly figure to whom he owed obedience, as a parent's right can often demand. Far from being served by others, the Prophet's (s) very presence brought immeasurable blessings and prosperity to those who cared for him. Wherever he dwelled, that person or household experienced divine favor and abundance.

The miraculous nature of his early life extended beyond his protection from human obligation. His physical development was astonishingly rapid and atypical. At two months, he was already sitting; at nine months, he began to walk; by fifteen months, he could run with ease; and remarkably, at thirty months (two and a half years), he could wrestle with and overcome the youth of his age. This accelerated growth served a dual purpose: it was a clear sign of his extraordinary status and also a divine safeguard, as it made him harder for his enemies—who sought a child of a particular age—to identify and track.

Furthermore, his basic needs were often met by unseen hands. It is narrated that whenever his guardians, be it Sayyida Halima or Sayyida Amina, intended to bathe or groom him, they would find him already pristine, his hair neatly combed. His eyes, unlike those of other infants who might wake with residue, were always fresh and clear upon rising. His clothes would be found changed, seemingly by no earthly tailor. He never partook in the household food of his caregivers; rather, his sustenance was provided divinely, ensuring no one could claim to have fed him. Even more astounding, in fulfilling his natural bodily needs, the Prophet (s) left no physical traces, maintaining an absolute purity that defied human norms. This divine self-sufficiency underscored his sacred and unparalleled nature from the very outset.

The world, already stirred by the prophecies of his birth, continued to react to his presence. We have previously mentioned that his birth required no human midwives; instead, angelic women, including Jibreel and Mika'il, attended Sayyida Amina. The entire city of Mecca seemed to celebrate his arrival, not by human arrangement but by divine orchestration.

One day after his birth, a Jewish scholar, who had long resided in Mecca in anticipation of the coming Prophet, approached the Kaaba in a state of distress. He inquired of every Quraish tribesman if a child had been born the previous night. When all denied it, his urgency grew, for his knowledge indicated the birth of the prophesied child. Upon learning that *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib had a newborn, his anxiety peaked. He implored to see the infant. Though Abdul Muttalib was hesitant, he brought the Prophet (s) in his cradle. The moment the Jewish scholar's eyes fell upon the baby, he cried out, "This is he! This is the child after whom the kingdom of Bani Israel will cease, and prophethood will depart from them! This is the child who will become the ruler of the entire world, and because of him, Arabs will spread throughout the world!" His words,

born of envy and fear, further fueled the jealousy of those already hostile towards Abdul Muttalib and his lineage.

Recognizing the immense danger this pronouncement posed, Abdul Muttalib immediately took the Prophet (s) back inside and concealed him for seven days, akin to a "minor occultation." During this period, on the fourth day, another esteemed Arab scholar, Sawar ibn Qareb, renowned for his knowledge, approached Abdul Muttalib. He had heard of the birth and wished to see the child. Despite Abdul Muttalib's deep concern about further inflaming envy, he relented, leading Sawar into Sayyida Amina's home in privacy. As the Prophet's (s) covering was removed, a brilliant light illuminated the entire room. Sawar, overwhelmed, instinctively kissed the child's feet and declared his immediate belief, stating, "Bear witness, Abdul Muttalib, that I believe in this child right now! I know I will not live to see his declaration of prophethood, but I bear witness that he is indeed the final Messenger of Allah." Sawar ibn Qareb was thus the first person outside the Prophet's (s) immediate family to embrace faith in him after his birth.

On the seventh day, *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib performed the traditional *aqeeqa* (sacrifice) for his grandson and hosted a grand feast, inviting all of Mecca. During the celebration, someone inquired about the child's name. Abdul Muttalib announced, "I have named him Muhammad." This name, meaning "the praised one," was entirely new to the Arabs; no one in their lineage or history had ever been given such a name. The Meccans, particularly those who harbored resentment, were perplexed, questioning why he had chosen a name that did not align with his ancestors. Abdul Muttalib simply replied, "My desire is that this child reaches such a status that the entire world praises him. Therefore, I have named him Muhammad." This unique name further spread news of the extraordinary child throughout Mecca.

The divine plan continued to unfold, dictating that the Prophet (s) be temporarily moved away from Mecca to protect him from the relentless conspiracies brewing against him. Jewish scholars, sorcerers, and agents of Satan, having witnessed the astounding celestial and terrestrial events of his birth, were in a frenzy. They knew an extraordinary being had arrived, and their scriptures foretold the end of their dominion with his coming.

A poignant historical anecdote highlights their desperate attempts. Before the Prophet's (s) birth, the Jews had consistently attacked his lineage, from Hashim to Abdullah, trying to prevent his arrival. When *Sayyiduna* Abdullah came of age, the Jews, recognizing him as the future father of the Prophet (s) through a tell-tale sign—the blood of Prophet Yahya's (a.s.) garment that miraculously appeared on Abdullah—made a concentrated effort to assassinate him before he married. They failed. Later, when *Sayyiduna* Abdullah traveled to Medina for trade and to visit his relatives (Medina being a stronghold of Jewish communities), he was reportedly poisoned and martyred. The Jews celebrated, believing they had successfully thwarted the birth of the final Prophet. They then thoroughly investigated to confirm Abdullah had no offspring. Upon concluding he was childless, they returned, declaring the threat averted.

However, they made a fatal oversight: they failed to ascertain if Sayyida Amina, Abdullah's wife, was pregnant. Thus, when the Prophet (s) was born, and global reports of accompanying miracles began to pour in, Jewish scholars were plunged into confusion. Their books confirmed the signs of the final Prophet, but how could he have been born when his father, whom they had killed, was supposedly childless? A delegation was immediately dispatched to Mecca to investigate. By this time, however, as per divine instruction, the Prophet (s) had already been transferred to Sayyida Halima al-Sa'diya's care, outside Mecca.

Years later, when the Prophet (s) was approximately seven years old, another Jewish delegation arrived in Mecca. They spotted the young Prophet (s) with his grandfather and uncle. Despite his tender age, he appeared remarkably mature, like a 20 or 25-year-old. More strikingly, divine signs accompanied him: a cloud shaded him, trees bowed in his path, stones greeted him with salutations, and even mountains lowered themselves as he passed. These were all signs of the promised Prophet from their own scriptures. Yet, they were perplexed, expecting a seven-year-old, not a seemingly adult figure. Their scholars debated, concluding that prophets grow differently from ordinary humans.

To confirm their suspicion, they devised a cunning test. They knew from their scriptures that a Prophet of Allah could never consume *haraam* (forbidden) food, nor even *mushtabah* (doubtful) food. They procured some chickens: some were outright stolen (thus *haraam*), and others were taken with the intention to pay later (making them *mushtabah*). They then invited *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib and his family, including the Prophet (s), to a feast.

When the meal was served, Abdul Muttalib waited for the Prophet (s) to begin. The Prophet (s) declared, "This food is not for us." The Jews, insistent, tried to feed him the *haraam* chicken. As the morsel neared his lips, it miraculously fell from the feeder's hand. This happened repeatedly, five, six, ten times. Then, they brought the *mushtabah* chicken. Again, the Prophet (s) stated it was not for them. When they tried to feed him, the morsel would veer off to the side or fall, unable to touch his blessed lips. This profound sign confirmed to the Jews that he was indeed the true Prophet, for no *haraam* or *mushtabah* food could enter his mouth.

This incident, while confirming his prophethood, also intensified the enemies' plotting. Abdul Muttalib, understanding the grave danger, immediately instructed his entire family that the Prophet (s) should never be

allowed to leave the house unsupervised. Previously, he would sometimes send the young Prophet (s) to tend camels or sheep, but now, such outings were strictly forbidden. As Abdul Muttalib approached his own demise a year later, he summoned his sons and bequeathed his most crucial advice: "I am leaving this world, but my paramount instruction to you is to protect my grandson, even at the cost of your own lives."

This remarkable incident also highlights a crucial spiritual distinction. Consider the case of Prophet Musa (a.s.). When Pharaoh doubted Musa's (a.s.) innocence as a child, fearing him as a future enemy, Musa (a.s.) was commanded by Allah to pick up a burning coal and place it in his mouth, proving he was merely an infant attracted to shiny objects. This action, while saving his life and concealing his identity, caused him to have a speech impediment, which was later rectified by Allah. The point here is that Allah commanded Musa (a.s.) to do something physically harmful to save his life and conceal his secret.

Why then, did Allah not command His Beloved Prophet Muhammad (s) to consume the *haraam* food to conceal his identity and save his life from the Jews? The answer lies in the profound sanctity of the Prophet (s) and the inherent impurity of *haraam*. In Allah's sight, *haraam* is more abhorrent than fire or poison. While a prophet like Musa (a.s.) was permitted to consume burning coal, and even our *A'imma* (Imams) were divinely commanded to consume poison (leading to their martyrdom) out of submission to Allah's will, *haraam* food could not even touch the lips of Prophet Muhammad (s). This underscores the absolute purity of the Messenger of Allah (s) and the grave consequence of *haraam* sustenance. No matter the peril, *haraam* could not enter his sacred being.

This error by the Jews—their failure to check Sayyida Amina for pregnancy—is significant. Centuries later, during the birth of the final Imam, Imam Mahdi (a.s.), Muslims themselves, then in opposition to the Imamate,

remembered this Jewish mistake. They rigorously monitored the household of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), the eleventh Imam, meticulously checking every woman for pregnancy to prevent the birth of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). However, Allah's promise always prevails. Just as the Prophet's (s) pregnancy was not concealed from Sayyida Amina for nine months (because Allah knew the Jews would err in their investigation), the birth of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) was concealed even from his mother until mere moments before his birth, frustrating the enemies' every effort. These parallels illustrate how the strategies against the Prophet (s) informed later conspiracies against the Imams (a.s.), yet Allah's divine protection always triumphed.

Thus, the events immediately following the Prophet's (s) birth led to the decision to move him from Mecca. *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib and Sayyida Amina had already received divine guidance that Sayyida Halima al-Sa'diya's home was designated for his temporary care. This period marks, in essence, a "minor occultation" of the Prophet (s) in Sayyida Halima's home, protecting him from his burgeoning enemies. The question then arises: did Sayyida Halima al-Sa'diya confer a favor upon the Prophet (s) by taking him in and protecting him? This crucial point, emphasizing that no one could bestow a favor upon the Prophet (s), but rather his presence was a blessing for them, will be the subject of our next discussion.

Chapter 9

Divine Providence and the Blessed Foster Mother

Following the miraculous birth and the initial sacred week, the care of the newborn Prophet Muhammad (s) entered a new phase, one orchestrated by divine wisdom to further safeguard his extraordinary nature. While historians and biographers have noted minor differences in accounts regarding his earliest days of nursing, it is largely agreed that after the first week, during which Sayyida Amina herself may have nursed him or a special arrangement was made by *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib, the infant Prophet was entrusted to the care of a wet-nurse from outside Mecca.

The common practice among the Arabs, particularly the affluent, was to send their infants to be nursed in the desert regions. This tradition was rooted in two primary considerations: the belief that the open, unpolluted air of the desert fostered better health for children, and the desire to preserve the purity of the Arabic language, uncontaminated by foreign dialects and interactions prevalent in bustling urban centers like Mecca. While the Banu Hashim had not typically followed this custom, the circumstances surrounding the Prophet's (s) birth made this course of ac-

tion imperative.

Mecca, though enjoying prosperity and abundance (known as ***Aamul Khair*** or ***Aamul Rahat***) thanks to the Prophet's (s) blessed advent, was surrounded by regions grappling with severe famine and drought. Many people from these stricken areas migrated to Mecca in search of sustenance and work, adding to the city's population. Compounding this challenge, an epidemic had swept through Mecca, disproportionately affecting children and spreading rapidly from house to house. Furthermore, as previously recounted, the intensified activities of Jewish scholars and spies, relentlessly searching for the prophesied Last Messenger, made Mecca a dangerously exposed location for the infant Prophet (s). Each of these factors—the need for a healthy environment, the desire for linguistic purity, the opportunity to provide aid to the famine-stricken, protection from the epidemic, and safeguarding from persistent enemies—converged to necessitate the Prophet's (s) immediate relocation from Mecca. This early concealment and transfer from the immediate dangers of the city echoed divine precedents, much like the hidden early life of Prophet Musa (a.s.), and foreshadowed the future occultation of Imam Mahdi (a.s.), underscoring Allah's unfailing protection of His chosen ones.

On the seventh or eighth day after the Prophet's birth, following the completion of his ***aqiqah*** (the traditional sacrifice and naming ceremony), Sayyida Amina received a clear divine instruction. A voice from the unseen realm conveyed to her, "Entrust your child to a woman named Halima." In response, *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib dispatched his servants into Mecca, searching for a wet-nurse. It was customary for women from the surrounding desert tribes to visit Mecca twice a year—in spring and autumn—to offer their services as wet-nurses, hoping to earn compensation from wealthy families. During times of famine, their visits became even more frequent.

Among these women was Halima al-Sa'diya, from the distinguished tribe of Banu Sa'd. Halima herself recounted the arduous journey to Mecca. Their region was experiencing severe drought, and her tribe was desperate for livelihood. Her own donkey was weak and slow, lagging behind the entire caravan. Her camel, vital for sustenance, had no milk, and her own child was suffering from hunger, as her breasts were almost dry. Upon arriving in Mecca, her distressed condition prevented her from immediately joining other wet-nurses in finding a child. She observed, with mounting despair, that all the infants from affluent families had already been taken by other women.

Just as hope seemed to wane, she heard the calls of *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib's servants, seeking a wet-nurse for his orphaned grandson. Despite the common reluctance to take an orphan (as there was no father to ensure generous payment), Halima, with no other options, approached Abdul Muttalib. It is worth noting that Halima was not a stranger to the Banu Hashim; she had previously nursed *Sayyiduna* Hamza, the Prophet's (s) uncle, establishing a sacred foster-brotherhood. This prior connection affirmed her purity, as Islamic scholars concur that no prophet or imam can be nursed by an impure or polytheistic woman. Halima, Abdul Muttalib, Abu Talib, Abdullah, and Amina were all considered *Hanifs*, followers of the pure monotheistic religion of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) before the advent of Islam.

Upon meeting Abdul Muttalib, Halima introduced herself. Hearing her name, "Halima al-Sa'diya," Abdul Muttalib praised its significance: "Halima" denoting patience and wisdom, and "Sa'diya" signifying auspiciousness. He then directed her to Sayyida Amina. Entering Amina's chamber, Halima was astonished. Despite the bright daylight outside, the room glowed with an otherworldly radiance. Amina, smiling, explained that it was not the light of a lamp but the inherent ***Noor*** (light) of her blessed son. As Halima took the infant Prophet (s) into her arms, she was over-

whelmed by an inexplicable wave of love and reverence. Sayyida Amina, recognizing Halima from her divine vision, entrusted her precious child to her care, emphasizing the immense responsibility.

As Halima prepared to depart with the Prophet (s), *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib, ever vigilant, imparted a crucial warning. He stressed the multitude of enemies the child possessed and strictly enjoined Halima to keep secret any extraordinary phenomena she might witness. This was to prevent the spread of news that could alert hostile parties, particularly the Jews, to the Prophet's (s) whereabouts and unique blessings.

The return journey to Banu Sa'd was nothing short of miraculous. Halima's weak donkey, which had struggled on the way to Mecca, now sprinted ahead, outperforming even the swiftest horses, leaving the entire caravan astonished. Her camel, previously dry and emaciated, now produced an abundance of milk, enough to nourish not only her own child but also the entire tribe. Along the way, divine manifestations continued. A deer, speaking in human tongue, addressed Halima, confirming the child's blessed status as a future leader and urging her to protect him with utmost reverence. Shortly after, a pious man emerged from a mountain, prostrating before the infant, affirming that the child was a divine trust and instructing Halima to show him profound respect. The very elements of nature—speaking animals, clouds providing shade, harmonious sounds—all bore witness to the unique station of the Prophet (s).

Upon reaching her home, the blessings multiplied. Her ailing donkey bowed three times before the Prophet (s) in her house, then prostrated, expressing gratitude for its miraculous healing. This was but a prelude to the prosperity that would envelop Halima's household. During the severe famine that gripped their tribe, Halima's animals, previously emaciated, returned from grazing plump and full-bellied, while others' livestock remained sickly. Her meager flock of 22 goats swelled to an as-

tonishing 1030 animals within just five years, a direct consequence of the Prophet's (s) blessed presence.

Furthermore, a profound miracle occurred concerning Halima's own nursing. When it was time to feed the infant Prophet (s), Halima tried to offer him her left breast, which had always been dry. However, the child turned his face away. When she offered her right breast, which had only produced meager milk for her own child, an abundant flow miraculously issued forth, enough to nourish both the Prophet (s) and her own son to their fill. This underscored a vital theological principle: the Prophet (s) did not receive a favor from Halima; rather, his presence *conferred* favor and blessings upon her. Allah's intention was that His Beloved Prophet (s) should owe no human being any obligation, but rather be a source of grace and bounty for all.

Thus, the Prophet Muhammad (s) spent five blessed years in the care of Halima al-Sa'diya, a period filled with visible miracles and divine protection, preparing him for the monumental destiny that awaited him.

Chapter 10

The Miraculous Years in Banu Sa'd and a Mother's Final Journey

The radiant journey of Prophet Muhammad (s) continued under the blessed care of Sayyida Halima al-Sa'diya, a period divinely orchestrated to further illuminate his extraordinary nature. As Sayyida Halima journeyed back to her tribe, the Banu Sa'd, with the sacred infant in her arms, the very elements of creation heralded his arrival. Animals along the path would pause, turning to Halima to offer salutations and congratulations for the incomparable treasure she carried. Trees, as she passed, would bend their branches as if in prostration, and even the stones, previously inanimate and cold, seemed to weep with joy and reverence, offering their salutations. These pervasive signs confirmed to Halima that the child in her care was no ordinary being, a realization that instilled both awe and a protective sense of responsibility.

During this time, a significant encounter occurred with a group of sorcerers who, perceiving the immense spiritual light emanating from the Prophet (s), recognized him as a formidable threat to their dark practices. Driven by their sinister knowledge and sensing the advent of one

destined to eradicate their false sciences, they attempted to harm him. However, their malevolent intentions were utterly thwarted by divine intervention. A powerful, thunderous sound, akin to a bolt of lightning, emanated from the Prophet's (s) presence, striking fear into their hearts and scattering them in terrified retreat, reminiscent of the failed attempts by Jewish scholars to harm him previously. This incident further solidified Halima's conviction that this child was under an unparalleled celestial guardianship.

The blessings brought by the Prophet (s) extended far beyond these miraculous greetings and protections. Halima's impoverished household was transformed into a haven of prosperity. Her previously barren camel began to yield abundant milk, and her small flock of goats, once emaciated, now produced copious amounts of milk and grew robust. Her own infant, previously weak and ill-fed, now thrived, sharing the blessed milk with the Prophet (s). What was most astonishing to Halima was the Prophet's (s) self-sufficiency and the profound reverence he commanded, even from her own child. The Prophet (s) would always take his share of milk from one breast, leaving the other for Halima's son. Furthermore, Halima observed that his hair was miraculously combed, his body bathed, and his clothes changed without her ever having to perform these tasks, as if unseen hands attended to his needs. Her own child, though still an infant, would never reach for the breast until the Prophet (s) had taken his share, a testament to the respect and awe he inspired even in one so young.

As the Prophet (s) grew, his inherent sense of justice and compassion began to manifest. One day, at the tender age of two, he approached Sayyida Halima with a profound complaint. While he was accustomed to resting comfortably in the shade of their home, his foster brothers spent their days enduring the harsh sun, grazing the flocks in the desert. "Mother Halima," he gently protested, "how is it fair that my brothers suffer un-

der the blazing sun in the desert while I remain in comfort and shade? I, too, wish to accompany them and share their burden." Halima, in awe, attempted to dissuade him, explaining the difference in their ages and roles. However, the Prophet (s) insisted, expressing that he could not bear such an inequality between brothers residing under the same roof. He insisted on accompanying them, even to the extent of performing tasks for them. This early display of solidarity and deep concern for others, even when not obligatory upon him, underscored the very essence of the Messenger of Allah (s)—a character rooted in altruism and an unwavering commitment to justice. This ethical foundation, exemplified by the Prophet (s) from his earliest days, is the true essence of Islam, urging believers to embody righteousness not just through words but through their very conduct, as a beacon to all humanity.

The entire Banu Sa'd tribe, witnessing the extraordinary blessings and the profound character of the young Prophet (s), developed an immense love and reverence for him. His presence brought prosperity to their livestock and their homes. Even the poorest and most desperate among them, like Umm Mata'ati, a woman reduced to begging during a famine, found her fortunes transformed merely by looking upon the radiant face of the Prophet (s). Within a week, she had become one of the wealthiest women in the tribe, a testament to the baraka (blessing) that accompanied him. Trees that were barren would bear fruit upon his proximity, and dry wells would miraculously flow with water. Most significantly, their animals, the very lifeblood of the nomadic Arab tribes, were supernaturally protected from predators. Narrations recall an incident where a wolf, having taken some goats from Halima's flock, was compelled by the Prophet's (s) prayer to return them unharmed. This unprecedented safety for their herds further solidified the tribe's devotion, making the Prophet (s) their beloved leader, despite his tender age.

The blessings and protection surrounding the Prophet (s) were not lim-

ited to the physical realm. Halima's foster brothers would recount astonishing incidents. On one occasion, they witnessed two radiant figures descending from the sky, taking their brother Muhammad aside. Frightened, they rushed back to Halima, crying that their brother had been taken. Halima, recalling Abdul Muttalib's warnings about his numerous enemies, was overcome with fear. However, upon rushing to the spot, she found the Prophet (s) lying peacefully, as if crowned and robed in regal attire, with two luminous youths sitting beside him like devoted servants. The Prophet (s) calmly reassured her, explaining that they were Jibreel and Mika'il, his constant protectors sent by Allah, ensuring no harm would ever befall him. This angelic guardianship manifested multiple times during his five years with Halima, reinforcing the divine surveillance over him.

After five years, the Prophet (s) was returned to his mother, Sayyida Amina, in accordance with the customary agreement. While the original intention was to return him at age two, an earlier incident of his temporary disappearance, prompting Abdul Muttalib's frantic search and prayer to Allah, had led to his return to Halima's care. But now, at age five, the period of fostering was complete. Sayyida Halima received generous rewards from Abdul Muttalib and Sayyida Amina, and the Prophet (s) was joyfully reunited with his mother and grandfather.

He spent a year in the loving embrace of Sayyida Amina. When the Prophet (s) was six years old, Sayyida Amina had a dream in which she saw her deceased husband, Abdullah. Prompted by this dream and a desire to visit Abdullah's grave, she sought Abdul Muttalib's permission to travel to Medina. Accompanied by Umm Ayman, Abdullah's freed slave-woman who had also accompanied Abdullah on his final journey, and the young Prophet (s), Sayyida Amina embarked on the arduous journey from Mecca to Medina.

Upon arriving in Medina, the small caravan was welcomed by the Banu Najjar, Sayyida Amina's maternal uncles. They stayed for approximately one month, during which Sayyida Amina visited the resting place of her beloved husband, Abdullah, opening his grave and staying by it, as a sign of respect and longing. After a month, they began their return journey to Mecca. However, tragedy struck at a place called Abwa, about one hundred miles from Medina. Sayyida Amina fell gravely ill. Her illness worsened rapidly, and surrounded by her beloved son and faithful Umm Ayman, the pure soul of Sayyida Amina departed from this world. She was buried reverently at Abwa, leaving the Prophet Muhammad (s) an orphan of both parents at the tender age of six.

Umm Ayman, now burdened with the care of the orphaned Prophet (s), brought him back to Mecca. He was lovingly taken into the full guardianship of his venerable grandfather, *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib. This profound loss of his mother at such a young age left an indelible mark on the Prophet (s). Later in his life, during the *Hudaybiyah* expedition, when passing through Abwa, the Prophet (s) halted his entire caravan, despite being in the sacred state of *ihram* for pilgrimage, to visit his mother's grave, where he wept profusely, reminiscing about her. This act affirmed the deep Islamic tradition of visiting graves and honoring the deceased, even for those in *ihram*.

Abdul Muttalib, now 118 years old, fully understood the immense responsibility placed upon him. The Prophet (s) remained under his direct care for one year. It was during this period that the earlier attempts by the Jewish scholars to test the Prophet (s) with *haram* food failed, further confirming their fears and Abdul Muttalib's resolve to protect him.

At this time, a significant encounter occurred that further underscored the Prophet's (s) destiny. The King of Yemen, Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan, a formidable ruler, had temporarily taken control of Mecca. Abdul Mut-

talib, ever the protector of Mecca's sanctity, traveled to Yemen to address the issue of taxes being imposed on the sacred city. He departed from Mecca, leaving the Prophet (s) in the care of Abu Talib, as it was his custom not to take the Prophet (s) on journeys outside Mecca due to safety concerns.

Upon reaching Yemen, Abdul Muttalib found that King Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan was in seclusion for a 40-day retreat in his magnificent garden palace. Denied entry by the guards, Abdul Muttalib, with his unwavering determination, offered a hefty bribe to the guard, who was astonished but ultimately swayed. Inside, he found the King, who appeared aged and frail. The King, upon hearing of Abdul Muttalib's arrival from Mecca, expressed an unexpected eagerness to meet him. It was revealed that Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan had been anticipating this very meeting, for he possessed ancient scriptures that foretold the advent of the final Prophet (s) in Mecca. He prophesied that this Prophet (s) would be orphaned of his father before birth and his mother soon after, and would then be raised by his grandfather, who would one day visit him.

Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan confirmed that this prophesied child would possess the ***Seal of Prophethood*** between his shoulders, inscribed with the words ***La Ilaha Illa Allah*** (**There is no god but Allah**). The King then revealed that he held three sacred trusts, handed down through generations, specifically meant for this final Prophet (s). Abdul Muttalib, recognizing the description of his grandson, could only smile, confirming the King's extraordinary insight. Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan then revealed that he had dyed his hair black, a practice unknown to the Arabs at that time, and instructed Abdul Muttalib and his companions in this art. The King then promised to hand over the three precious trusts to Abdul Muttalib when the time was right, a testament to the divine arrangements surrounding the Prophet's (s) early life and the global anticipation of his arrival.

Chapter 11

A Mother's Farewell and a Grandfather's Guard: The Prophet's Early Years in Mecca

The years spent under the nurturing care of Sayyida Halima al-Sa'diya continued to unfold with a series of profound blessings and divine manifestations, solidifying the extraordinary nature of Prophet Muhammad (s). The journey back to the Banu Sa'd tribe after his initial two-year stay, and indeed his entire five-year sojourn in the desert, was marked by an incessant display of miracles. Animals, trees, and even stones offered salutations to the blessed child, affirming his lofty status.

His divine light was so potent that it agitated malevolent sorcerers and *jinn*, who recognized in him a force destined to dismantle their corrupt knowledge and practices, particularly the illicit art of divination and soothsaying. They mounted attacks, but each attempt was supernaturally thwarted, unable to breach the divine shield that encompassed the Prophet (s). This constant protection served as a testament to his unique mission and the direct intervention of the Divine.

The presence of the Prophet (s) brought unparalleled prosperity to Halima's household and the entire Banu Sa'd tribe. Their meager flocks mul-

tiplied exponentially, their dry lands became fertile, and their barren udders flowed with milk. Even the poorest among them, like the woman famously known as "Umm al-Masakin" (Mother of the Destitute), found her fortunes transformed. She, who once came to Halima's impoverished home seeking aid, discovered the source of blessing in the young Prophet (s). Her initial disappointment at finding little soon turned to awe as she witnessed the profound effect of his presence, eventually becoming one of the wealthiest in the tribe, constantly seeking to gain blessings from the Prophet (s). Furthermore, the tribe's livestock, which were usually vulnerable to predators in the harsh desert, found themselves inexplicably protected; even wolves and other wild animals, upon approaching the Banu Sa'd flocks, would turn away or even return stolen animals, a clear sign of the Prophet's (s) blessed presence.

The Prophet's (s) miraculous self-sufficiency in his daily care continued to astound Halima. His hair would be found combed, his eyes kohl-lined, and his clothes clean without any human intervention, as if unseen hands attended to his needs. Even Halima's own son, previously accustomed to having his mother's milk first, instinctively demonstrated profound respect for the Prophet (s). He would not reach for his mother's breast until the Prophet (s) had taken his fill, recognizing the sacred precedence.

At a tender age, the Prophet's (s) innate sense of justice and compassion shone brightly. Observing his foster brothers toiling under the desert sun as they grazed the flocks, he insisted on joining them. Halima tried to dissuade him, reasoning that his delicate nature was different from theirs, but he firmly declared it unjust for him to rest in comfort while his brothers labored. This refusal to accept ease at the expense of others' hardship, even at such a young age, epitomized his profound *akhlaq* and his deep empathy for the suffering of others—a trait that would later define his mission.

Throughout this period, angelic guardians, Jibreel and Mika'il, were constantly in his vicinity, their presence sometimes glimpsed by Halima's sons, ensuring his perpetual safety and care. Halima recounted an incident when the Prophet (s) briefly disappeared, causing her immense distress, only to be found perfectly safe, protected by these celestial beings.

At the age of five, the Prophet (s) finally returned to Mecca, reuniting with his beloved mother, Sayyida Amina, and his venerable grandfather, Abdul Muttalib. This reunion was filled with joy, but his stay with his mother was tragically brief. When the Prophet (s) was six years old, Sayyida Amina, deeply affected by a dream she had of her late husband Abdullah, resolved to visit his grave in Medina. Accompanied by the young Prophet (s) and his faithful nurse, Umm Ayman, she embarked on the journey.

In Medina, they visited the sacred resting place of Abdullah, spending a month in the city, reconnecting with Sayyida Amina's maternal uncles from the Banu Najjar tribe. However, on their return journey to Mecca, approximately a hundred miles from the city, at a place called Abwa, Sayyida Amina's health rapidly deteriorated. The journey had taken its toll, and she passed away, leaving her beloved son, Prophet Muhammad (s), an orphan of both parents. Umm Ayman, with a heavy heart, brought the young Prophet (s) back to Mecca, where he came under the sole and profound guardianship of his grandfather, *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib.

Abdul Muttalib, now an elder at 118 years of age, understood the immense responsibility placed upon him. He had already recognized the unique blessedness of his grandson, particularly after an incident at age seven where the Prophet (s) miraculously refused to consume *haraam* food, confirming his prophethood to observing Jewish scholars. Abdul Muttalib now bore the weight of protecting this sacred trust from ene-

mies who had long sought to harm him.

Around this time, a significant event further emphasized the Prophet's (s) destiny. The King of Yemen, Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan, had asserted control over Mecca. Abdul Muttalib, ever the guardian of the Kaaba and its people, resolved to travel to Yemen to intercede on behalf of the Meccans and ensure the sanctity of their holy city. It was Abdul Muttalib's custom not to take the Prophet (s) outside Mecca, relying on his son Abu Talib to protect him within the city. So, leaving the young Prophet (s) in Mecca, Abdul Muttalib embarked on the journey.

Upon reaching Yemen, Abdul Muttalib discovered that King Sayf was in seclusion for a 40-day retreat. With great persistence and after offering a hundred pieces of gold, Abdul Muttalib gained an audience. The King, who possessed ancient prophecies passed down through generations, immediately recognized Abdul Muttalib. He spoke of the imminent advent of the final Prophet, describing his characteristics: an orphan of both parents, whose grandfather would take him under his care and then visit the King. Sayf revealed that three sacred trusts, passed down from previous prophets, were safeguarded by him, awaiting the arrival of this final Prophet. He also mentioned a unique "Seal of Prophethood" between his shoulders, bearing the inscription "La Ilaha Illallah, Muhammad Rasulullah."

Abdul Muttalib was astounded, recognizing every detail as pertaining to his grandson. He cautiously confirmed that the King's description matched his own grandson, assuring the King that when the time was right, the Prophet (s) would be brought to receive these trusts. This encounter cemented Abdul Muttalib's profound responsibility and deepened his conviction in his grandson's divine mission, setting the stage for the crucial years of guardianship that lay ahead.

The sorrow of Sayyida Amina's passing left a deep imprint on the young

Prophet (s). Years later, during the Hudaybiyya peace treaty negotiations, when the Prophet (s) passed by Abwa, he paused the entire caravan to visit his mother's grave, weeping profusely, a testament to the enduring bond and the profound respect he held for the deceased. This act underscored a vital Islamic principle: the profound importance of respecting graves and the deceased. It was this reverence that contrasted sharply with the actions of figures like Hind, who, during the Battle of Uhud, harbored the malicious intent to desecrate Sayyida Amina's grave, an act of sheer barbarity prevented by divine intervention.

The Prophet's (s) actions and the teachings of the *Ahl al-Bayt* consistently emphasize the spiritual benefit of visiting graves, particularly those of parents, to seek blessings and facilitate prayers. As Imam Ali (a.s.) taught, supplicating at the graves of parents can lead to the swift acceptance of prayers, highlighting the sacred status of parents even after their passing.

Thus, at the age of six, the Prophet Muhammad (s), now a double orphan, found himself firmly under the loving and protective wing of his venerable grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, whose wisdom and foresight would guide him through the critical years of his early childhood in Mecca.

Chapter 12

The Syrian Journey: Early Signs of Prophethood and Enduring Guardianship

The life of Prophet Muhammad (s) unfolded under a singular divine providence, ensuring that he would never be indebted to any worldly individual, even during his most formative years. From his very birth, when no human assistance was required, to his youth, a period when all humans are typically dependent, the Most High Lord ensured that His Beloved remained self-sufficient, a source of blessings for all who cared for him. Whether it was his grandfather, *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib, his uncle, Abu Talib, or his foster mother, Sayyida Halima al-Sa'diya, it was they who continually received blessings and spiritual benefit from him, rather than the other way around. This profound truth continued to manifest throughout his early life, consistently highlighting his unique status.

Following the passing of *Sayyiduna* Abdul Muttalib, when the Prophet (s) was eight years and one month old, the sacred duty of his guardianship passed to his beloved uncle, Abu Talib. Abu Talib, along with his wife Fatima bint Asad, embraced the Prophet (s) into their home, showering him with a love and care that surpassed even that given to their own children.

Fatima bint Asad, in particular, witnessed certain miraculous events that moved her to pray for a son like him. It was during this period that Mecca once again faced a severe drought, reminiscent of a previous famine during Abdul Muttalib's lifetime. While the common people of Mecca turned to their idols for relief, the Banu Hashim, steadfast in their belief in the One God, sought divine intervention. A wise voice suggested approaching Abu Talib, the venerable guardian of the Prophet (s), for his prayers.

The people gathered at Abu Talib's door, imploring him to intercede for rain. Abu Talib, understanding the true source of blessing, emerged the next day with his young nephew by his side. Outside Mecca, in the presence of the assembled crowd, he gently took the Prophet (s) in his arms and, raising the blessed child towards the heavens, prayed. The Prophet (s) then extended his own hands in supplication. As the Chief of the Prophets, his prayer was immediately answered. Dark clouds gathered swiftly, and a torrential downpour alleviated the drought, bringing immense relief to Mecca. In joyful gratitude, Abu Talib composed the famous *Qasida al-Lamiyya*, a timeless ode that not only extolled the Prophet (s)'s virtues but also clearly acknowledged his impending prophethood and his unique status as a means of salvation in both this world and the hereafter. This profound poem stands as a testament to Abu Talib's unwavering belief and deep understanding of his nephew's divine destiny, demonstrating that he sheltered him not merely as a family member, but as Allah's chosen Messenger.

As the Prophet (s) approached his eleventh year, or the beginning of his twelfth, Abu Talib prepared for a significant trading journey to Syria. It was a perilous route, scorching hot and fraught with dangers from bandits and the harsh desert environment. Despite the risks, Abu Talib, bearing the heavy responsibility of his family and the upkeep of the **Kaaba's** guests, found it necessary to undertake this journey. His determination to take the young Prophet (s) with him surprised other family members,

who expressed concern over exposing an orphaned boy to such hardships. However, Abu Talib's resolve was firm: "My nephew is more precious to me than my own life. My heart will only be at peace if he is with me. This is a trust entrusted to me, and I will protect him." He understood that worldly protection would be insufficient against the enemies who sought to harm him, and only direct divine care, facilitated by his constant presence, could truly safeguard him.

To ease the journey, Abu Talib arranged a comfortable camel litter for the Prophet (s). As the caravan set out from Mecca, Abu Talib's initial anxieties about the harsh desert soon turned to awe. Despite the intense heat and scorching winds, a miraculous cloud perpetually shaded the Prophet (s), its cool shadow extending over the entire caravan, offering a refreshing respite. It was as if a block of ice floated above them, protecting everyone from the sun's scorching rays. The animals of the caravan, too, were miraculously sustained. When any animal showed signs of fatigue, the Prophet (s) would dismount, place his hand upon the weary camel or horse, and immediately the animal would regain its strength, rejoining the caravan as if freshly rested. Furthermore, at every stop, no matter how barren the land, a lush garden would miraculously appear, complete with flowing water, offering comfort and repose to the travelers. All these wonders strengthened Abu Talib's conviction that Allah Himself was guarding His chosen one, and that the blessings extended to the entire caravan were solely due to the Prophet (s)'s presence.

Upon reaching Busra, the first city in Syria, the caravan halted for a midday rest. The Prophet (s) dismounted and sat beneath a dry, withered tree. Instantly, the tree blossomed, its branches growing verdant and bearing fruit. What was even more astonishing was that it produced three types of fruit simultaneously: one seasonal to summer and two to winter, a clear sign of divine intervention. Nearby, a small, seemingly dried-up stream began to flow with abundant water. These extraordinary sights

were witnessed by Bahira, a revered Christian monk who resided in a monastery nearby. For years, Bahira had awaited the prophesied advent of the final Prophet, knowing that specific signs would accompany him. He observed his monastery stir, and felt it move, and witnessed the miraculous cloud, the flourishing tree, and the flowing stream. Realizing the long-awaited moment had arrived, he emerged from his hermitage and invited the entire caravan to a meal.

Initially, the Prophet (s) remained in the camp, but Bahira, observing the cloud still hovering over the boy outside his monastery, insisted that every member of the caravan be present. When the Prophet (s) entered, Bahira's heart swelled with joy. He observed how the Prophet (s) refused to eat alone, insisting that the entire caravan share the meal, a powerful lesson in sharing and selfless leadership even at a young age. Bahira then requested permission to inspect the Prophet (s) and recognized the **Seal of Prophethood** between his shoulders, confirming all the ancient prophecies.

Bahira, now certain of the Prophet (s)'s identity, turned to Abu Talib. He confirmed that the child was indeed the last Prophet, foretold in the scriptures, whose advent would be so momentous that the very universe would submit to his message. He warned Abu Talib of the dangers posed by Jewish and Christian enemies, who, recognizing the same signs, would seek to harm him. He advised Abu Talib to swiftly return to Mecca and guard the boy carefully, never allowing him out until his prophethood was formally announced.

Abu Talib, reassured by the divine protection he had already witnessed, gratefully acknowledged Bahira's warning. The caravan continued its journey towards the capital of Syria. Upon entering the city, a light as brilliant as the moon seemed to descend from the sky, illuminating the entire city. The people poured out of their homes, captivated by the

radiant aura emanating from the Prophet (s). This immediate recognition, even before he formally proclaimed his message, illustrated the profound impact of his divine presence. Merchants, eager to witness this phenomenon, thronged the caravan, leading to an unprecedented quick sale of all goods. What would normally take a month, was completed in a mere three days, allowing the caravan to depart early.

In this capital city, another respected Christian monk named Nestor, who had also long awaited the Prophet (s), observed his arrival. Nestor, too, was deeply affected by the Prophet (s)'s countenance. For three days, he remained in the Prophet (s)'s presence, even sleeping outside his tent at night, unable to articulate the depth of his reverence. On the third day, he approached Abu Talib and, upon seeing the **Seal of Prophethood**, kissed it repeatedly, offering his deep respect. He echoed Bahira's warning, emphasizing the critical need to protect the Prophet (s) from those who would seek to harm him.

Significantly, among the members of this very caravan were ancestors of future adversaries like Khalid ibn Walid and the forefather of Abu Sufyan. While they feigned disinterest and wandered outside the city, their deep-seated envy and animosity towards Banu Hashim grew. They encountered other monks who, recognizing the Prophet (s) through his family lineage, despairingly noted that the awaited Prophet was from Banu Hashim, not their own lineage. This encounter further intensified their resentment, highlighting how the Prophet (s)'s divine signs, recognized by sincere seekers, also fueled the jealousy and hostility of those with hardened hearts, laying the groundwork for future conflicts. The Syrian journey, therefore, served as a powerful revelation of the Prophet's (s) identity, not only to his future followers but also to those who would become his most staunch enemies, solidifying the divine purpose behind his every step.

Chapter 13

The Path of Justice: Harb al-Fijar, Hilf al-Fudul, and the Dawn of Amin

The life of Prophet Muhammad (s), as revealed in the Glorious Qur'an, stands as the most perfect exemplar for all humanity. In every era, every circumstance, and every challenge, his blessed *Seerat* offers a guiding light, a complete blueprint for navigating the complexities of human existence. As we delve deeper into the formative years of the Beloved Prophet (s), we find profound instances where his inherent character shone brightly, laying the groundwork for his future prophethood and establishing the very principles that Islam would later enshrine.

Having journeyed through the first twelve years of his life, observing his miraculous physical growth and the profound divine protection that enveloped him, we now turn to a pivotal phase where his inner virtues and dedication to justice began to manifest visibly in Meccan society, even before the formal declaration of his prophethood. This period not only reveals the nascent stages of Islamic principles spreading through his actions but also inadvertently set the stage for the animosity of those who would later become his staunchest adversaries.

By his early twenties, the young Muhammad (s) had already engaged in extensive trade journeys, accompanying his uncle Abu Talib. These travels were not limited to Syria, but extended to distant lands such as Yemen and Bahrain. Narrations confirm that his mercantile expeditions took him to the far corners of the Arabian Peninsula, granting him an intimate knowledge of its diverse regions and peoples. Centuries later, after the advent of Islam, when people from places like Bahrain visited him, they were astonished by his detailed knowledge of their cities and conditions. He would simply respond, "I journeyed through your lands many times during my youth as a merchant." These journeys underscored his practical wisdom and widespread influence.

A significant event during this period was the ***Harb al-Fijar*** (Sacrilegious Wars), which occurred when the Prophet (s) was approximately twenty years old. These were a series of conflicts fought between various Arab tribes in the sacred months, during which warfare was traditionally forbidden—hence their name, meaning "sinful wars." The fourth and most significant of these wars erupted due to a dispute over a murdered employee of a chieftain from the Banu Kinanah tribe at the annual Ukaz market, a place typically revered for peace and trade. The aggrieved chieftain, Nu'man, demanded justice—either the killer or blood money—but his demands were brazenly refused. This led to a tribal war where the Banu Kinanah were pitted against the aggressor's tribe.

While the Banu Hashim had no direct stake in the initial dispute, Sayyiduna Abu Talib and other elders recognized that Nu'man's tribe was the victim of injustice. Upholding their ancestral commitment to justice and respecting the sanctity of the sacred months, the Banu Hashim, led by Abu Talib, sided with the wronged party. The Prophet Muhammad (s) participated in these wars, but his role was profoundly distinct from the usual combatants. He did not wield a sword, nor did he engage in direct fighting. Instead, as he himself stated, "I merely picked up the arrows that fell and

handed them to my uncles." This simple yet powerful action exemplified his burgeoning concern for justice and the protection of the innocent, without ever resorting to violence or bloodshed. His presence in this war, though passive, marked a profound moral stance against injustice and chaos.

The chaos and moral decay evident in the *Harb al-Fijar* underscored the desperate need for a system of justice in Mecca. A few days after the conclusion of these wars, another incident highlighted this need. A merchant from the Zabid tribe of Yemen arrived in Mecca to sell his goods. A prominent Meccan chieftain, Al-As ibn Wa'il, bought merchandise from him but then refused to pay. The Yemeni merchant, a stranger in Mecca with no local support, sought help from various Meccan leaders, but none were willing to intervene against their own chieftain. In desperation, he ascended Mount Abu Qubays, a prominent hill overlooking the Kaaba, and publicly cried out for justice.

Upon hearing the merchant's plea, Sayyiduna Zubair, the Prophet's (s) eldest uncle, felt deep shame that such injustice could occur in Mecca. He convened a meeting at the house of Abdullah ibn Jud'an, gathering various honorable and principled individuals from different tribes, including the young Prophet Muhammad (s). These men, irrespective of their beliefs—for Islam had not yet been declared—shared a common commitment to righteousness. Together, they forged a solemn pact, swearing by Allah to defend the oppressed against their oppressors, to restore rights, and to prevent any future injustice in Mecca. This momentous agreement became known as ***Hilf al-Fudul*** (The Covenant of the Virtuous or The Alliance of the Excellent). The term "Fudul" is said to derive either from the names of several key participants who shared the name Fadl, or from its meaning of "virtues" or "excellence," indicating its noble purpose.

The Prophet Muhammad (s), despite his youth, actively participated in

this covenant and remained a staunch proponent of its principles throughout his life. Even after receiving prophethood and migrating to Medina, he continued to praise *Hilf al-Fudul*, declaring, "I was present at a covenant in the house of Abdullah ibn Jud'an that I would not exchange for red camels (the most valuable possessions at the time). If I were invited to it today, I would surely accept." This enduring praise underscored the universal and timeless nature of seeking justice and aiding the oppressed, a fundamental tenet of Islam.

The Prophet's (s) involvement in *Harb al-Fijar* and his pivotal role in forming *Hilf al-Fudul* solidified his reputation across Mecca. His unwavering honesty in trade, his commitment to upholding justice, and his inherent nobility led the Meccans to bestow upon him the titles ***Sadiq*** (The Truthful) and ***Amin*** (The Trustworthy). By his early twenties, and certainly before his thirtieth year, these epithets were already universally recognized and widely used when referring to him. He was known not only for his impeccable integrity in business dealings—his accounts were flawless, and those who entrusted him with their goods often found greater profit—but also for his consistent championship of the vulnerable.

These foundational experiences marked a crucial phase in the Prophet's (s) life, preparing him for the immense responsibilities of prophethood. His inherent qualities, recognized and admired by society, created a fertile ground of trust and respect. It was this impeccable reputation for honesty and trustworthiness that reached the ears of Sayyida Khadija, a noble and discerning woman of Mecca, setting the stage for the next significant chapter of his blessed life.

Chapter 14

The Miraculous Journey to Syria: Signs and Wonders

The narrative of the life of the **Messenger of Allah** (peace be upon him) continues, focusing on the remarkable period before the formal declaration of his prophethood. Our previous discussions had begun to detail the momentous trade journey to Syria undertaken by the **Prophet** on behalf of **Sayyidah Khadijah bint Khuwaylid** (may Allah be pleased with her). This journey, while ostensibly a commercial endeavor, was replete with signs and wonders, serving as a prelude to the divine mission that awaited him. Given the extensive detail these early events require, our current aim is to narrate them as succinctly yet comprehensively as possible, so that we may swiftly reach the period of explicit prophethood, which holds profound lessons for our present times.

As the **Prophet** embarked on this significant venture as a business partner to **Sayyidah Khadijah**, a wealthy and respected woman of Makkah, it sparked a familiar flame of envy in the hearts of his detractors, particularly **Abu Jahl** and his associates. These individuals, already resentful of the esteemed position of the **Bani Hashim** clan—a prominence rein-

forced by **Sayyiduna Abdul Muttalib's** prophecies regarding the newborn **Prophet**—found it inexplicable that an orphan, though from a noble lineage, should command such respect and be entrusted with the wealth of one of Makkah's leading figures. Though **Abu Jahl** and his peers had been unable to openly challenge the authority of **Sayyiduna Abdul Muttalib** and later **Sayyiduna Abu Talib**, this journey presented them with an opportunity. Here was the **Prophet**, unaccompanied by his protective uncle, traveling alongside other prominent figures, many of whom would later form the very front against him after the declaration of his prophethood. This journey, therefore, became an early testing ground for their ingrained animosity, providing a context for the fierce opposition that would emerge later.

The journey to Syria was undertaken by a large caravan, a common practice for Arab traders seeking prosperity in the fertile lands to the north. Traders from Makkah, including prominent figures like **Abu Jahl** and **Abu Sufyan**, were part of this massive convoy. The journey itself was arduous, traversing perilous routes known for their dangers, though the influence of **Bani Hashim** somewhat mitigated the threat of highwaymen. As the caravan prepared to depart Makkah, an initial dispute arose over the appointment of a leader. Given the length and challenges of the journey, a single leader was deemed necessary to guide the procession, assess dangers, and relay instructions. Various tribal representatives put forth names, including **Abu Jahl** and **Abu Sufyan**. However, it was **Maysarah**, **Sayyidah Khadijah's** trusted servant who accompanied the **Prophet**, who interjected. He proposed that the leadership be granted to the one chosen by his mistress, referring to **Prophet Muhammad** (peace be upon him). **Maysarah** was acutely observing the **Prophet's** qualities, having been specifically instructed by **Sayyidah Khadijah** to report all his observations, particularly after a vivid dream she had experienced.

Abu Jahl and his faction vehemently rejected this proposal, their envy

boiling over at the thought of a young man, a perceived 'orphan' in their eyes, leading them. **Sayyiduna Hamza**, representing the **Bani Hashim** in **Sayyiduna Abu Talib's** absence, stepped forward, his sword drawn, to defend his nephew's honor, warning **Abu Jahl** against any disrespect. It was at this crucial moment that **Prophet Muhammad** (peace be upon him) intervened with his characteristic wisdom and calm. Recognizing that contention at the outset of such an important journey was unwise, he proposed a compromise: they would share the leadership, with each taking charge for half the day. **Abu Jahl**, desiring to be at the forefront during the more energetic morning hours, readily agreed. This approach, characteristic of **Islam's** emphasis on peaceful resolution even before its formal advent, averted conflict and set the caravan in motion.

As the great caravan left Makkah, the members of **Bani Hashim** who had come to see the **Prophet** off returned home, and the journey commenced. It was not long before the caravan encountered its first major test, highlighting the extraordinary nature of its new leader. They reached a point where one side of the path was flanked by mountains, and the other by a flat plain. While caravans usually camped on the plain, the **Prophet**, now leading during the evening hours, advised his companions to move to the foothills of the mountain for rest. This suggestion baffled the traders, as moving such a large caravan with all its goods and camels to higher ground seemed unnecessarily arduous. **Abu Jahl** seized the opportunity to spread propaganda, questioning the **Prophet's** judgment and lamenting the 'trouble' he was causing. Despite their grumbling, the **Bani Hashim** and **Khadijah's** men, respecting the **Prophet's** authority, began the difficult ascent. Surprisingly, the ascent proved less challenging than anticipated, as if an unseen force aided their camels. However, one individual, an associate of **Abu Jahl**, refused to move his four hundred camels, stubbornly remaining on the plain, complaining about the difficulty and the perceived inexperience of the young leader.

Just as the half of the caravan that followed the **Prophet** had reached their vantage point and were setting up camp, a sudden, torrential downpour struck the area. The storm was so fierce that flash floods quickly engulfed the plain. Those who had obeyed the **Prophet's** advice watched in awe and horror as the plain transformed into a raging torrent. The man who had refused to move, along with his four hundred camels, was swept away and perished in the deluge. This miraculous intervention astonished everyone, reinforcing the growing belief among the caravan members, especially those outside **Abu Jahl's** immediate circle, that the **Prophet** was no ordinary youth, but one possessing a unique, divinely guided quality. This event, however, only intensified **Abu Jahl's** deep-seated envy.

The intense rain continued for four days, leaving the path ahead completely submerged and impassable. The fear of being stranded for months, facing starvation and thirst, gripped the caravan. **Maysarah**, perturbed, approached the **Prophet**, suggesting they abandon the journey and return to Makkah, waiting for the floods to recede. The **Prophet** remained silent, contemplating, and deferred his answer until the morning. At dawn, he led his followers to the edge of the floodwaters, which stretched like an endless sea. He instructed those who were willing to follow him to prepare their goods, declaring they would pass through. The sight caused widespread disbelief and fear, but the **Prophet** stood firm.

As they stood at the water's edge, a white bird descended from a nearby mountain peak, holding a branch with a leaf in its beak. It flew low over the water, leaving a visible line on the surface, as if marking a clear path. The **Prophet** then announced, "Whoever recites **Bismillah** (In the Name of Allah) and follows me, will cross safely." Though fear gripped most, the **Prophet**, seeing **Abu Jahl's** reluctance to lead despite it being his turn, stepped forward himself, reciting **Bismillah**. To the astonishment of all, he walked through the raging waters, and not a single drop touched his

knees. The entire caravan, witnessing this incredible feat, followed behind him in a single file, walking through the water unharmed, reaching the other side. Only one man, a follower of **Abu Jahl**, refused to recite **Bismillah**, declaring he would proceed in the name of his own idols. As he stepped into the water, he was instantly swallowed by the flood, vanishing before their eyes. This second dramatic miracle left an indelible mark on the hearts of the caravan members, reinforcing their belief in the **Prophet's** unique connection to the divine.

Abu Jahl, now deeply humiliated, continued to lead the caravan, his envy festering. A day or two later, they came across a well, a vital source of water in the desert. In those days, water was scarce, carried in limited quantities, and caravans relied on wells along their route. **Abu Jahl**, recalling the earlier humiliation, conceived a nefarious plot. After the caravan had drawn water, he secretly instructed his men to fill the well with stones and block its mouth, ensuring that the **Prophet's** group, which followed behind, would find no water. His sinister aim was to cause their death by thirst, thus diminishing the **Prophet's** growing respect and influence in Makkah. After sealing the well, he rode two to four hours ahead, leaving his slave there with a single waterskin, instructing him to observe the **Prophet's** group and report their demise from thirst, promising him freedom in return.

However, the slave returned, not with news of death, but with a look of awe and fear. He reported that the **Prophet**, upon reaching the blocked well, had calmly raised his hands in prayer, then struck the ground with his foot. Immediately, a fresh spring of water gushed forth, overflowing with abundance. The entire caravan, overjoyed, prostrated themselves at the **Prophet's** feet, praising him. This was reminiscent of the miracle of **Prophet Ismail** at the Zamzam well, and a similar event during a journey of **Sayyiduna Abdul Muttalib**. **Abu Jahl**, listening to his slave's account, was consumed by rage and frustration, realizing that all his schemes had

been thwarted by divine intervention.

The caravan continued its journey towards Syria. As they approached the Syrian border, **Abu Jahl**, still ahead, encountered a date palm. Suddenly, a terrifying serpent emerged from its trunk, causing his camel to bolt, throwing him to the ground. He sustained severe injuries to his ribs, and his camel fled. Frightened and humiliated, **Abu Jahl** retreated about a mile, gathered his companions, and waited for the **Prophet's** caravan. When the **Prophet** approached, **Abu Jahl**, feigning humility and repentance, confessed his mistake in assuming leadership. He declared that he had been blind to the **Prophet's** true status and publicly proclaimed **Prophet Muhammad** (peace be upon him) as the undisputed leader of the entire caravan, promising to follow him. **Sayyiduna Abbas**, witnessing this, embraced the **Prophet**, expressing his joy that even such a bitter enemy as **Abu Jahl** had come to recognize his greatness. However, the **Prophet**, with his divine insight, sensed deceit. He warned **Sayyiduna Abbas** and the others to remain vigilant, acknowledging that **Abu Jahl's** sudden change of heart seemed disingenuous. The **Prophet** then proceeded to the date palm, placed his hand on the serpent's head, and asked if it was a sorcerer. The serpent, surprisingly, spoke in a clear voice, explaining that it was the leader of the **Jinn**, who had accepted **Islam** at the hands of **Prophet Ibrahim** (peace be upon him). It had been awaiting the arrival of the final **Prophet**, **Prophet Muhammad** (peace be upon him), whose coming had been foretold by **Prophet Ibrahim**. The serpent requested the **Prophet's** intercession for its forgiveness, to which the **Prophet** agreed, instructing it to leave the path and not reappear before any traveler. This astonishing encounter further solidified the caravan's awe of the **Prophet**, even though the full meaning of his interaction with the serpent was not yet clear to them.

Finally, after a journey marked by countless miracles and divine protection, the caravan reached Syria, which in those times encompassed what

is now Syria, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, and Palestine. As they entered the region, they passed a monastery where a reclusive and devout Christian monk, named **Abd al-Jadid**, resided. This monk had diligently studied the ancient scriptures of the **Torah** and the **Injeel** (Gospels), specifically those passages foretelling the coming of the final **Prophet** from the land of **Tihamah** (Makkah). He spent his days in prayer and contemplation, often weeping and yearning for the day he would witness the arrival of this blessed individual before his own death. His fervent prayers had diminished his eyesight, leaving him almost blind. He had instructed his disciples to constantly watch the caravan routes from Arabia and report any unusual occurrences.

Just as the **Prophet's** caravan approached, a spectacular event unfolded. The entire monastery was illuminated by a radiant light, startling **Abd al-Jadid** and his disciples. Simultaneously, the disciples rushed in, exclaiming that a caravan from **Hijaz** (Arabia) was approaching, shadowed by a cloud that provided constant shade. The monk, recognizing these signs, immediately identified them as characteristics of the awaited **Prophet**. His joy was immense. He instructed his disciples to observe the caravan closely, particularly an ancient, withered tree that had been dry for centuries, ever since **Prophet Moses** and **Prophet Jesus** (peace be upon them) had rested beneath it. He also directed them to watch a nearby well, dry since the time of these prophets. If any person caused the tree to revive and the well to flow, that person was the awaited **Prophet**.

As the caravan made camp, the **Prophet**, as was his custom, sought a secluded spot away from the bustling company. He was observed by the monk's disciples to walk towards the withered tree. As he sat beneath it, the tree miraculously burst forth with new leaves and blossoms, becoming lush and green. Shortly after, he approached the dry well, dipped his fingers into it, and immediately, the well began to gush with fresh, abundant water. Overjoyed, the disciples rushed back to their master, **Abd**

al-Jadid, and reported what they had witnessed. The monk, his prayers answered, exclaimed that Allah had finally heard his pleas. He immediately sent an invitation to the entire caravan for a meal.

When the disciples entered the caravan to extend the invitation, they found **Abu Jahl** in charge, as the **Prophet** was in seclusion. **Abu Jahl** expressed surprise, remarking that they had passed this monastery many times without ever receiving an invitation. Nevertheless, he saw this as an opportunity to save on their own provisions and accepted the invitation. However, he cunningly suggested that the **Prophet** (whom he disparagingly referred to as a "servant" of an Arab woman) stay behind to guard their goods. He offered to leave the valuables in the **Prophet's** care, knowing his reputation for trustworthiness, in hopes of isolating him from the monk. **Sayyiduna Abbas**, recognizing the slight, intervened and stated that the **Prophet** was a respected member of their family, not a mere servant.

When the caravan members settled down for the meal, **Abd al-Jadid** approached each person, examining their faces, for his near-blindness required him to be very close. Yet, when he came near the seat where the **Prophet** would have sat, he suddenly looked terrified and retreated to a corner, trembling. His disciples, noticing their master's distress, also lost interest in the meal. **Sayyiduna Abbas** approached the monk, asking about his distress. The monk asked if the entire caravan was present or if anyone remained outside. Before **Sayyiduna Abbas** could reply, **Abu Jahl** interjected, confirming that only their servant was outside, reiterating his disrespectful description. **Abd al-Jadid** instantly bristled, warning **Abu Jahl** against such offensive language. **Sayyiduna Abbas** then explained that the person outside was indeed his nephew, a relative, and not a servant.

Abd al-Jadid then asked to be taken to him, describing the signs he had

observed: the cloud, the revived tree, and the flowing well. **Sayyiduna Abbas** led him to the **Prophet**. As soon as the monk's gaze fell upon the **Prophet** from a distance, his eyes, which had been nearly blind, regained their sight and shimmered with youthful clarity. He exclaimed, "This is indeed the one I have been waiting for!" He then respectfully saluted the **Prophet** and informed him that he had been awaited for centuries. The **Prophet**, in turn, replied that his immediate duty was to protect the goods entrusted to him. **Abd al-Jadid** reassured him, offering his disciples to guard the merchandise and guaranteeing their safety to the last needle. He then led the **Prophet** to his private chamber.

This chamber had a remarkably low entrance, built specifically by the monk to test a specific sign of the awaited **Prophet**. It was known that the **Prophet** would never bow his head to anyone but **Allah**, and that any small doorway would miraculously enlarge for him. As the **Prophet** approached the low door, it expanded to allow him to enter with dignity, without having to bend his head. Inside, the monk engaged in a private conversation with the **Prophet**, though the content was not fully disclosed at the time. **Maysarah**, **Sayyidah Khadijah's** servant, who had secretly followed the **Prophet** out of curiosity, also entered the chamber and observed. After some time, the **Prophet** emerged from the chamber, attended the meal, and then departed.

Abd al-Jadid then turned to **Maysarah** and asked, "Who is this young man? Is he your kinsman?" **Maysarah** replied that he was not, but rather a partner in **Sayyidah Khadijah's** trade. The monk then instructed **Maysarah** to convey a message to his mistress upon their return: that **Allah** had granted her a tremendous opportunity, for this man was the Last **Prophet** and would be the intercessor on the Day of Judgment. He urged her to marry him, stating that she would become the mistress of this world and the hereafter. **Maysarah** carefully remembered these words.

The caravan then proceeded to the market of Syria. The **Prophet's** approach to trade was remarkably unique. Unlike other traders who rushed to sell their goods upon arrival, fearing competition from large capitalists, the **Prophet** calmly instructed **Maysarah** to wait. He allowed all the other traders to sell their goods first. This patience baffled **Abu Jahl** and his companions, who openly mocked the **Prophet**, predicting his utter failure and the ruin of **Khadijah's** investment.

However, the next day, the **Prophet** brought his goods to the market. By this time, the initial rush of buyers—the wealthy local merchants—had subsided. But it was then that the smaller traders from the surrounding villages and towns, who received market news later, arrived. These individuals usually had to purchase goods from the large merchants who had bought them at discounted rates from the caravans. Now, to their surprise, they found **Prophet Muhammad's** goods available directly in the market. Furthermore, while the large merchants would have sold them a product for five Dirhams that they had bought for two, the **Prophet** was selling it for four Dirhams. This was still cheaper than the prices of the middlemen and was perceived as a great bargain. Consequently, **Prophet Muhammad's** entire stock sold out quickly, earning **Sayyidah Khadijah** double the expected profit. This success left **Abu Jahl** astonished and remorseful, realizing the profound wisdom in the **Prophet's** patience and business acumen.

As the news of the **Prophet's** successful trade spread, it reached a hostile Jewish scholar in the city. He recognized the signs of the awaited **Prophet** from his scriptures and, fearing the end of his people's dominance, rushed to the market. Seeing the **Prophet**, he recognized him instantly and returned to his companions, declaring that the one who would destroy their religion, widow their women, and orphan their children had arrived. He then conceived a plot. Approaching the **Prophet**—who was left with only a few bags of goods—he offered to buy the remaining mer-

chandise for five hundred Dirhams. He claimed the money was at his house and asked the **Prophet** to accompany him.

The **Prophet**, ever trusting, agreed. The Jewish scholar led him to his house, offered him food, and then went to his wife, urging her to kill the **Prophet** by dropping a millstone on his head as he exited the house, making it look like an accident. His wife stood on the roof with the millstone. As the **Prophet** emerged from the house, his radiant face caused the woman's eyes to be dazzled and her vision to fail. In her momentary blindness, she accidentally dropped the millstone, not on the **Prophet**, who had already moved ahead, but on her two sons who were entering the house. Both were instantly killed.

The Jewish scholar, witnessing this horror, let out a shriek. Overwhelmed with rage, he gathered his companions and rushed to the caravan to attack the **Prophet**. However, the **Bani Hashim** and the entire caravan, having witnessed the **Prophet's** countless miracles and feeling deeply indebted to him, rose in his defense. A fierce confrontation ensued, with the Jewish group launching an attack and the Makkans fiercely defending the **Prophet**. It was at this moment that **Abu Jahl**, who had heard the Jewish scholar's initial pronouncement, uttered a chilling statement that would later prove prophetic. He shouted to the Makkans, "What are you doing? I am not fighting for my children! I am fighting because this man will destroy my religion, widow my women, and orphan my children! You who are defending him today, remember that when he presents his religion to you, you will seek to destroy him! You will be the ones trying to widow your women and orphan your children! You are making a mistake today; you are protecting someone you will regret protecting tomorrow!" While the Makkans, fueled by the immediate conflict, did not fully grasp the depth of his words, this statement from the Jewish perspective eerily foreshadowed the future opposition the **Prophet** would face from his own people after the advent of **Islam**. The Jewish scholar,

seeing that he could not overpower the united caravan, eventually ceased his attack.

The caravan then began its swift return journey to Makkah. Upon nearing the city, **Sayyidah Khadijah**, who was anxiously awaiting their return from her rooftop, observed a remarkable phenomenon. She saw a cloud, resembling a canopy of soft cotton, perpetually shading the approaching caravan. Within this cloud, she noticed distinct figures, like strings of pearls, moving. Her eyes could hardly believe what they saw, yet this was the very moment the **Messenger of Allah** (peace be upon him) was approaching the gates of Makkah, having completed his extraordinary journey.

Chapter 15

Upholding Justice and Earning Trust: The Young Prophet's Renown

The life of **Prophet Muhammad** (peace be upon him) stands as the quintessential model for humanity, a truth beautifully enshrined in the Qur'anic verse: **"And verily in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example"** (***uswatun hasanah***). This profound declaration emphasizes that the Prophet's life provides the finest methodology, the perfect conduct, and the ultimate blueprint for human existence, irrespective of era, location, or circumstance. Every human condition, every challenge, every triumph finds resonance and guidance within the vast tapestry of his blessed *seerah*. As our narrative progresses, we delve into a pivotal phase of his pre-prophetic life, a period that not only illustrates his innate moral excellence but also laid the groundwork for the formidable opposition he would later face upon the declaration of his prophethood. These early events powerfully foreshadowed the fundamental principles of Islam, demonstrating how the Prophet's character inherently fostered peace and security within society even before the formal revelation.

Our last discourse concluded with the Prophet's (s) impactful journey to

Syria on behalf of **Sayyidah Khadijah**. Before this, during his formative years, a significant shift in his responsibilities unfolded. While scholarly accounts vary on the precise age, with some noting nine years and others twelve, it is widely agreed that **Sayyiduna Abu Talib**, his beloved uncle and guardian, first included him in trade expeditions. Even at such a young age, the Prophet (s) possessed a maturity and countenance that made him appear much older than his years. The family of **Banu Hashim** had made it their sacred duty to ensure the Prophet's complete protection, a commitment that initially limited his travels beyond Makkah's immediate vicinity. However, as he grew, and particularly as **Sayyiduna Abu Talib** advanced in age, the Prophet (s) either desired to contribute more actively to his family's livelihood or was gradually entrusted with greater responsibilities in trade.

Beyond trade, the Prophet (s) also spent time as a shepherd, tending to the flocks and herds of **Banu Hashim** and **Sayyiduna Abu Talib**. This occupation, common among prophets, often instilled patience, contemplation, and a deep connection with nature. Soon, **Sayyiduna Abu Talib** had placed the entire responsibility of trade upon the Prophet's (s) capable shoulders. From his twelfth year onward, the Prophet (s) embarked on numerous trade journeys, traversing the length and breadth of the Arabian Peninsula. Historical accounts affirm his travels to distant lands such as Yemen, Syria, and even the extensive region then known as Bahrain, which encompassed parts of modern-day Qatar, the UAE, and Oman. This extensive travel endowed him with an intimate knowledge of the diverse regions, tribes, and customs of Arabia, preparing him for the monumental task that lay ahead. Years later, after his prophethood, when individuals from Bahrain came to embrace Islam, the Prophet's (s) detailed knowledge of their cities and conditions astonished them, prompting him to explain that he had frequently visited their lands during his youthful trade endeavors.

A significant event during this period, when the Prophet (s) was around twenty years of age, was the fourth phase of the *Fijar* War. This conflict, named *Fijar* (meaning 'sin' or 'transgression') because it was fought during the sacred months—a period when fighting was strictly forbidden by ancient Arabian custom—was a stark illustration of the *jahiliyyah* (ignorance) that plagued pre-Islamic Arabia. It was a time when tribal disputes escalated over trivial matters, leading to relentless cycles of violence where alliances were based solely on kinship, regardless of who was the oppressor or the oppressed.

The *Fijar* War erupted at *Ukaz*, a renowned fairground where, despite tribal animosities, people gathered annually for trade, poetry, and social interaction, respecting its sanctity. The spark was the killing of an employee of **Nu'man**, a chieftain from the **Banu Kinanah** tribe, by members of **Banu Hawazin** while he was tending camels during a sacred month. **Nu'man** demanded either the killer or blood money, but **Banu Hawazin** defiantly refused. This ignited a brutal conflict between the two tribes.

Despite having no direct involvement, **Banu Hashim**, led by **Sayyiduna Abu Talib**, assessed the situation. They recognized that **Banu Kinanah** was the wronged party and, adhering to their innate sense of justice, decided to support the oppressed. The Prophet (s) participated in this war alongside his uncles. His participation, however, was unique and indicative of his character. He himself affirmed that he never drew a sword, threw a spear, or shot an arrow at anyone. His role was purely defensive: he would gather arrows that landed near his uncles and return them to them for their defense. This demonstrates his deep aversion to initiating violence and his unwavering commitment to aiding the wronged, even if it meant standing with a party not directly related to his immediate kin. This was the first and last time the Prophet (s) was present on a battlefield before his formal prophethood, and even then, his conduct was exemplary, purely in defense of justice. Ultimately, through the wise

counsel of the Prophet (s) and the mediation of his uncle **Zubayr** (the eldest among his uncles, though not the tribal chief), a reconciliation was brokered, bringing the *Fijar* War to an end.

Following the conclusion of the *Fijar* War, Makkah witnessed another incident that highlighted the pervasive injustice of the time and paved the way for a crucial alliance. A merchant from the **Zabid** tribe of Yemen arrived in Makkah with his goods. **As ibn Wa'il**, a powerful Makkan chieftain, purchased merchandise from him but then brazenly refused to pay. The Yemeni merchant, a stranger in Makkah with no local connections, sought help from various prominent Makkan leaders who were gathered around the *Kaaba*. Yet, none were willing to intervene on behalf of a foreigner against a powerful Makkan, illustrating the deep-seated tribal bias and disregard for justice that prevailed.

Desperate, the Yemeni merchant ascended *Abu Qubays* mountain, a prominent hill overlooking the *Kaaba* (from which important announcements were traditionally made to the entire city, even serving as the very place where the Prophet (s) would later make his public declaration of prophethood). From its summit, he cried out, appealing to the Makkans to help him reclaim his rights. While many of the chieftains who had previously refused him help recognized him and turned away, the members of **Banu Hashim**, whose homes were located away from the immediate vicinity of the *Kaaba*, approached to inquire. They had not been sitting idly by, displaying their grandeur, but rather engaged in their daily lives.

Sayyiduna Zubayr, the Prophet's (s) eldest uncle, heard the merchant's plea. He invited the distraught man to narrate his ordeal fully, promising assistance if his claim was just. After hearing the account, **Sayyiduna Zubayr**, a highly respected figure in Makkah and the eldest son of **Sayyiduna Abdul Muttalib**, gathered four other principled men. Together, they confronted **As ibn Wa'il**, demanding that he return the merchant's due.

Faced with their united resolve, **As ibn Wa'il** was compelled to pay the Yemeni merchant, who departed Makkah with gratitude.

This incident profoundly affected **Sayyiduna Zubayr** and his companions. He lamented the shame brought upon Makkah, the center of their ancestral worship, by such overt injustice and the indifference of its leaders. He proposed that they form an alliance to prevent such injustices in the future. Consequently, a meeting was convened at the house of **Abdullah ibn Jud'an**, a respected but non-Muslim figure of *jahiliyyah* who possessed strong moral qualities. Many members of **Banu Hashim**, including the young **Prophet Muhammad** (s), along with other upright and honorable individuals from various tribes, gathered there.

This historic assembly formed a pact, known in Islamic history as *Hilf al-Fudul* (The Pact of the Virtuous or Excellent). The name itself has various interpretations: some say it was due to many participants sharing the name Fudul; others suggest it referenced a similar pre-Islamic pact; and still others contend that *fudul* in Arabic can signify 'right' or 'excellence,' befitting a pact dedicated to upholding justice. Regardless of the exact etymology, its purpose was singular and noble: to guarantee that the rights of the oppressed would be restored from the oppressor, irrespective of their tribal affiliation, status, or origin.

The **Prophet Muhammad** (s), though still in his early twenties and not yet formally a prophet, was an active participant in this pact. His lifelong endorsement of this agreement speaks volumes about its profound significance in Islam. Even after his prophethood and emigration to Madinah, he declared: **"By Allah, if I were invited to a similar pact today, I would accept it. And if someone were to offer me a red camel (a highly prized and valuable bribe) not to join, I would not accept it, but would join."** This emphatic statement underscores the immense importance Islam places on aiding the oppressed and standing against in-

justice. The Prophet's participation in this pact, his commitment to upholding truth and justice, and his unwavering integrity in all his dealings further solidified his reputation among the Makkans. It was during this period of his youth that the entire society, including his elders, began to universally recognize him with the distinguished titles of **al-Amin** (The Trustworthy) and **as-Sadiq** (The Truthful). These appellations were not merely honorary but a testament to his consistent character and unwavering adherence to truth, even in the absence of formal prophethood. This widespread recognition came even before his twenty-third year, as evidenced by his arbitration in a dispute over the placement of the Black Stone, where the Makkans exclaimed, "The Trustworthy one has come!"

As the Prophet (s) approached his twenty-fifth year, his reputation as **al-Amin** and **as-Sadiq** had reached the ears of **Sayyidah Khadijah bint Khuwaylid**. Her vast trading empire, which historical accounts describe as employing as many as eighty thousand camels in its caravans, had grown beyond the capacity of any single manager. It is important to note that **Sayyidah Khadijah** herself, a woman of dignity and honor, did not personally travel with the caravans, but rather managed her enterprises through her trustworthy servants and agents from her home. Driven by the recent experiences of the Prophet's (s) unmatched integrity and perhaps by the significant dream she had experienced following his previous journey (as detailed in the preceding chapter), she felt an urgent need for an exceptionally honest and capable individual to oversee her massive trade operations. Her desire to entrust her entire business to none other than the Prophet (s) grew stronger, leading her to consider him for this pivotal role, an event that would dramatically alter the course of his life and the nascent history of Islam.

Chapter 16

The Foundations of Faith: *Taqwa* and the Inner Circle of Justice

The biography of the **Prophet Muhammad** (s) continually reminds humanity of the supreme example embodied in his life, and the principles he championed are not mere rituals but profound truths meant to reshape society from its most fundamental units. As the narrative of his blessed life unfolds, it becomes increasingly clear that the Prophet's (s) teachings laid down universal principles of justice and piety that permeate every aspect of human existence, beginning with the individual and extending outward to the family and wider community.

Central to these teachings are the concepts of *taqwa* (piety, God-consciousness) and *adl* (justice). The **Holy Qur'an** unequivocally states the innate equality of all humanity: **"O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."** (***Surah Al-Hujurat***, 49:13). This foundational verse establishes that lineage, wealth, or social status hold no inherent superiority in the divine estimation; rather, true honor lies in

taqwa – a deep consciousness of God that manifests in righteous conduct.

This principle of *taqwa* extends even to the realm of spiritual proximity to the *Masumeen* (infallibles), which includes the Prophet's (s) pure progeny. The **Qur'an** guides believers: **"O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with the truthful."** (***Surah At-Tawbah***, 9:119). This implies that to gain acceptance and benefit from the *Masumeen*, one must first strive for *taqwa*. It is not enough to merely be in their presence; a state of piety is a prerequisite for genuine connection and spiritual elevation. Furthermore, the **Qur'an** repeatedly affirms that both the rewards of the afterlife and the blessed abode of paradise are reserved for the *muttaqin* – those who embody *taqwa*. Thus, *taqwa* is the bedrock of honor in God's sight, a condition for spiritual proximity to the *Masumeen*, and the path to ultimate salvation.

The crucial question then arises: How does one achieve *taqwa*? The **Qur'an** provides the answer through the principle of *adl* (justice). **"Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct..."** (***Surah An-Nahl***, 16:90). *Adl* is not merely about legal fairness; it represents a state of perfect balance and equilibrium in all affairs, avoiding both excess (*ifrat*) and negligence (*tafrit*). It means upholding the rights of God (*Huquq Allah*) and the rights of people (*Huquq an-Nas*) simultaneously. For instance, *adl* dictates that one should not immerse oneself so completely in prayer that familial duties are neglected, nor should one be so absorbed in worldly pursuits that worship is abandoned. It requires living in this world with an awareness of the hereafter, ensuring that no one is oppressed, and maintaining equilibrium in fulfilling the rights of parents, children, and spouses.

However, a subtle yet profound error often afflicts those who strive for *adl* and *taqwa*: the tendency to extend justice and compassion to the broader world while neglecting those closest to them. This mirrors the tragic mistake of *Azazil* (who became Satan), who prayed for the salvation of all

others but overlooked his own self, leading to his downfall. Similarly, a believer might meticulously fulfill their obligations to God and to distant members of society—donating to charity, assisting strangers, smiling at fellow Muslims—yet fail to apply the same principles of justice and kindness within their own homes.

A poignant example illustrating this lapse is the story of a woman who, out of devotion to her deceased husband, regularly prepared food for the poor and orphaned. Her own young son would often deliver this food, despite frequently being hungry himself. Her charity was commendable, yet one day, the son, overwhelmed by hunger, consumed the food meant for others. Later, her deceased husband appeared in a dream, indicating that only the charity offered *that specific day* had reached him, implying that previous offerings were not fully accepted due to the neglect of her own child's immediate need. This serves as a stark reminder that true *adl* begins within one's inner circle.

The Prophet Muhammad (s) profoundly emphasized this truth. He declared, **"The best among you is the best to his family, and I am the best among you to my family."** This statement elevates the treatment of one's spouse and family members to a measure of a Muslim's goodness. A complete *Iman* (faith) is inextricably linked to how justly and kindly one treats the women in their household. The Prophet (s) taught that even a smile given to a fellow believer is an act of worship, and this certainly extends to one's family. He encouraged aiding one another, emphasizing that assisting a fellow believer to resolve their difficulty earns immense divine reward.

This is why the lives of **Imam Ali** (a) and **Sayyidah Fatima Zahra** (a) serve as the ultimate paradigm of *adl* within the family. While Imam Ali (a) toiled tirelessly outside the home, Sayyidah Fatima (a) would ease his fatigue upon his return, and he, in turn, would share in her house-

hold chores. Their life together was a testament to mutual respect, love, and balanced responsibilities. After Sayyidah Fatima's (a) demise, Imam Ali's (a) profound statement, "After you, O Daughter of the Messenger of Allah, there is no pleasure in life for me," encapsulates the depth of the peace and support she provided within their home. This level of companionship and reciprocal care is a testament to the *adl* they lived by, ensuring that every member's rights and emotional well-being were upheld.

Regrettably, the speaker noted, practices of *Jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic ignorance) have, at times, infiltrated Muslim households, leading to mistreatment of wives and daughters-in-law. It is astonishing that some individuals, who themselves might have endured hardship or injustice, perpetuate such behavior, believing they are entitled to inflict similar suffering. This stands in stark contrast even to the *Jahiliyyah* of figures like Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab, who, despite their cruelty, at least targeted their wrath at those they perceived as their enemies or their close kin. In contemporary households, however, injustice is sometimes meted out to those who have no connection to a past wrong, simply because they are vulnerable members of the family. Islam, however, unequivocally rejects this, enjoining utmost kindness and justice towards one's family, even making it *mustahab* (recommended) to earn more and spend more on them to provide comfort.

The profound suffering of Sayyidah Fatima Zahra (a) after the Prophet's (s) passing further illustrates the depth of the Prophet's (s) bond with his family and the immense void his absence created. Her daily visits to *Jannat al-Baqi*, accompanied by **Imam Hassan** (a) and **Imam Hussein** (a), leaning on a stick at the young age of eighteen due to her frail health, and her lamentations—**"Such calamities have befallen me that if they had fallen on days, the days would have turned into nights"**—speak volumes about her enduring grief. The poignant account of Bilal's return to Medina and his refusal to call the *adhan* after the Prophet's (s) demise,

only to be moved by Sayyidah Fatima's (a) plea, signifies the profound spiritual connection and immense respect she commanded. When Bilal finally uttered "Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasool Allah," Sayyidah Fatima (a) fainted, overwhelmed by the vivid memory of her beloved father, a stark reminder of the unbearable grief and suffering that defined the final days of the Prophet's (s) blessed daughter. Her life, even in its moments of profound sorrow, remained a living testament to the principles of love, loyalty, and justice that the Prophet (s) himself embodied and tirelessly preached.

Chapter 17

The Path to a Blessed Marriage

The divine narrative often underscores the profound wisdom and grace of Allah's plans, particularly in the life of His beloved Prophet, Muhammad (s). The **Holy Qur'an** in **Surah Ad-Duha** beautifully articulates this divine care, reminding the Prophet (s) of three profound blessings: **"Did He not find you an orphan and give [you] shelter? And He found you misguided and guided [you], And He found you needy and enriched [you]."** These verses set a powerful backdrop for a pivotal moment in the Prophet's life—his marriage to **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a). The enrichment mentioned in the verse was not merely material; it was a comprehensive blessing, equipping him for the immense mission ahead. It was also a preemptive answer to future accusations, for it was known that those who opposed the Prophet (s) would eventually resort to slander, claiming he sought personal gain. The length of his youth, spent devotedly with a single wife, **Sayyidah Khadijah**, stands as an undeniable refutation to such baseless allegations. This blessed union marked a significant transformation, not only in his personal life but in the divine unfolding of his prophetic journey.

The Prophet's (s) journey to Syria, undertaken on behalf of **Sayyidah Khadijah's** trading enterprise, was now reaching its culmination. Ac-

companying him was *Maysarah*, her trusted servant. Even before their departure, the air was thick with the whispers of enmity; Abu Jahl had already begun to propagate rumors, describing the Prophet (s) as a sorcerer. The journey itself had been fraught with subtle dangers, including a chilling attempt on the Prophet's (s) life by a Jewish man in Syria, which miraculously resulted in the accidental death of the assailant's own son.

With an unprecedented success in trade, the caravan decided to return to Makkah without delay. The return journey was punctuated by a series of extraordinary events: stones greeting the Prophet (s), trees bending to shade him, and animals speaking, all of which served to deepen the conviction within the caravan that this young man was no ordinary human. He possessed an undeniable and unique connection to the divine.

Upon their return, the caravan halted at Juhfah, a significant geographical point roughly 1300 miles from Makkah. It was customary for caravans laden with goods to stop here before entering Makkah, sending messengers ahead to announce their prosperous return and allow families to prepare for their arrival. *Maysarah*, overwhelmed by the journey's blessings, approached the Prophet (s). He humbly requested the Prophet (s) to ride ahead and deliver the good news to **Sayyidah Khadijah** personally, sensing the immense joy it would bring. The Prophet (s) agreed, briefly rested in a small valley nearby, and then embarked on the final leg of his journey.

Meanwhile, back in Makkah, on the very same morning, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) was seated with her companions on the rooftop of her two-story house. Her residence, one of the highest in Makkah, offered views of the **Ka'bah** and the Jannat al-Mu'alla cemetery. As she gazed towards the mountains behind Jannat al-Mu'alla, she witnessed an extraordinary phenomenon: a brilliant light, unlike the sun's glare, emanating from that direction. As she focused, she saw a magnificent dome, crafted from

gold and silver and adorned with precious jewels, hovering over a camel rider. To her astonishment, she recognized the camel as *Sahbah*, her own, and the rider as *Maysarah*. She quickly turned to her companions, asking if they saw what she saw. They confirmed it, witnessing the miraculous sight alongside her. Just as the dome approached the outskirts of Makkah, it vanished, leaving **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) in awe and deep contemplation.

Moments later, a knock echoed at her door. To the astonishment of her companions, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a), usually composed and dignified, rushed to answer it herself. It was the Prophet (s). He informed her of the caravan's successful return and the vast profits reaped. Still reeling from her vision and seeking a deeper confirmation, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) made an unusual request. After offering him water and dates, she asked the Prophet (s) if he would return to Juhfah and re-enter Makkah with the rest of the caravan, though he had already completed the journey. The Prophet (s) graciously accepted.

Upon his return to Juhfah, *Maysarah* was astonished to see the Prophet (s), having believed him to be resting in the valley. The Prophet (s) then revealed the empty date pouch and the Zamzam water skin, still bearing **Sayyidah Khadijah's** seal, undeniable proof of his visit to Makkah and immediate return. *Maysarah*, utterly convinced and overwhelmed, rushed to share this incredible account with the rest of the caravan. Everyone, save for Abu Jahl who stubbornly insisted the Prophet (s) was a sorcerer, accepted these miracles as irrefutable signs of his unique status.

The caravan's return to Makkah was met with unprecedented celebration. Never before had such a successful trade venture arrived. *Maysarah* proposed that everyone contribute a portion of their profits as a gift to the Prophet (s), emphasizing that it was not *sadaqah* (charity), for the Prophet (s) would accept gifts but not charity. The entire caravan will-

ingly agreed, presenting their offerings with immense respect. The Prophet (s) accepted, establishing a principle that while seeking from others was inappropriate, accepting a genuine gift was commendable. With this, the Prophet (s) returned to his own home.

Meanwhile, *Maysarah* reached **Sayyidah Khadijah's** (a) residence, filled with excitement. She eagerly sought his full report. *Maysarah* recounted every miraculous detail: the cloud's shade, the serpent's movement, the trees' prostration, the stones' greetings, and the Christian monk's prophecy that confirmed Muhammad's (s) prophethood. He also reported that the Prophet's (s) presence made meagre food abundant for all. Overjoyed and fully convinced of the Prophet's (s) blessed nature, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) immediately granted *Maysarah*, his wife, and their children their freedom, along with two camels and a bag of gold and silver. *Maysarah* gratefully acknowledged that his freedom was a direct blessing through the Prophet (s).

Sayyidah Khadijah's (a) certainty regarding the Prophet (s) was not a sudden revelation but the culmination of several prior encounters and signs: Firstly, on an Eid day, while seated near the **Ka'bah** with her companions, a Jewish scholar had passed by, declaring that one of them would marry the last Prophet, who would emerge from Makkah, and that she would be the most fortunate woman in creation. While others dismissed him with stones, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) had listened intently, for her heart had always been drawn towards the divine. This was further affirmed by her half-brother, *Waraqa ibn Nawfal*, a profound scholar of earlier scriptures, whom she frequently visited to hear his recitations from the Torah and Psalms.

Secondly, on another occasion, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) had hosted a Jewish scholar in her home, a man she held in high esteem. From her balcony, the scholar spotted the Prophet (s) passing by and requested **Sayyidah**

Khadijah (a) to call him. With the Prophet's (s) permission, the scholar lifted his garment, revealing the **Seal of Prophethood** on his shoulder. He reverently kissed it, then informed **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) of the young man's destiny: an orphan, raised by his uncle, who would marry a woman from Arabia and make her the most fortunate woman in the universe. **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) instantly recognized these prophecies aligning with the Prophet (s).

Thirdly, *Waraqa ibn Nawfal* had previously given **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) an amulet to place under her pillow, which protected her from a jinn that had attempted to enter Abu Talib's house.

With these profound confirmations, combined with *Maysarah's* detailed report and her own extraordinary vision, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) reached an unshakeable conviction: Muhammad (s) was the chosen one, the essence of her destiny. She resolved to propose marriage to him, despite the societal norms and the potential perception of a woman of her standing (widowed twice, though some scholars believe she was a virgin before this marriage, a view the speaker supports) initiating such a proposal to a younger, less materially wealthy man. She understood the immense honor and desired to act swiftly lest this unique opportunity pass her by.

Sayyidah Khadijah (a) called upon her trusted friend, *Nafisa bint Umayyah*, to subtly ascertain the Prophet's (s) inclinations towards marriage, particularly if he held any thoughts of her. *Nafisa* approached the Prophet (s) and inquired if he had considered marriage. He explained that his financial circumstances, relying on his uncle Abu Talib and recent trade, made such a step challenging. *Nafisa* then proposed a match—a woman of exemplary lineage, wealth, beauty, and nobility, unequalled in Makkah. The Prophet (s), with his innate wisdom and divine knowledge, understood her unspoken reference to **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a).

The next day, the Prophet (s) visited **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a). She ex-

pressed her gratitude for the successful trade journey. Gently, she probed his thoughts on marriage, suggesting he marry someone his uncle, Abu Talib, would choose. The Prophet (s) conveyed his desire to marry into a family of comparable social standing, not one of vastly greater wealth, to avoid potential disparities in their future life. **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a), without explicitly naming herself, then proposed that such a match was indeed available, affirming that her wealth was now entirely at his disposal. The Prophet (s) acknowledged her words, stating he would consult with his uncle.

Upon his return, the Prophet (s) shared his intentions with his uncle, Abu Talib, and other Banu Hashim elders. Abu Talib expressed his support for the union. However, Abu Lahab, Abu Talib's younger brother, voiced his objection, arguing that **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) had rejected proposals from kings and chieftains, and it would be a humiliation for Banu Hashim to propose to her with the Prophet's (s) limited worldly means. At this, Abbas, another of the Prophet's (s) uncles, rose in indignation, passionately declaring that the Banu Hashim family and all their wealth were at the Prophet's (s) disposal, emphasizing that he was their leader.

Abu Talib, with his characteristic sagacity, sought to navigate the delicate situation. To avoid any potential affront to Banu Hashim should **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) refuse, he suggested confirming her personal consent. For this, he turned to his sister, Safiyyah, who was also **Sayyidah Khadijah's** sister-in-law (being married to **Sayyidah Khadijah's** brother). Safiyyah approached **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a), who, to her sister-in-law's delight, confirmed her absolute willingness to marry the Prophet (s), expressing full readiness to proceed with the proposal. Safiyyah returned to Abu Talib with this joyful news.

With **Sayyidah Khadijah's** (a) explicit consent, Abu Talib, leading a dignified delegation of Banu Hashim, proceeded to her family's house to for-

mally propose. Historical accounts confirm that **Sayyidah Khadijah's** father, Khuwailid, had passed away, so they approached her uncle, *Amr ibn Asad*, who was the head of her family. After the customary initial greetings, Abu Talib presented the proposal. *Amr ibn Asad*, while maintaining courtesy, expressed his hesitation. He stated that **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) was independent in her decisions and had previously rejected numerous powerful suitors, including kings and tribal chieftains. He subtly implied that she would likely refuse this proposal too, given the Prophet's (s) lack of material wealth, thereby indirectly rejecting the proposal.

The Banu Hashim delegation, including Abu Talib, felt the sting of this indirect refusal. Filled with a mixture of sadness and dignified silence, they returned home, understanding that to press the matter further would be against their honor. Back in her home, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) was dismayed to learn of her uncle's response. She recognized her autonomy but also respected her elders. The situation had become complicated, and she knew Abu Talib and his family would not return to face another potential rejection.

In this moment of perplexity, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) recalled the wisdom and deep spiritual insight of *Waraqa ibn Nawfal*. She sent a servant to summon him, trusting that he alone could resolve this intricate matter. *Waraqa*, who cherished **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) like his own daughter, arrived promptly. Seeing her distress, he playfully chided her for her previous rejections. **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) clarified that she had rejected outside suitors because she did not wish to leave Makkah, and she had rejected the wealthy Meccan chieftains because they were *gumrah* (misguided idolaters). She then inquired if there was truly no righteous, noble man in Makkah who was not *gumrah* and suitable to be her companion.

Waraqa immediately thought of the Prophet (s). **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a), sensing his thoughts, acknowledged the Prophet's (s) virtues but, to test

Waraqa's conviction, asked him to name his "flaws." *Waraqa* then launched into a magnificent and poetic description of the Prophet's (s) unparalleled virtues: "His inner self is better than his outward appearance. There is no one more superior than him in the universe. His family has no equal. His personality has no parallel. His face is like the sun, his forehead shines more than stars, his scent is sweeter than musk, his words are sweeter than honey, and when he walks, it is as if the full moon is walking." **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) repeatedly asked for his "flaws," but *Waraqa* continued to enumerate only virtues, ultimately concluding that the Prophet (s) was utterly flawless.

Overwhelmed by this sublime description and *Waraqa's* unshakeable conviction, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) pleaded with him to finalize the marriage. *Waraqa* agreed, but with a condition. When **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) offered him any worldly possession—wealth, land, or property—he refused, stating his desire was not for material gain. Instead, he sought a promise: that on the Day of Judgment, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) would intercede with her future husband, the Prophet (s), for his forgiveness, for he feared the enormity of that day. **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) readily gave her solemn promise. With this, *Waraqa ibn Nawfal* committed himself to resolve the matter and facilitate the blessed union, a testament to his profound faith and foresight.

Chapter 18

The Blessed Nuptials: Khadijah's Devotion and the Prophet's Enduring Virtues

The path to the sacred union between **Prophet Muhammad** (s) and **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) was now set, yet not without its final trials. As the previous chapter recounted, despite **Sayyidah Khadijah's** (a) unwavering conviction and the prophetic confirmations she had received, her uncle, *Amr ibn Asad*, had initially rejected the proposal brought by the esteemed Banu Hashim family. This rejection, rooted in conventional societal concerns regarding worldly wealth, left Khadijah in distress. The distinguished Banu Hashim had returned in a state of righteous indignation, their honor seemingly bruised.

In this delicate situation, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) turned to her other paternal uncle, *Waraqa ibn Nawfal*, a man of wisdom and deep scriptural knowledge, and notably, of a similar age to herself, fostering a relationship of both familial respect and genuine camaraderie. She laid the entire matter before him. *Waraqa*, already convinced of the Prophet's (s) divine status and a proponent of this marriage, was quick to act.

Approaching his brother, *Amr ibn Asad*, *Waraqa* confronted him with a

powerful blend of wisdom and strategic foresight. "How could you commit such an egregious error?" *Waraqa* demanded. "You have alienated the mighty Banu Hashim! Do you not realize the consequences if they were to turn against us? The entire Makkah would rally under their banner, leaving us vulnerable. Our prestige, our influence, our very existence would be jeopardized. Have you forgotten the stature of *Abu Talib*, that noble man, and the formidable *Hamza*, that lion, whom you turned away from your door?"

Amr ibn Asad, still clinging to his worldly concerns, presented his reasons. "There were two reasons," he explained. "Firstly, the Banu Hashim came seeking a hand for *Abdullah's* son, a youth devoid of worldly wealth. We had previously rejected proposals from great chiefs like *Utbah*, *Shaybah*, *Abu Jahl*, and *Sufyan* for Khadijah. If news spread that we turned them down only to accept a man of modest means, it would be a grave insult. Everyone would perceive it as our intentional slight, and who could withstand the animosity of so many powerful figures?" He continued, "Secondly, even if I were to agree, Khadijah herself is strong-willed. She has rejected suitors of kings and Makkah's paramount chiefs. She is her own master. I feared she would reject him too, and even blame me for considering such a match."

Waraqa listened patiently, then delivered a crushing rebuttal. "How can you speak of *Abdullah's* son as 'poor'?" he exclaimed. "Do you not know that there is no one in Makkah who does not owe him a debt of gratitude? Everyone acknowledges his supreme station! Does Makkah not call him *al-Sadiq* (the Truthful) and *al-Amin* (the Trustworthy)? From his early youth, he earned these titles. Have you forgotten his journey to Syria, where all of Makkah's polytheists witnessed his miracles and abundant blessings? He saved their caravans from robbers and floods, and their trade multiplied manifold. They were astonished! Everyone praises him; his name is spoken with reverence in every household. If you object to *his*

proposal, no one will object to you; but if any other proposal were made, people would surely object! I take responsibility for this. How could you refuse *his* proposal without even consulting Khadijah? Did you know her opinion?"

Amr ibn Asad, flustered, conceded that Khadijah was indeed pleased and willing. "If my niece is truly agreeable," he stammered, now concerned about his reputation, "is there no way for this matter to conclude discreetly, preserving my honor?"

"Yes," *Waraqa* affirmed, "but you must promise that if the Banu Hashim return, you will receive them with full respect." *Amr ibn Asad*, realizing the weight of the situation and the immense stature of Khadijah in Makkah, finally consented. His dignity and standing in Makkah were interwoven with hers, and he knew he could not afford to displease her, nor the powerful Banu Hashim.

A date for the *nikah* (marriage contract) was set. Despite the tight timeframe due to *Amr ibn Asad's* initial hesitation, Khadijah ensured that nothing would be lacking. The Banu Hashim delegation, led by *Abu Talib*, processed towards Khadijah's home. **Prophet Muhammad** (s) himself was adorned in magnificent attire, his feet graced with the blessed sandals of *Ali ibn Abi Talib* (a), and his head adorned with a turban and a ring belonging to *Abu Talib*. The young men of Banu Hashim, including *Hamza*, formed a protective escort around him.

As the procession arrived, *Abu Jahl*, who was among the guests, attempted to assert his perceived superiority. Noticing the seating arrangements with important elders like *Amr ibn Asad* and *Waraqa ibn Nawfal* seated prominently, *Abu Jahl* moved to occupy a large seat directly opposite the main entrance, believing it to be reserved for him. However, *Maysarah*, Khadijah's trusted servant, who had accompanied **Prophet Muhammad** (s) on his Syrian journey and witnessed *Abu Jahl's* past misconduct, in-

tervened. "Know your place, *Abu Jahl*," *Maysarah* firmly instructed, "This is not your seat. You must sit with the other guests." *Abu Jahl*, stunned by this public rebuke, retreated in humiliation.

This affront, however, did not go unnoticed by *Hamza*, the Prophet's (s) brave uncle. Known for his fiery disposition, *Hamza* could not tolerate such disrespect. He grabbed *Abu Jahl* by the scruff of his neck, squeezing him so hard that, as some accounts state, blood flowed from *Abu Jahl's* nose. "This is a wedding ceremony, not a place for your insolence," *Hamza* roared, compelling *Abu Jahl* to move. *Abu Talib*, witnessing the scene, calmly intervened, reminding *Hamza* that it was a festive occasion and not a time for altercations.

With order restored, the *nikah* ceremony commenced. *Abu Talib*, in his profound and eloquent sermon, addressed the gathering. He began by praising Allah, affirming **Tawhid** (Oneness of God), acknowledging the prophethood of His messengers from Adam to the present, and lauding the virtues of his own family. He then spoke of his nephew, **Prophet Muhammad** (s): "O people of Makkah, you know that my nephew is unmatched in nobility, character, and intellect. He surpasses all in excellence. While it is true that he possesses little worldly wealth, you also know that wealth is fleeting and does not bestow honor, nor does its absence diminish it. You are all aware of his integrity and honesty." He then formally declared, "I marry my nephew, **Muhammad**, to **Khadijah**."

Waraqa ibn Nawfal then responded, praising the noble lineage of Banu Hashim and confirming that **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) was delighted with the union. He completed the *nikah* by confirming the marriage on Khadijah's behalf. It is noteworthy that while this was a pre-Islamic marriage, its every detail was in perfect accordance with what would later be established as Islamic law. The *mahr* (dower) was set, with various narrations citing its value as 30 loads of camels, or 12.5 *awqiyah* of gold, or 400 gold

dinars. Scholars have confirmed that all these values were equivalent in worth at the time.

Following the *nikah*, a grand *walima* (wedding feast) was held. The Prophet (s), *Abu Talib*, and **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) all contributed generously from their wealth to host the grand event.

Six months later, the *rukhsati* (bride's ceremonial departure to her husband's home) took place. **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) had awaited this moment with profound anticipation. The traditions speak of the unparalleled grandeur of her preparations, reflecting her immense wealth and her deep love for the Prophet (s). Slaves adorned with gold and silver jewelry, fragrant perfumes filling the air, and exquisite carpets covering the entire street of Banu Hashim all attested to Khadijah's opulence. It was a spectacle to behold, cementing her title as the "Queen of Arab" (*Malikat al-Arab*).

Two esteemed women from Banu Hashim accompanied Khadijah: **Safiyyah bint Abd al-Muttalib**, the Prophet's (s) aunt and *Abu Talib's* sister, and **Fatimah bint Asad**, the Prophet's (s) paternal aunt and mother of *Ali ibn Abi Talib* (a). They escorted **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) to *Abu Talib's* residence, where she initially stayed. After two or three days, however, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) expressed a profound desire to fulfill a promise she had made to the Prophet (s) during their initial discussions. She had told him, "O son of *Abdullah*, all my wealth is yours. From this day forward, I belong to you."

Now, she wished to formalize this pledge. In a truly astonishing act of devotion, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) transferred all her immense wealth – her camels, goods, properties, slaves, and precious metals – to the Prophet (s). This was not merely a verbal promise; it was a complete, legal divestment, rendering her "poor" in worldly terms, yet immeasurably rich in faith and devotion. This momentous act perfectly fulfilled the divine

pronouncement in **Surah Ad-Duha**: □□□□□□□□□□" □□□□□□□□ "□□□□□□□□□ (**"And He found you in need, and made you self-sufficient"**). Through **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a), Allah had indeed enriched His beloved Prophet.

With such vast wealth now at his disposal, one might expect a change in character, as often happens to individuals blessed with immense fortune. However, **Prophet Muhammad** (s) remained utterly consistent. His integrity, his truthfulness, and his trustworthiness, which had earned him the titles *al-Sadiq* and *al-Amin* in his youth, remained absolute. The people of Makkah observed this with astonishment, noting that despite his increased prosperity, his character remained flawless.

A powerful illustration of this unwavering commitment to promises is found in the famous account of *Abdullah ibn Abd al-Hamsa*. *Abdullah* had an appointment with the Prophet (s) to conduct some trade. They agreed to meet at a specific spot, and the Prophet (s) stated he would wait. *Abdullah* left to retrieve his goods, but upon returning home, he became preoccupied and entirely forgot the appointment. Three days passed. On the fourth day, as he was resting, his eyes fell upon the goods he had intended to sell. He instantly remembered his forgotten promise to the Prophet (s). Rushing back to the agreed spot, *Abdullah* was astounded to find **Prophet Muhammad** (s) still waiting there, precisely where he had left him three days prior, exhibiting patience and determination that transcended normal human endurance. His face showed signs of heat and sweat, but he had not moved. When *Abdullah*, filled with shame, apologized profusely for his oversight, the Prophet (s) calmly replied, "I promised you I would wait here, and I waited. How could I break my word?" This singular incident, though seemingly minor, profoundly underscored the Prophet's (s) absolute *siddiqiyyah* (truthfulness) and *amanah* (trustworthiness), further solidifying his reputation throughout Makkah. It was a testimony that even when entrusted with great wealth, his character remained impeccable, unlike many who falter under the test of affluence.

Another remarkable testament to the Prophet's (s) character and revolutionary compassion, even before the advent of Islam, is the story of **Zayd ibn Harithah**. Zayd, born into a noble family, was abducted as a young boy (around 5 years old) during a raid while accompanying his mother. He was sold into slavery and eventually came into the possession of *Hakim ibn Hizam*, **Sayyidah Khadijah's** (a) nephew, who then gifted him to his aunt. Khadijah, in turn, presented Zayd to the Prophet (s), who immediately treated him not as a slave, but as a beloved son.

Years later, Zayd's father, *Harithah*, and uncle, heartbroken by his disappearance, learned of his whereabouts in Makkah. They immediately traveled there and approached the Prophet (s), pleading for Zayd's return. "We have come to reclaim our son," they implored. The Prophet (s), with unparalleled magnanimity, said, "If he wishes to go with you, I will not take ransom. He is yours, take him." He then summoned Zayd and presented him with a choice: "These are your father and uncle, who have come to take you home. You are free to choose."

To the astonishment of all present, Zayd, a young man who had spent over a decade with the Prophet (s), looked at his biological father and uncle, then turned to the Prophet (s) and declared, "I will not leave you. I have found in you something better than father and mother. I will remain with you." His father, heartbroken, tried to appeal to his sense of family, asking, "Zayd, are you choosing slavery over freedom? Are you choosing to stay with him rather than return to your family?" Zayd replied, "Yes, for the 'slavery' in this house is a thousand times more beloved to me than any freedom elsewhere."

At this profound declaration, the Prophet (s) seized the moment to make a revolutionary public statement. He took Zayd by the hand and went to the Kaaba, where the Makkans often gathered for announcements. Standing before the assembled crowd, he declared, "Bear witness, O people of

Makkah! Zayd is now my son. He will inherit from me, and I from him." This act, pre-dating the formal declaration of Islam, abolished Zayd's status as a slave and elevated him to the position of an adopted son, even though the later Qur'anic verses would clarify the distinction between biological and adopted children. This was a powerful demonstration of the Prophet's (s) inherent justice, compassion, and his revolutionary challenge to prevailing social norms regarding slavery and human dignity. It underscored that his character was perfectly aligned with divine principles long before his formal prophethood.

The blessed marriage of **Prophet Muhammad** (s) and **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) lasted for 25 years—15 years before the declaration of prophethood and 10 years after. The Prophet (s) was 25 years old at the time of their marriage. While there are differing accounts regarding Khadijah's age at the time of marriage (some say 40, others 30, and some scholars even propose 28), it is universally agreed that she was older than the Prophet (s), and that she passed away when she was 65 years old (or 60, or 53 depending on the earlier age).

From this sacred union, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) bore the Prophet (s) three children: two sons, Qasim and Abdullah, and one daughter, Fatimah Zahra. Both sons, Qasim (from whom the Prophet (s) earned his *kunyah* or teknonym, *Aba al-Qasim*) and Abdullah (also known as Tayyib and Tahir), passed away in their infancy. Abdullah passed away five years before the declaration of prophethood, and Qasim followed later.

The loss of their infant sons brought profound grief to **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a). Our fifth Imam, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a), narrates a moving incident regarding Abdullah's passing. One day, the Prophet (s) found Khadijah deeply saddened. "What troubles you, Khadijah?" he asked. She replied, "My son has left me in his infancy. I feel a void, a missing part of my being." The Prophet (s) consoled her with profound

words of divine promise. He said, "Are you not pleased, Khadijah, that on the Day of Judgment, your son will be standing at the gates of Paradise, refusing to enter until his mother enters with him?"

Upon hearing this, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a), with the compassion characteristic of the Mother of Believers, inquired further, "Is this promise exclusive to my son, O Messenger of Allah? Or does it extend to all believers who lose their young children?" The Prophet (s) replied, "O Khadijah, this is Allah's promise to every believer whose child dies in infancy. That child will stand at the gates of Paradise, refusing to enter until their parents enter with them. It is against Allah's boundless mercy that a believer who shows patience (*sabr*) and gratitude (*shukr*) at the loss of their child should not be granted this favor."

These formative years of the Prophet's (s) life, marked by his blessed marriage, his unwavering moral character, his compassion, and his profound connection with the divine, solidified his position as *al-Sadiq* and *al-Amin*. They laid the crucial groundwork, demonstrating that his inherent prophethood and exemplary conduct were evident long before the formal declaration of his divine mission.

Chapter 19

The Years of Preparation: The Birth of Ali and the Ka'bah's Renewal

The sacred life of Prophet Muhammad (s), from his twenty-fifth year onward, marked a period of profound preparation and divine shaping, leading inevitably to the momentous declaration of his prophethood at the age of forty. While historical accounts from this specific period—the fifteen years between his blessed marriage to **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) and the commencement of his divine mission—are notably sparse, two colossal events stand out, illuminating the nascent stages of his future role and the divine plan unfolding around him. These events not only cemented his inherent virtues but also set the stage for the epochal shift that was to come.

Immediately following his marriage to **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) at the age of twenty-five, the Prophet (s) transitioned from residing in the quarter of Bani Hashim to taking up abode in the home of **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a). This move, seemingly a simple domestic change, carried immense significance. Prior to this, although recognized for his trustworthiness and integrity, his financial standing was not that of a wealthy merchant. With

Sayyidah Khadijah's (a) immense wealth now at his disposal—a wealth she had generously transferred to him—the Prophet's (s) commercial influence soared. Merchants, both great and small, from across Arabia, could now engage in trade with him without apprehension, knowing that vast capital stood behind his ventures. He effectively became, in the economic landscape of Makkah, a towering figure akin to a bank, trusted with deposits and capable of undertaking large-scale transactions. Under his direct involvement, **Sayyidah Khadijah's** (a) enterprises flourished with unprecedented growth and divine blessings, a testament to his unparalleled commercial acumen, coupled with his unwavering *amanah* (trustworthiness) and *diyanah* (honesty).

As the Prophet (s) entered his thirtieth year, Makkah bore witness to an extraordinary event, unparalleled in human history: the miraculous birth of *Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib* (a) within the holy confines of the **Ka'bah** itself. The narrative is as follows: The esteemed **Sayyidah Fatimah bint Asad** (a), the venerable mother of Ali and the Prophet's (s) beloved aunt, approached the sacred walls of the **Ka'bah** during a period of intense pain. She was seen praying fervently near the spot adjacent to the door. To the astonishment of all present, the solid wall of the **Ka'bah** miraculously parted, allowing her to enter, and then sealed itself behind her. For three days, she remained within the holy sanctuary, and despite the frantic efforts of the people of Makkah, the locked door of the **Ka'bah** could not be opened. On the fourth day, the Prophet (s) himself arrived. The historical accounts vividly describe his approach to the **Ka'bah's** door; upon his arrival, the very lock of the **Ka'bah** yielded to him. As he stepped inside, he witnessed his aunt, **Sayyidah Fatimah bint Asad** (a), holding the newborn *Imam Ali* (a) in her lap. A divine veil descended from the heavens, separating her from other women who had also entered miraculously at that moment, signaling the sanctity of the birth. The Prophet (s) was then divinely instructed to take the infant into his blessed arms.

Upon receiving the child, the infant *Ali* (a) astonishingly pronounced the ***adhan*** and ***iqamah***, followed by the recitation of verses from **Surah Al-Mu'minoon**: □□□□" □□□□□□□□ "□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ (**"Certainly, the believers have attained prosperity"**). The Prophet (s) immediately interjected, declaring to the infant Ali (a), "O Ali, the believers have attained prosperity through you, and you are their leader (*Amir al-Mu'mineen*)." The Prophet (s) then conveyed the divine instruction concerning the child's name, stating that he had heard a voice from the divine court declaring that his name was 'Ali. This event, unique in its sacred setting and miraculous nature, further underscored the extraordinary destiny of both the Prophet (s) and the newborn *Imam Ali* (a). Notably, historical accounts from our traditions clarify that *Imam Ali* (a) was nurtured and raised by the Prophet (s) from infancy. Reports that suggest Abu Talib's (a) poverty led to Ali's (a) adoption by the Prophet (s) are contradicted by the evidence of Abu Talib's (a) immense wealth. For instance, the lavish *walima* (feast) held for *Imam Ali's* (a) birth involved the sacrifice of three hundred camels and a thousand sheep, a scale of generosity that far exceeded the means of any but the wealthiest and most influential figures in Makkah, affirming Abu Talib's (a) esteemed status and ample resources. From that day onward, the Prophet (s) took *Imam Ali* (a) into his own home, personally tending to his needs, washing him, changing his clothes, and keeping his cradle by his own bed, demonstrating an inseparable bond that would characterize their relationship throughout their lives.

Five years later, when the Prophet (s) was thirty-five years old, Makkah faced a crisis that threatened to plunge its tribes into devastating civil war: the reconstruction of the **Ka'bah**. The sacred structure, originally built by Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail (a), had suffered significant damage over centuries. Firstly, Makkah's unique geography—a basin surrounded by mountains—meant that even minor rainfall caused torrents of water to

cascade down, repeatedly flooding the **Ka'bah's** foundations, weakening its ancient, unmortared stone structure. Secondly, a fire, accidentally started by a woman burning incense, consumed the **Ka'bah's** coverings, damaging the walls and creating cracks. Thirdly, a grave theft occurred when two golden deer, a prominent treasure within the **Ka'bah**, were stolen. These three successive incidents prompted the Quraish to consider rebuilding.

However, a deep-seated fear and reverence prevented anyone from initiating the demolition. The Quraish were hesitant to dismantle a structure so ancient and sacred, fearing divine retribution. Providentially, a large Roman merchant ship, laden with timber, ran aground near Jeddah. Among its crew was a skilled Roman architect and engineer, who offered his services. This was seen as a divine sign, as Makkah, being a desert city, lacked timber, and building materials were prohibitively expensive. With the necessary resources and expertise now available, Walid ibn Mughirah, a respected Quraish elder, bravely initiated the demolition, beginning with a single stone. As he did so, a formidable snake, which had been guarding the **Ka'bah's** foundations, appeared. Fearing disaster, the people halted. It was then that *Abu Talib* (a), seeing the people's trepidation, raised his hands in prayer to the heavens, affirming the Quraish's sincere intention to rebuild and repair the **Ka'bah**, not to desecrate it. Instantly, an eagle (*shahin*) descended, seizing the snake and carrying it away, a clear sign of divine approval.

The rebuilding commenced, but a significant hurdle arose concerning finances. It was decreed that only *halal* earnings could be used for the reconstruction. A large amount of money, tainted by illegitimate means (such as usury, theft, or earnings from illicit activities like singing and dancing), had to be removed, leaving insufficient funds to rebuild the **Ka'bah** to its original dimensions as designed by Prophet Ibrahim (a). Consequently, the Quraish decided to construct it smaller, leaving a sec-

tion outside the main structure. This unbuilt portion, known as the *Hateem* (or *Hijr Ismail*), is still a part of the Ka'bah's original foundation, and encompasses the graves of *Ismail* (a) and his mother, *Hajar* (a). For this reason, performing *tawaf* (circumambulation) around the entire **Ka'bah**, including the *Hateem*, is mandatory for pilgrims, as it completes the circumambulation of the original structure. Furthermore, due to financial constraints, only one door was constructed for the **Ka'bah** (instead of the original two, as built by Ibrahim). The Quraish, driven by commercial interests and a desire to control access, strategically raised this single door high above the ground, making it inaccessible without a ladder, effectively limiting entry to their discretion and turning access into a privilege, often granted only on Mondays and Thursdays.

The most critical challenge arose with the placement of the ***Hajar al-Aswad*** (Black Stone). This sacred stone, believed to be a stone from Paradise that descended with Prophet Adam (a) or an angel recording deeds, was to be set into the **Ka'bah's** wall. Every tribe in Makkah fiercely coveted the honor of placing it, viewing it as an unparalleled mark of prestige. The dispute escalated rapidly, with swords drawn and a bloody conflict seeming inevitable, a direct consequence of the Quraish's exaggerated sense of *gheerah* (honor/pride) that had historically led to brutal, protracted tribal wars over trivial matters.

At this perilous juncture, the Quraish, recognizing his universally acknowledged integrity, decided that the first person to enter the **Ka'bah** precinct through the *Bab Bani Shaybah* (a gate often used by the Prophet, later renamed *Bab al-Islam*) would arbitrate the dispute. As fate would have it, the very next morning, the first person to enter was Prophet Muhammad (s). Upon seeing him, the assembled tribal leaders collectively cried out, "This is **al-Amin!** This is **as-Sadiq!** We are pleased with his judgment!"

The Prophet (s), demonstrating unparalleled wisdom and diplomacy, re-

moved his cloak and spread it on the ground. He then placed the ***Hajar al-Aswad*** upon it. He instructed a representative from each tribe to grasp a corner of the cloak and together lift the stone to the height of the wall. Once it reached the designated spot, the Prophet (s) himself, with his own blessed hands, took the ***Hajar al-Aswad*** and set it firmly into its place in the **Ka'bah's** wall. This ingenious solution satisfied all parties, allowing every tribe to partake in the honor and averting a catastrophic war that would have devastated Makkah. This incident stands as a profound testament to the Prophet's (s) unmatched wisdom, justice, and leadership, long before his formal declaration of prophethood.

It is recorded in traditions that had the Quraish embraced Islam and not feared discord, the Prophet (s) would have rebuilt the **Ka'bah** according to the original plan of Prophet Ibrahim (a), restoring its full size and two doors. However, to prevent further conflict and the possibility of his actions being perceived as a slight against their pre-Islamic efforts, he left the structure as the Quraish had completed it. It is prophesied that when the Imam of the Age, ***Imam al-Mahdi*** (a), reappears, he will restore the **Ka'bah** to its original Abrahamic design, fulfilling the Prophet's (s) unfulfilled desire.

With the reconstruction of the **Ka'bah** and the resolution of the ***Hajar al-Aswad*** dispute, the period leading up to the declaration of prophethood now stands complete. These events vividly illustrate the Prophet's (s) divine preparation, his inherent wisdom, and the exemplary character that had already earned him the titles of **al-Amin** and **as-Sadiq** among his people, laying the groundwork for the monumental mission that was soon to begin.

Chapter 20

The Pre-Prophetic Landscape of Arabia

As the blessed life of the Messenger of Allah (s) approached its fortieth year, the time drew near for the divine command that would mark the commencement of his prophethood and the unveiling of his sacred mission. The **Holy Qur'an** offers a profound glimpse into the preparatory stages of the Prophet's (s) life through the verses of **Surah Ad-Duha**. This **Surah** alludes to three distinct phases of his life, each a testament to Allah's perpetual care and guidance.

The first phase, spanning from his birth to his twenty-fifth year, is encapsulated in the verse, **"Did He not find you an orphan and give you refuge?"** (**Qur'an 93:6**). This period speaks to his early life, marked by the loss of his parents, his upbringing under the care of his grandfather and uncle, and the divine shelter provided to him amidst the vulnerabilities of his youth.

The second phase, from his twenty-fifth year to the cusp of prophethood around his fortieth year, is alluded to by the verse, **"And found you poor and made you rich?"** (**Qur'an 93:8**). This refers to his journey from a state of financial dependency to one of self-sufficiency and prosperity, largely facilitated by his blessed marriage to **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a),

which elevated his status and influence in society.

The third and most pivotal phase, extending from the announcement of his prophethood at forty until the end of his blessed life, is summarized by the verse, **"And found you astray and guided you?"** (**Qur'an 93:7**). This verse, in this context, highlights the transformation from being unknown to the world to becoming the universally recognized and revered Messenger of Allah, a beacon of divine guidance. It is into this profound third phase that the narrative of the Prophet's (s) life now enters, marking the true beginning of his prophetic mission.

Before delving into the grand announcement of prophethood, it is imperative to understand the intricate and often turbulent societal fabric of Arabia in which this divine revelation would descend. The region of *Hijaz*, encompassing the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina, was geographically isolated by formidable mountain ranges and vast sand dunes. This isolation meant that the Arabian Peninsula remained largely untouched by the intellectual, philosophical, and legal advancements witnessed in contemporary civilizations like Greece, Rome, or India. Unlike these societies with their developed systems of law, governance, and learning, pre-Islamic Arabia was a land where the law of the jungle often prevailed.

Life in Arabia was dominated by an extreme form of tribalism, or *asabiyyah*. Loyalty to one's tribe superseded all other considerations. The life and property of an individual were considered sacred only if they belonged to the same tribe; outside the tribal boundaries, there was little to no inherent respect for human life or dignity. It was an environment where tribal members would protect their own, even if they were aggressors or criminals, while outsiders, no matter how honorable, were fair game for plunder or harm. The very concept of universal humanity – that an individual outside one's tribe was still a human being deserving of respect – was largely alien to their understanding.

Religiously, the Arabs of *Jahiliyyah* (the Age of Ignorance) possessed a deeply flawed and contradictory understanding of God. They acknowledged **Allah** as the supreme Creator, the ultimate Sustainer, the Giver of rain, life, and death. Indeed, many Meccan *Surahs* of the **Holy Qur'an** would repeatedly question the disbelievers on who controlled the heavens and the earth, and they would invariably respond, "**Allah**." They believed **Allah** to be the greatest and most powerful entity.

However, alongside this acknowledgment of **Allah**, they had established 360 idols around the **Ka'bah** and innumerable others across the peninsula. These idols – such as Lat, Manat, Hubal, Uzzah, Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, Nasr, Isaf, and Naila – were not considered equal to **Allah**, but rather as *intercessors* or *intermediaries*. The pervasive belief was that one could only reach **Allah** and gain His pleasure by first pleasing these smaller deities. Their fear of these idols often overshadowed their reverence for **Allah**.

This distorted theology manifested in peculiar practices. For instance, when allocating portions of their produce or wealth, they would set aside a share for **Allah** and another for their idols. Yet, in practice, the idols' share was always prioritized. If a portion designated for **Allah** accidentally mingled with the idols' share, it automatically became part of the idols' portion. Conversely, if a portion for the idols mixed with **Allah's** share, it remained the idols' share and would never be merged into **Allah's**. In times of scarcity, they would readily consume **Allah's** share, justifying it by claiming that **Allah** is All-Sufficient and Most Merciful and does not need their meager offerings. However, they would never dare touch the idols' share, fearing their wrath and its perceived negative consequences on their lives and wealth. This reveals a profound spiritual misdirection, prioritizing fear of idols over reverence for the One True God.

Their religious practices were steeped in superstition. They consulted idols like *Hubal* at the **Ka'bah** using divining arrows to make significant decisions, believing in omens from trivial occurrences like an eye twitching or an animal's cry. Animals dedicated to idols were considered sacred and exempt from normal use; their offspring were subjected to arbitrary laws about who could consume them based on gender or whether they were born alive or dead. Paradoxically, these same idolaters, when hungry on a journey, might break and consume their idols, demonstrating a lack of genuine reverence when convenience dictated. The worship of idols like *Isaf* and *Naila* – deities believed to have originated from individuals turned to stone for committing fornication within the **Ka'bah** – further underscores the complete absence of moral discernment in their religious practices.

Beyond their religious beliefs, the social fabric of *Jahiliyyah* was riddled with extreme injustices, particularly against women and orphans. Women were relegated to a status far below that of men, often considered less valuable than animals. Men practiced unlimited polygamy, marrying dozens of women without any social or legal restriction. It was common for a man to marry his stepmothers (any of his father's wives, except his own biological mother). Divorce was entirely at the man's discretion, with no limits on the number of times a man could divorce and remarry the same woman, a practice often used to torment women endlessly, leaving them in a state of perpetual uncertainty and suffering. During menstruation, women were considered impure and socially isolated, forbidden from sitting with men or even being touched. Most egregiously, women had no right to inheritance, as they were not deemed earners of wealth.

Orphans faced an even more tragic plight. Their guardianship was often sought by others not out of compassion but purely to seize their inheritance. If an orphan girl was beautiful, her guardian might marry her

without paying a *mahr* (dowry) to exploit both her beauty and her wealth. If she was deemed unattractive, she was often forced into prostitution. This horrific practice was institutionalized in two forms: women engaging with multiple men for a fee, which they paid to their masters, with paternity claimed by any of the men; or public houses marked with flags (*rayat*) where women were available for a fee. Many tribal chiefs derived significant income from such practices, making them formidable opponents of Islam.

The most barbaric practice prevalent in *Jahiliyyah* was *wa'd al-banat*, the live burial of infant girls. Fathers would often hide when their wives gave birth; if a girl was born, she would be buried alive by the midwife without the father even seeing her face. Even girls up to the age of thirteen, considered women in that society, were subjected to this horrifying fate.

This, then, was the profoundly corrupt and morally bankrupt environment into which **Prophet Muhammad** (s) was commanded to declare the message of **La ilaha illallah** – "There is no god but Allah." It was a society where the spiritual, social, and economic interests of the powerful few were inextricably linked to the preservation of idol worship, tribalism, and social injustices. For those who profited from the prevailing system – the idol guardians, the tribal chiefs, the exploiters of women and orphans – the message of Islam was a direct threat to their livelihood and authority. They would resist with fierce opposition. However, amidst this darkness, there was also a vast segment of the population – the oppressed women, the exploited orphans, and the weak – who silently yearned for justice and awaited a savior. It is this profound tension between the forces of oppression and the yearning for liberation that would define the early years of Islam's mission.

Chapter 21

Unveiling the Roots of Opposition: Wealth, Status, and Injustice in Pre-Islamic Arabia

The preceding chapter laid the groundwork for understanding the social and religious landscape of *Jahiliyyah*, the Age of Ignorance. As the blessed advent of Prophet Muhammad (s) drew near, the societal fabric of Arabia, particularly Mecca, revealed a deeper truth: the fierce opposition he would face was not merely theological, but intrinsically linked to the entrenched economic interests, social hierarchies, and distorted pride of the powerful.

Contrary to a common misconception that the resistance stemmed primarily from the introduction of a new religion, a closer examination of *Jahiliyyah* reveals a more profound, self-serving motive. The Arabs of Mecca, already revering 365 idols alongside a supreme deity, would not have found it difficult to acknowledge another God, especially One they already recognized as the Greatest. The true threat posed by the Prophet's message was the dismantling of a corrupt system that enriched the elite and upheld their perceived superiority. The core of their defiance lay in the preservation of their wealth, their elevated status, their false pride

(*takabbur*), and the continuation of their existing social and economic order, which they were unwilling to surrender.

The prevailing social system was rooted in a rigid tribal structure where an individual's worth, security, and very life were entirely dependent on their tribal affiliation. Outside the protective embrace of their own clan, one was without guarantee of safety, property, or even existence. This created a fractured society, a virtual "prison" bounded by tribal loyalties, where inter-tribal warfare for trivial reasons was common.

A profound illustration of this societal perversion was their understanding of justice, particularly concerning retribution for murder. If a person of high status or wealth from a particular tribe was killed, merely slaying the murderer was deemed insufficient. The value of life was equated with social standing. They might demand the lives of dozens of individuals from the killer's tribe, or someone of equivalent status, regardless of their innocence. This warped sense of justice, prioritizing tribal honor and wealth over individual accountability, underscores the monumental challenge the Prophet (s) would face in introducing the radical concept of universal human equality. His message that "the children of Adam are all brothers; no Arab is superior to a non-Arab, no white to a black, no rich to a poor" was a direct assault on the very foundation of their unjust system.

Beyond economic and social injustice, the moral fabric of *Jahiliyyah* was severely frayed. Modesty was largely absent; it was common for individuals, particularly women, to remove their clothing publicly without shame. The concept of rights was also fundamentally distorted. They would establish fictitious relationships, such as adopted sons, for the sole purpose of enabling inheritance from wealthy individuals, demonstrating a purely materialistic approach to familial bonds. Islam, in its wisdom, would later correct these practices, emphasizing natural blood ties

over fabricated ones for inheritance and other legal matters.

One of the most horrific practices of *Jahiliyyah* was *wa'd al-banat*, the live burial of infant daughters. This abhorrent act was driven by a confluence of fears: * **Economic Anxiety**: Sons were seen as future providers and protectors, while daughters were viewed as financial burdens, requiring dowries and support, and ultimately leaving the family to take wealth with them. * **Fear of Dishonor**: The prospect of a daughter bringing dishonor to the family, either through an 'unsuitable' marriage or capture in tribal skirmishes, led some to prefer her demise over potential shame. The act of burying a daughter alive was seen as a way to preemptively safeguard tribal 'honor'.

A poignant narration vividly illustrates this tragedy. A man who embraced Islam approached the Prophet (s), confessing a deep-seated remorse. Before Islam, he had left his pregnant wife for a journey, instructing her to bury the child if it were a girl. Upon his return months later, he discovered a daughter had been born and buried as per his command. Years passed, and he noticed his wife's unusual affection for a neighbor's child. Pressured by her husband, she eventually revealed that the child was their daughter, whom she had entrusted to the neighbor to save from infanticide. Overcome with joy, the man embraced his daughter, only to lead her outside Mecca, dig a pit, and, despite her innocent cries and attempts to cling to him, bury her alive. The Prophet (s) was so deeply moved by this recounting that tears flowed from his blessed eyes. He allowed the man to continue his painful narration, emphasizing that such stories, though agonizing, needed to be heard to underscore the depths of *Jahiliyyah*. The Prophet (s) then reassured him that Islam's embrace cleanses all past sins. It is important to note that this abhorrent practice was not universal; some individuals, like Farazdaq's grandfather who saved 307 girls, and certain tribes, such as Banu Asad and Banu Janab, did not engage in it.

The Quraysh, as custodians of the **Ka'bah** and residents of the sacred **Haram**, further solidified their perceived supremacy through a system known as *Humus*. They declared themselves, and later their allied tribes, inherently superior to all other Arabs. This superiority manifested in bizarre and exploitative rituals during Hajj: * They refused to perform rituals like standing at *Arafat* with common Arabs, deeming it beneath their status, starting their Hajj from Muzdalifa instead. * During the circumambulation of the **Ka'bah** (**Tawaf**), pilgrims from outside Mecca were forbidden from wearing their own clothes, which were deemed 'impure' or inferior. They were forced to either purchase expensive clothing from the Quraysh or perform **Tawaf** naked. This was a clear economic exploitation, a practice sharply condemned by the Qur'an in **Surah Al-A'raf**, **Ayat** 31-32, which urged believers to adorn themselves properly for worship and not to forbid what Allah has made lawful. Furthermore, instead of invoking Allah during Hajj, they would arrogantly praise their ancestors, reinforcing their *jahiliyyah* pride and blatant polytheism.

Adding to the complexity of the pre-prophetic era was the widespread reliance on soothsayers (*kahins*) and sorcerers (*sahirin*) who claimed to receive information from Jinn. In *Jahiliyyah*, Jinn were believed to have access to heavenly news and were sought for protection and guidance, especially by travelers entering desolate areas. However, a significant shift occurred shortly before Prophet Muhammad's (s) prophethood. As narrated by *Imam Zain al-Abidin* (a), divine decrees are transmitted from the highest heavens through angels to the lower ones. Jinn historically eavesdropped on these angelic conversations to gather 'news'. Yet, either at the Prophet's (s) birth or approximately four years before his declaration of prophethood (**Bi'thah**), Jinn were barred from ascending to the heavens. Consequently, they could no longer obtain accurate, pre-ordained news. The last message they conveyed spoke of the imminent arrival of the 'Last Messenger' and the end of their era. This sudden cessation of their 'heav-

enly news' profoundly disrupted the *kahins'* authority and the Quraysh's reliance on them, adding to the pre-prophetic signs.

This era was marked by numerous other miraculous signs heralding the Prophet's (s) arrival. Animals and even inanimate objects were reported to salute him. In Yemen, a calf about to be sacrificed for an idol spoke, declaring the existence of the One True God and the coming of an Arab man who would proclaim "La ilaha illallah." Even after embracing Islam, *Umar ibn al-Khattab* encountered a former *kahin* who recounted his Jinn's final, desperate message before fleeing: "Woe to you if you accept him (the Prophet), for your destruction is near!" These occurrences, alongside the general sense of unease and change permeating the land, signaled the end of one era and the dawn of another. The Quraysh, through their *kahins* and their own observations, began to understand that the 'prophet' they had heard about was indeed emerging from among them, leading to an increasing sense of panic and, for some, a reluctant acknowledgment of an impending radical shift.

Despite the pervasive darkness of *Jahiliyyah*, certain pockets of goodness and individuals of integrity existed, waiting for a divine light to dispel the shadows. The stage was set for a profound transformation, one that would challenge the very foundations of their society, their power, and their pride. The Prophet Muhammad (s), bearing the message of universal justice, equality, and the oneness of Allah, was about to step onto this complex and volatile stage.

Chapter 22

The Prophet's Inviolable Youth: Divine Preservation and the Seekers of Truth

The preceding chapters have illuminated the profound darkness of *Jahiliyyah*, detailing a society steeped in idol worship, tribal animosity, social injustice, and moral decay. Against this backdrop, the life of **Prophet Muhammad** (s) stands as a beacon of unparalleled purity and divine grace, embodying the **Qur'anic** principle of **"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah, you have an excellent example"** (***Uswe Hasana***). This guiding verse asserts that for all humanity, especially the believers, the **Prophet** (s) is the ultimate model, offering guidance for every time, circumstance, and situation. Even before the announcement of his prophethood, his life was a testament to his innate ***ismah***—his divinely protected infallibility and absolute purity.

It is a core tenet of our belief that **Prophet Muhammad** (s), his blessed father, and his forefathers, were intrinsically pure and untouched by the pervasive corruptions of *Jahiliyyah*. Contrary to some historical accounts that suggest the **Prophet** (s) might have engaged in certain commonplace activities of his youth, our tradition firmly rejects such notions. From the

moment of his birth, through his childhood and youth, he was shielded by divine providence from any practice or belief that contradicted the essence of ***Tawhid*** or moral rectitude.

Divine intervention was a constant companion in his formative years, subtly guiding him away from the pitfalls of his society. For instance, on two separate occasions, the young **Muhammad** (s) intended to attend a wedding feast in Mecca, drawn by the sounds of music and festivities, a typical youthful diversion. However, both times, as he approached the gathering, an overwhelming drowsiness would envelop him, causing him to fall into a deep sleep, only to awaken with the first rays of the sun. This miraculous intervention ensured that he never participated in such idle and often unseemly gatherings, which were characteristic of the *Jahiliyyah* era.

Another poignant instance of divine protection relates to his modesty. As a young man, while participating in the reconstruction of the **Ka'bah**—an event previously recounted—he, like other Arab youths, was engaged in carrying stones. To prevent his *izar* (loincloth) from hindering his movement and to ease the burden of lifting stones, he attempted to lift and tuck it up. However, as he did so, he would immediately fall unconscious, waking to find his *izar* intact and covering him. This happened twice, teaching him implicitly that his **Allah** (SWT) did not wish for his sacred body to be exposed, even inadvertently. Such events underscore the profound level of divine guardianship safeguarding his purity and preserving him from anything that might tarnish his pristine character.

While the society of Mecca was largely engulfed in polytheism and moral decay, there existed a small, discerning group who, long before the **Prophet's** (s) mission, had rejected idol worship and sought the true religion of **Prophet Ibrahim** (a). These individuals, known as the *Hunafa*, were a rare exception to the prevalent idolatry, dissatisfied with the religious

vacuum and yearning for a deeper truth.

Among these notable figures were four individuals who gathered in Mecca to discuss their shared conviction that the worship of idols was a grave delusion. These were:

1. **Waraqah ibn Nawfal**: A cousin of **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) and a maternal uncle to her. Waraqah was a learned Christian, deeply conversant with the scriptures of the **Torah** and the **Gospels**. He had recognized the prophecies pertaining to the final **Prophet** and affirmed the monotheistic path. His influence on **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) and her unwavering faith in **Tawhid** is evident, demonstrating that her own household was far removed from the idolatry of the Quraysh. It is said that even before the marriage of **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) to the **Prophet** (s), Waraqah had already recognized the coming of **Prophet Muhammad** (s).

2. **Uthman ibn Huwairith**: Also a cousin of **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a), being the son of her paternal uncle, Huwairith. He too rejected idol worship and sought the true faith.

3. **Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh**: A relative of the **Prophet** (s) himself, being a cousin of **Umm Habibah**, who would later become a wife of the **Prophet** (s). **Ubaydullah** was among the early seekers of truth, initially embracing Islam after the **Prophet's** (s) declaration of prophethood. He was part of the first migration to Abyssinia, where he and his wife, **Umm Habibah**, sought refuge. However, his journey took a tragic turn as he apostatized in Abyssinia, converting to Christianity, while **Umm Habibah** remained steadfast in Islam, eventually divorcing him and later marrying the **Prophet** (s). This incident is a testament to the individual trials of faith and the unwavering conviction of sincere believers even amidst profound personal loss and adversity.

4. **Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nufayl**: A paternal uncle of **Umar ibn al-Khattab**. **Zayd** was a staunch monotheist who vehemently rejected idol worship, the consumption of carrion, and other *Jahiliyyah* practices. He openly preached the religion of **Ibrahim** (a), urging people to abandon their false deities. Despite facing severe persecution from the Quraysh, including his own relatives like **Khattab** (Umar's father), he remained resolute. He journeyed far and wide, seeking knowledge from Christian and Jewish scholars, always searching for the pure faith. His fervent quest led him to anticipate the arrival of a **Prophet** from Mecca, foretold by a wise monk. Tragically, **Zayd** was martyred by a group of bandits shortly before the **Prophet's** (s) advent, but his steadfastness in ***Tawhid*** earned him a high station in the eyes of **Allah** (SWT) and the **Prophet** (s), who affirmed that he would be resurrected as a nation unto himself. It is also significant that his daughter, **Sa'idah bint Zayd**, later married **Umar's** sister, **Fatimah bint al-Khattab**, both of whom embraced Islam early on.

These individuals, particularly those related to **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) like Waraqah, illustrate the deep roots of ***Tawhid*** within her own family and her personal adherence to a pure faith even before her marriage to the **Prophet** (s). Such narratives confirm that the environment, though overwhelmingly corrupt, was not entirely devoid of those who yearned for truth. These seekers paved the way for the acceptance of the **Prophet's** (s) message, as their hearts were already attuned to the call of ***Tawhid***.

With the stage thus set, portraying the profound darkness of *Jahiliyyah* alongside the radiant purity of the **Prophet** (s) and the nascent light of truth-seekers, the moment for the divine announcement was rapidly approaching. The **Prophet** (s) had begun to seek solitude in the Cave of Hira, preparing himself for the momentous task that awaited him. The time for the descent of the angel was at hand, heralding the dawn of prophethood.

Chapter 23

The First Light: The Revelation in Ghar Hira

The preceding chapters have meticulously laid bare the profound challenges inherent in the pre-Islamic Arabian society, known as *Jahiliyyah*. This era was characterized by an all-pervading tribalism, rampant social injustices, and a spiritual void often filled by idol worship. Understanding this desolate landscape is paramount to comprehending the monumental task bestowed upon the **Prophet Muhammad** (s) and the arduous path he was destined to tread in transforming a world steeped in ignorance into one illuminated by divine truth.

Beyond the polytheistic practices prevalent in Makkah and its immediate environs, the Arabian Peninsula was also home to two other powerful and widely-practiced religions: Judaism and Christianity. These were not minor cults but established faiths with significant followings in the regions surrounding Makkah. To the north, extending towards Sham (Syria), lay areas dominated by Jewish communities, while across the Red Sea, the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia) held sway, and further north, the Byzantine (Roman) Empire, a formidable Chris-

tian power, encompassed territories like Egypt and Syria. Though less directly impactful on the Prophet's immediate mission, Zoroastrianism was present in the Persian Empire, and minor cults, such as star-worshippers or those who deified time itself, also existed, albeit on a much smaller scale.

A striking contrast emerged in the reactions of these two major Abrahamic faiths to the nascent call of Islam. Christianity, whose adherents are recognized as ***Ahl al-Kitab*** (People of the Book), generally demonstrated a degree of respect and openness towards Prophet Muhammad (s) and his message. This was evident in the actions of **Waraqah ibn Nawfal**, **Sayyidah Khadijah's** (a) scholarly cousin, who, upon hearing of the Prophet's early experiences, immediately recognized him as the awaited prophet mentioned in divine scriptures. Later, when the early Muslims faced persecution in Makkah, the Prophet (s) directed them to seek refuge in Abyssinia, knowing its Christian ruler, Najashi, was known for his justice and piety, acknowledging shared prophetic traditions. Accounts of the Prophet's (s) letters to various rulers also highlight this distinction. While the Persian Emperor, upon receiving the Prophet's invitation to Islam, indignantly tore the letter, the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius and the ruler of Egypt, Muqawqis, received the Prophet's (s) messages with respect. Muqawqis even sent gifts, including **Sayyidah Mariyah al-Qibtiyyah**, who would later bear the Prophet's son, *Imam Ibrahim*. This relatively favorable stance from Christian entities is attributed to their faith, at that time, being less corrupted by worldly interests and maintaining a stronger adherence to monotheism and the recognition of prior prophets.

In stark contrast, the Jewish communities, also ***Ahl al-Kitab*** and believers in monotheism, prophethood, and divine books like the Torah, became the most vehement opponents of Prophet Muhammad (s) from the outset. Ironically, unlike the Christians who were not actively awaiting a

new prophet, the Jews were constantly anticipating the arrival of a final messenger, often threatening their polytheistic Arab neighbors with his coming. Yet, when he did arrive, they rejected him. The **Holy Qur'an** itself attests to this, stating that they recognized him as they recognized their own sons, yet denied him.

The primary drivers of Jewish opposition were rooted in their economic and social dominance in Arabia. They controlled the lucrative practices of usury and the trade of intoxicants (wine and liquor) across Madinah and Khaybar. Islam's strict prohibition of both usury and alcohol directly threatened their wealth and influence. Furthermore, their religious scholars had become deeply corrupted, prioritizing worldly gain over truth. They would manipulate religious rulings, for instance, by altering the punishment for adultery (*rajm* or stoning) to avoid offending powerful or wealthy individuals, while applying the full rigor of the law to the poor. This hypocrisy is exemplified by an incident where a prominent Jewish couple was brought before the Prophet (s) for adultery. The Jewish scholars present, recognizing the Torah's severe punishment for such a sin but wishing to avoid it for their elites, fabricated a lenient penalty. The Prophet (s) exposed their deceit, compelling them to admit that the Torah indeed prescribed stoning, but they had concealed it due to their own self-interest. This systemic corruption and fear of losing their established power structure made them see the new religion as an existential threat.

Even before the formal declaration of prophethood, Prophet Muhammad's (s) life was a living testament to divine purity and preparation. From his earliest days, as previously highlighted, he remained untouched by the moral decay of *Jahiliyyah* due to his innate ***ismah*** (infallibility and divine preservation). History reveals that even before the advent of the **Holy Qur'an**, he lived in accordance with principles that would later form the core of Islam, abstaining from all that would become forbidden (*haram*)

and adhering to that which would become obligatory (*wajib*).

Around the age of 35, a profound shift began in his spiritual practices. He started to frequent *Ghar Hira* (the Cave of Hira), located on Jabal al-Noor (also called Sarand), a mountain roughly three miles from Makkah. This period, extending for five years until his prophethood, is known as ***Tahannuth***—a time of intense contemplation, spiritual seclusion, and devotion. During these solitary retreats, the Prophet (s) began to experience early forms of divine communication. He received inspirations (***ilham***), heard angelic voices, and saw true dreams (***ru'ya sadiqah***), which were themselves a part of revelation. The natural world around him also responded to his spiritual elevation; stones, trees, and animals would greet him with *salam*, and as he neared the age of forty, these greetings intensified, with creation addressing him as "Ya Rasul Allah" (O Messenger of Allah). The frequent appearance of the angel ***Jibreel*** (Gabriel) in his dreams further affirmed the imminence of his divine mission.

The blessed moment arrived on the 27th of Rajab, a Friday, when Prophet Muhammad (s) was precisely 40 years, 4 months, and 10 days old. He had been in deep spiritual contemplation within *Ghar Hira* for approximately seven or eight days. On this auspicious day, which some traditions also indicate coincided with the ancient Persian festival of Nawruz, the heavens opened. Multitudes of angels descended, eager to witness the epochal event. ***Jibreel***, accompanied by 70,000 angels, and ***Mika'il*** with another 70,000, entered the sacred cave. With utmost humility, ***Jibreel*** sat before the Prophet (s) and presented a green silken cloth woven from the finest *yaqut* (ruby), upon which was inscribed the word "Read."

Upon the Prophet's (s) inquiry, "***Ma ana bi qari'in***" (What shall I read? / I am not a reader), ***Jibreel*** recited the first five verses of **Surah Al-Alaq**: ***Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem. Iqra bismi Rabbika allathee khalaq. Khalaqal insana min alaq. Iqra wa Rabbukal akram. Allathee allama bil***

qalam. Allamal insana ma lam ya'lam.

"***In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Read in the name of your Lord who created. Created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous. Who taught by the pen. Taught man that which he knew not.***"

After the recitation, ***Jibreel*** presented a divine banner—the banner of ***Hamd*** (Praise) or Islam—to the Prophet (s), symbolizing his new role as the leader and guide of humanity. The Prophet (s) repeated the sacred verses. As he emerged from *Ghar Hira*, a universal chorus of ***salam*** emanated from all creation, addressing him as "Ya Rasul Allah."

This profound event was witnessed by ***Imam Ali*** (a), who, even in his youth, often accompanied the Prophet (s) to *Ghar Hira*. ***Imam Ali*** (a) testified to hearing the first revelation, hearing the voice of ***Jibreel***, and observing the despairing cry of ***Shaytan*** (Satan) as his era of dominance concluded. ***Imam Ali*** (a) eloquently affirmed that he heard and saw all that the Prophet (s) did, confirming his unique proximity to the divine, with the sole distinction being that he was not a prophet, but rather the Prophet's minister and supporter.

The Prophet (s) hurried back to the home of **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a). Upon his arrival, he instructed her to recite the ***Kalima*** (declaration of faith). **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a), whose faith in the Prophet (s) was already unwavering, immediately pronounced the ***Kalima***, formally affirming her acceptance of his prophethood and the new divine message. This moment marked not only the formal announcement of prophethood to humanity but also the establishment of the first Islamic household, founded on absolute devotion and unwavering belief in **Allah** and His Messenger. The era of ignorance had begun to yield to the radiant dawn of divine guidance.

Chapter 24

The Unveiling of Truth: Forms of Revelation and the Dawn of Secret *Da'wah*

Following the momentous first revelation in *Ghar Hira* on the 27th of Rajab, which formally marked the dawn of Prophet Muhammad's (s) prophethood, the divine connection deepened and diversified. While the initial encounter established his prophetic mission, the subsequent period brought forth a fuller understanding of how ***Wahy*** (revelation) would manifest, shaping the very foundation of Islam's early *da'wah* (call).

It is essential to comprehend the various modes through which Allah communicated with His chosen Prophet. The traditional understanding identifies five distinct ways in which ***Wahy*** was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (s): 1. ***Ilham***: This was the most subtle form, where a divine thought or instruction was instilled directly into the Prophet's (s) heart. This form of inspiration required no angelic intermediary and was a continuous presence, even before his formal prophethood at the age of forty. It served as a constant source of divine guidance, illuminating his understanding and actions. 2. **Dreams**: Revelation could also come through truthful dreams (*Ru'ya Sadiqah*). These were not ordinary

dreams but divinely inspired visions that conveyed specific commands or insights. A famous example cited is **Prophet Ibrahim's** (a) command to sacrifice his son through a dream. For Prophet Muhammad (s), such dreams were a prelude to significant events, such as the dream preceding the ***Fath Makkah*** (Conquest of Makkah), which guided him to undertake the journey. 3. **Appearance of Angels in Their True Form**: This was a rare and profound experience, primarily associated with the initial revelation in *Ghar Hira* where ***Jibreel*** (a) appeared in his majestic, true angelic form. Such encounters were intensely impactful and directly conveyed divine messages. Narrations confirm that during such direct angelic encounters, the Prophet (s) did not experience the physical duress sometimes associated with revelation. 4. **Appearance of Angels in Human Form**: More commonly, ***Jibreel*** (a) would appear to the Prophet (s) in human guise, often resembling a handsome companion named *Dihya al-Kalbi*. During these interactions, others present could sometimes see and interact with the human form, unaware that it was ***Jibreel*** (a). *Imam Muhammad al-Baqir* (a) narrated how *Imam Ali* (a) once encountered *Jibreel* (a) in this form, mistaking him for *Dihya*, and subsequently received the title "Amir al-Mu'minin" (Commander of the Believers) directly from *Jibreel* (a). 5. **Direct Divine Communication**: This was the most profound and rarest form of ***Wahy***, involving direct conversation between Allah and His Prophet, without any intermediary. It was during these instances that the Prophet (s) experienced the most intense physical sensations, such as profuse sweating and trembling, indicating the immense weight of the divine presence and communication. This phenomenon is often misinterpreted as the Prophet (s) reacting to *Jibreel's* presence, but it specifically occurred during direct divine speech, as attested by *Imam Jafar al-Sadiq* (a), who clarified that the Prophet (s) was never in distress when *Jibreel* (a) brought revelation. Such direct communication, exemplified by the ***Mi'raj*** (ascension) and the revelation of certain Qur'anic verses (like those in ***Surah Al-Ma'idah***), highlighted the unique close-

ness between the Almighty and His beloved Messenger.

This distinction in the modes of revelation also clarifies the three forms of divine communication that constitute the corpus of Islamic teachings: * **The Holy Qur'an**: This comprises Allah's exact words, conveyed through ***Jibreel*** (a), whose words are divine and infallible. * ***Hadith Qudsi***: These are sayings where the meaning originates from Allah, but the wording is from ***Jibreel*** (a). * ***Hadith Rasool***: These are sayings where both the meaning is from Allah and the wording is from the Prophet Muhammad (s) himself, under divine guidance and inspiration. The Prophet (s) never uttered a word concerning faith without divine permission.

Following the initial five verses of ***Surah Al-Alaq***, the Prophet (s) returned to **Sayyidah Khadijah's** (a) home. Shortly thereafter, the second revelation descended: the opening seven verses of ***Surah Al-Muddaththir*** (The Enrobed One). This revelation marked a pivotal moment, shifting from the command to "Read" to the directive to "Arise and warn!" It not only inaugurated the public phase of *da'wah* but also provided the foundational principles for its execution: "***O you who are enrobed! Arise and warn! And glorify your Lord! And purify your garments! And keep away from uncleanness! And do not bestow a favor to seek a greater return! And for the sake of your Lord, be patient!***" (***Surah Al-Muddaththir***, 74:1-7) These verses instructed the Prophet (s) to proclaim Allah's greatness, maintain purity of self and attire (both physical and spiritual), avoid seeking personal gain for his efforts, and, crucially, to exercise immense patience in the face of adversity. This patience would be vital as the path of prophethood was fraught with challenges.

Almost immediately after ***Surah Al-Muddaththir***, the third significant revelation, the initial verses of ***Surah Al-Qalam*** (The Pen), descended. It begins with "***Nun. By the pen and what they inscribe, You are not, by the grace of your Lord, a madman.***" (***Surah Al-Qalam***, 68:1-2). This verse

directly refuted the accusations of madness leveled against the Prophet (s), unequivocally affirming his sanity and divine connection.

With these divine directives, the Prophet (s) embarked on his sacred mission. The very first individual to embrace Islam was **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a), who had already affirmed her belief even before the second revelation, demonstrating unwavering faith and trust in her husband's prophetic call. Her recitation of the ***Kalima*** (declaration of faith) included the acknowledgement of *Imam Ali's Wilayah* alongside the affirmation of Muhammad (s) as the Messenger of Allah.

After **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a), the next to accept Islam was *Imam Ali* (a). His acceptance was not a formal conversion or an invitation, but rather a seamless continuation of his life alongside the Prophet (s) under divine guardianship. He had been a part of the Prophet's (s) household since his miraculous birth in the **Ka'bah** and his upbringing under the Prophet's (s) direct care. His deep understanding and innate connection to the divine truth meant that his Islam was manifest from the very moment of the Prophet's (s) declaration of prophethood. There are no authentic narrations in our tradition suggesting he hesitated or required an invitation to embrace Islam.

The next convert was **Zayd ibn Harithah**, the liberated slave and adopted son of the Prophet (s), who had resided in their household for years. Like **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) and *Imam Ali* (a), his close relationship with the Prophet (s) ensured his immediate acceptance of the new faith. Accounts regarding **Abu Bakr's** conversion vary, with some suggesting he accepted Islam after returning from a trade journey in Yemen, having heard of a prophet's advent, while others narrate his acceptance through a conversation with *Husayn ibn Hizam*, **Sayyidah Khadijah's** (a) nephew. Later, **Ja'far al-Tayyar**, *Imam Ali's* (a) brother, also embraced Islam.

The early revelations were also affirmed by learned individuals who rec-

ognized the signs of prophethood. **Waraqah ibn Nawfal**, **Sayyidah Khadijah's** (a) cousin and a Christian scholar, immediately recognized the divine nature of the revelation when **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) recounted the Prophet's (s) experience. He confirmed that the angel who visited Muhammad (s) was the same ***Jibreel*** (a) who had appeared to **Prophet Musa** (a) and **Prophet Isa** (a). Similarly, a Christian monk in Makkah, upon hearing **Sayyidah Khadijah's** (a) account, confirmed the divine nature of the visitation and even identified the *Seal of Prophethood* on the Prophet's (s) shoulder.

For approximately the first three years, the Prophet (s) was commanded to conduct his *da'wah* secretly. This was a strategic phase of internal consolidation before engaging with the broader, hostile society of Makkah. During this period, there were no public declarations or proclamations from mountains; instead, the message was delivered discreetly to those deemed receptive to the truth. The Prophet (s) would approach individuals he believed would accept Islam, and those who converted were then tasked with subtly spreading the message among their trusted friends and relatives.

Initially, there was no single fixed meeting place. Early Muslims would gather in small groups of five, ten, or fifteen, scattered across Makkah, to pray and learn the new teachings. The command for daily prayers came early, along with the directives of the ***Kalima*** and ***Surah Al-Qalam***. This discreet practice of prayer eventually led to discovery. One incident occurred in *Ghar al-Subhan* (cave of Subhan), where a group of Muslims from the Banu Taym tribe was praying. A passerby from their tribe observed their unusual movements—standing, bowing, prostrating—and ridiculed them. This led to a heated exchange and a minor altercation, prompting the Prophet (s) to realize the need for a central, private location for the growing community.

Consequently, after about two and a half years of this secret *da'wah*, a dedicated center was established: **Dar al-Arqam** (The House of Arqam). This house belonged to Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam, one of the early converts, and was strategically located near Mount ***Safa***, close to the **Ka'bah** but sufficiently hidden. For the next six months, **Dar al-Arqam** served as the clandestine hub of the nascent Muslim community, a sanctuary for prayer, learning, and gathering. It was here that new converts were brought to declare their faith and receive instruction from the Prophet (s). This house remained the primary center for Muslims until the *Hijrah* (migration) to Medina.

By the end of this three-year period of secret *da'wah*, the efforts had yielded significant results. A core group of approximately 134 individuals had embraced Islam. This number included nine slaves and maidservants, two individuals from outside Quraysh, and the remaining 122 were from the Quraysh tribe itself, many of whom were prominent and influential figures. This solidified internal strength laid the groundwork for the next phase of *da'wah*, which would soon involve a more open proclamation of the divine message.

Chapter 25

The Spectrum of Revelation and the Prophet's Exclusive Attributes

The sacred journey of **Prophet Muhammad** (s) continued, encompassing profound spiritual experiences that shaped his divine mission. Following the initial revelatory encounters in *Ghar Hira*, the modes of divine communication, known as ***Wahy***, were varied and profound. As previously discussed, these included inspiration (***Ilham***), prophetic dreams, and the appearance of ***Jibreel*** (a) in both human and celestial forms. However, the most profound and challenging form of ***Wahy*** involved direct communication from Allah, without the intermediation of ***Jibreel*** (a) – a unique spiritual fortitude granted solely to the Messenger (s).

A crucial theological point often debated among early Muslims and later generations concerns the nature of the Prophet's words beyond the Holy Qur'an. Some held the view that only the Qur'an constituted divine revelation, while the Prophet's other pronouncements were merely his personal opinions or interpretations. However, this perspective fundamentally misunderstands the Prophet's divinely guided nature. The Prophet (s) did not speak from his own inclination; his every word was a manifes-

tation of divine inspiration, as affirmed by the Holy Qur'an itself: **"Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed."** (***Surah An-Najm, 53:3-4***)

This indicates that all of the Prophet's words were, in essence, rooted in ***Wahy***. This divine discourse manifested in three distinct forms: 1. **The Holy Qur'an:** This is the direct Word of Allah, revealed in both meaning and precise Arabic wording, carrying a miraculous challenge (***I'jaz***) to humanity to produce anything similar. 2. ***Hadith Qudsi*:** These are sayings where the meaning originates from Allah, but the Prophet (s) conveys them in his own words. Unlike the Qur'an, they do not carry the same miraculous challenge or specific structure. 3. ***Hadith Rasool*** (**Prophetic Traditions**)**:** These are the Prophet's own words, actions, and approvals, all rooted in divine guidance. The meaning and expression are attributed to the Prophet (s), but they are ultimately inspired by Allah.

The distinction between the Qur'an and ***Hadith Qudsi***, both being the words of Allah, lies primarily in the Qur'an's unique status as a divine challenge and its specific preserved linguistic form.

The Holy Qur'an itself provides clear evidence that divine revelation extended beyond its own verses. For instance, ***Surah Al-Qiyamah*** states: **"Indeed, upon Us is its collection and its recitation. So when We have recited it, then follow its recitation. Then indeed upon Us is its explanation."** (***75:17-19***) This verse implies that while the Qur'an was revealed, its *explanation* and interpretation were also part of Allah's divine responsibility, conveyed through the Prophet's teachings and actions.

Further proofs from the Qur'an highlight this broader scope of ***Wahy***: * **The Change of *Qibla*:** The Qur'an refers to the *reason* for changing the direction of prayer from Jerusalem to the ***Ka'bah*** (***2:142-143***). However, the explicit *command* to change the *Qibla* during prayer, which the Prophet (s) followed immediately, is not found as a direct verse within

the Qur'an. This pivotal command came through another form of ***Wahy***.
* **The Marriage of Zayd ibn Harithah's Divorced Wife:** ***Surah Al-Ahzab*** (***33:37***) discusses the Prophet's marriage to Zaynab, the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zayd. While the Qur'an validates this marriage and clarifies its divine purpose (to dismantle the pre-Islamic custom of treating adopted sons as biological ones), it states: **"...when Zayd had fulfilled his desire from her, We married her to you..."** This signifies that the marriage was a divine decree and arrangement, not a direct command given to the Prophet (s) in a specific Qur'anic verse, implying a revelation beyond the Qur'anic text. * **Revelation of Secrets:** In ***Surah At-Tahrim*** (***66:3***), when the Prophet (s) revealed a secret shared by two of his wives, and they asked who informed him, he replied, **"The All-Knowing, the All-Aware told me."** This is a clear instance of divine ***Wahy*** conveying information about private matters, not in the form of a Qur'anic verse, but as a direct communication from Allah.

These examples underscore that the Prophet (s) was in constant communion with the Divine, receiving guidance and commands in various forms, all of which constitute ***Wahy*** and are binding upon Muslims.

Beyond the modes of ***Wahy***, the Prophet (s) was uniquely endowed with specific divine privileges and responsibilities, known as *Khasais* (singular: *Khasisah*). These attributes distinguish him from all other human beings, including other prophets, and are essential for a comprehensive understanding of his *Seerah* and the rationale behind certain events in his life. These *Khasais* can be categorized into several areas:

I. Unique Obligations and Prohibitions: * ***Salat al-Layl*** (Night Prayer) and ***Witr***: While *mustahab* (recommended) for other Muslims, these prayers were ***wajib*** (obligatory) for the Prophet (s), which he never abandoned. * ***Qurbani*** (Sacrifice): The ritual sacrifice was obligatory for the Prophet (s), whereas for the rest of the ***Ummah***, it is recommended for those who

can afford it. * **Paying Debts of the Deceased:** It was obligatory for the Prophet (s) to pay the debts of a deceased believer who left no heirs or assets to cover their dues. This also entailed the Prophet's right to inherit the property of such individuals if there were no other legal heirs. * **Prohibition of *Taqiyyah* (Dissimulation):** Unlike other Muslims, particularly the *Imams*, who may practice *taqiyyah* in times of severe danger to preserve their lives or the faith, the Prophet (s) was never permitted to conceal the truth or remain silent in the face of evil. His role was to convey the divine message fully and openly, making his every action and pronouncement a *hujjah* (proof) for humanity. * **Prohibition of Receiving *Zakat*:** The Prophet (s) and his progeny (***Ahlulbayt***) were forbidden from receiving ***Zakat*** or ordinary *sadaqah* (charity).

II. Marriage-Related Privileges and Regulations: * **Option for Wives to Separate:** The Prophet (s) was uniquely permitted to offer his wives the choice to remain with him or to separate, even without formal divorce, as mentioned in ***Surah Al-Ahzab*** (***33:28***). This differs from the general ruling for other Muslims, who must either fulfill their wives' rights or divorce them. * **More than Four Wives:** The Prophet (s) was permitted to have more than four permanent wives simultaneously, a privilege not granted to any other Muslim. * **Marriage without *Mahr* or *Aqad*:** If a woman offered herself to the Prophet (s) as a gift, he could marry her without a formal *mahr* (dowry) or a formal contract, simply by his acceptance. * **Prohibition of Remarriage for Prophet's Widows/Divorcees:** Any woman who was ever a wife of the Prophet (s), whether during his lifetime or after his passing, and whether the marriage was consummated or not, was forbidden for any other Muslim to marry. This is stated in ***Surah Al-Ahzab*** (***33:53***). * **No Obligation to Distribute Nights Equally Among Wives:** Unlike other Muslim men with multiple wives, the Prophet (s) was not obligated to divide his nights equally among them.

III. Interactional Protocol: * **Not Raising Voice Above Prophet's:** It was strictly forbidden to raise one's voice above the Prophet's (s) voice, out of reverence and respect, as mentioned in ***Surah Al-Hujurat*** (***49:2***). * **Not Calling Prophet by Name:** Muslims were commanded not to address the Prophet (s) by his personal name "Muhammad" but by titles like "Ya Rasul Allah" or "Ya Nabi Allah." Even Allah addresses him by his titles in the Qur'an. * **Not Calling Prophet from Behind a Wall:** It was impermissible to call the Prophet (s) from behind a wall, curtain, or outside his dwelling. One was required to seek his permission or wait to address him directly.

IV. Lineage Distinction: * **Daughter's Descendants as Prophet's Own:** The children of the Prophet's daughter, **Sayyidah Fatimah** (a), are considered his direct progeny and lineage, extending his sacred lineage through her.

V. Leadership and Prerogatives: * **Right to Select Best Spoils:** The Prophet (s) had the right to select the best portions from the spoils of war (***Anfal***) for himself or for the community's welfare before distribution. * **Entering Makkah with Weapons in *Ihram*:** During the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (s) was permitted to enter the sacred city armed while in the state of *Ihram*, a privilege not extended to others. * **Grazing Animals on Others' Land:** The Prophet (s) had the right to graze his or the community's animals on others' lands without explicit permission. * **Taking Food from the Needy:** The Prophet (s) had the unique authority to take food from a person in need, and that individual was obliged to provide it to him, even if they were themselves in dire straits.

VI. Asceticism and Worship: * **Continuous Fasting (*Sawm al-Wisal*):** The Prophet (s) was permitted to fast for multiple days without breaking his fast at night, a practice known as *Sawm al-Wisal*, which is forbidden for other Muslims. * **Completing Optional Acts:** If the Prophet (s) began an

optional act of worship (e.g., *Salat al-Layl*), he was obligated to complete it. Unlike ordinary Muslims who may discontinue optional prayers, the Prophet's actions set a precedent.

VII. Disputed *Khasais* (points of scholarly difference): * **Obligation to Consult:** Some scholars argue that it was obligatory for the Prophet (s) to consult his companions before making decisions, while others consider it optional. * **Prohibition of Smelly Food:** Some believe it was forbidden for the Prophet (s) to consume foods with strong, unpleasant odors like garlic or onions, out of respect for others and angels, while others consider it permissible. * **Prohibition of Leaning While Eating:** Some scholars assert that the Prophet (s) was forbidden from eating while leaning or reclining. * **Prohibition of Writing/Poetry:** A significant number of scholars maintain that the Prophet (s) was forbidden from physically writing or composing poetry. He could dictate or use a seal, but not write with his own hand. Similarly, it was considered against his dignity to make gestures indicating harm to someone. * **Funeral Prayer for Debtors:** Some scholars hold that the Prophet (s) was not permitted to lead the funeral prayer for an individual who died with unpaid debts, if they had the means to pay but refused. This highlights the grave importance of debt in Islam. * **Lending with Expectation of Return:** It was not permissible for the Prophet (s) to lend money with the *intention* of receiving more back, even if not explicitly conditioned as interest (***riba***). * **Obligation on a Woman to Marry Prophet:** Some traditions suggest that if the Prophet (s) expressed a desire to marry an unmarried woman, it became obligatory for her to accept. If she was married, her husband was obligated to divorce her. This was a theoretical right, though not actively exercised. * **Divorcing a Wife if She Disliked Him:** If a wife expressed dislike for the Prophet (s), he was divinely commanded to separate from her.

These *Khasais* are crucial for comprehending the nuances of the Prophet's life, particularly the events that unfolded in Medina. Without this un-

derstanding, many historical occurrences would appear contradictory or difficult to reconcile with his exalted status.

Returning to the unfolding narrative of the Prophet's mission, the initial phase of ***da'wah*** (preaching) remained covert for approximately three years after the first revelation. During this period, the Prophet (s) discreetly invited individuals to Islam, focusing on those who demonstrated openness to the divine message. ***Dar al-Arqam***, a house near Mount Safa and the ***Ka'bah***, served as the secret hub for clandestine worship and instruction for the early believers, a detail previously noted.

During these three years of secret proselytization, the Makkan pagans and their leaders offered no significant overt opposition. They did not fully grasp the profound and revolutionary nature of the Prophet's message. They likely viewed the burgeoning group of Muslims as another social or religious faction, similar to the *Hunafa* or participants in alliances like ***Hilf al-Fudul***, who deviated from established norms but posed no direct threat to their power structures. They observed their children and friends gravitating towards this new movement but underestimated its transformative potential.

A pivotal figure in this early phase was **Abu Talib**, the Prophet's uncle and guardian. His unwavering protection of the Prophet (s) was paramount. However, Abu Talib did not publicly declare his acceptance of Islam by reciting the ***Kalima***. This was not due to a lack of faith, but rather a divinely ordained strategic command. For the Prophet (s) to be fully protected during the hostile Makkan period, it was essential for Abu Talib to remain on the religion of **Prophet Ibrahim** (a), maintaining his social standing and influence among the Quraysh. His apparent neutrality allowed him to shield the Prophet (s) from direct harm, ensuring that the Makkans did not perceive his protection as an act of apostasy from their ancestral religion, which would have escalated hostilities and en-

dangered the Prophet's life.

This divine strategy ensured that despite the Makkans' escalating persecution of other believers, the Prophet (s) himself remained largely untouched by direct physical attacks during the Makkan period, save for minor incidents. In fact, throughout the entire Makkan period, there was no need for the Prophet (s) to have personal guards. This contrasts sharply with the Medina period, where, despite wielding political authority, the Prophet (s) often had companions standing guard, as seen outside his mosque, a place famously known as "Suffat al-Haris" (the station of the guard). This stark difference underscores the protective shield provided by **Abu Talib's** divinely orchestrated role in Makkah.

The early believers faced immense hardships and persecution, but the Prophet (s) himself was shielded, allowing the nascent Muslim community to grow. It was only after these three years, when the Prophet (s) was commanded to begin public ***da'wah***, that the true nature of his message became evident, and the Makkans began their aggressive and open opposition.

Chapter 26

The Public Proclamation and Early Hostility

The initial phase of the *da'wah*, shrouded in secrecy and confined to a select few, concluded after three years. During this period, the nascent Muslim community had grown to approximately 134 individuals—a blend of determined men and steadfast women—who had quietly embraced the message of Islam. While the general populace of Makkah remained unaware of the full scope of this burgeoning faith, a palpable shift in the air became undeniable. The Makkans, accustomed to the familiar rhythms of their polytheistic society, began to sense an undercurrent of change. Despite the Muslims' efforts to blend seamlessly with the *Kuffar*, subtle transformations in their relationships, their detachment from old alliances, and their occasional disappearances for prayer or instruction, slowly raised questions within the community. It became evident to many that a new influence was at work, a personality who was reshaping the lives of the youth and challenging established norms.

This subtle awareness, particularly among those who had known the Prophet (s) from his youth as **al-Amin** (**The Trustworthy**) and **as-Sadiq** (**The**

Truthful), hinted at the source of this change. These were individuals who remembered the divine signs preceding his birth, the attacks on his parents, and the extraordinary purity of his early life. They had witnessed his remarkable character on trade journeys and in Makkah itself. Now, at the age of 43, the Prophet's (s) unique stature was becoming increasingly visible, even to those who had previously dismissed the subtle shifts.

It was at this juncture that the divine command arrived, transitioning the *da'wah* from a covert movement to an open declaration. The verses descended upon the Prophet (s), revealing the next phase of his mission. ***Surah Al-Hijr***, verses 94 and 95, explicitly commanded: **"So proclaim openly what you are commanded and turn away from the polytheists. Indeed, We are sufficient for you against the mockers."** This was a direct order to abandon secrecy and make the message of Islam public. Concurrently, ***Surah Ash-Shu'ara***, verse 214, provided guidance on where to begin this momentous proclamation: **"And warn your closest kindred."**

In compliance with these revelations, the Prophet (s) initiated the ***Da'wat Dhul Asheerah*** (Feast of the Kin). He instructed *Imam Ali* (a) to prepare a modest meal for the entire **Bani Hashim** clan—a single goat, three *sa'* (approximately three kilograms) of bread, and a bowl of milk. On the appointed day, the clan gathered. Upon seeing the humble fare, **Abu Lahab**, the Prophet's (s) uncle and a staunch opponent, immediately scoffed, remarking sarcastically that such a meager meal could not possibly suffice for so many. Yet, a miracle unfolded before their eyes: every single person present ate to their fill, and remarkably, there was still food remaining, enough for the Prophet (s) himself to partake.

After the meal, the Prophet (s) rose to deliver his momentous address. He declared, "O children of Abd al-Muttalib, I have brought you something by which you will possess the Arabs, and the non-Arabs will be subjugated by you, and you will inherit paradise." He then posed a profound

question: "Who among you will be my minister (*wazir*), my successor (*wasi*), and my caliph (*khalifah*)?" Silence fell upon the gathering. Then, *Imam Ali* (a), a youth of approximately thirteen or fourteen years, stood up. The Prophet (s) asked him to sit down, and repeated the question. Again, only *Imam Ali* (a) rose. A third time the Prophet (s) asked, and for the third time, *Imam Ali* (a) stood. The Prophet (s) then accepted Ali (a)'s pledge, embracing him and placing his blessed saliva into Ali's (a) mouth—a symbolic transfer of knowledge and wisdom. This scene confirmed *Imam Ali* (a)'s pre-eminent status as the Prophet's (s) designated successor from the very outset of the public *da'wah*. **Abu Lahab**, observing this, turned to **Abu Talib** (a) with a derisive comment, "Lo! He has ordered you to follow your son!" The clan then dispersed, leaving the Prophet (s) to continue his mission.

Following this initial family gathering, the Prophet (s) proceeded with the broader public proclamation. He ascended **Mount Safa**, a small hill near the **Ka'bah**, which held historical significance as the starting point for **Sayyidah Hajar**'s (a) search for water and **Prophet Adam**'s (a) descent to Earth. From its summit, he cried out, "**Ya Sabahah!**" This was a traditional Arabian cry of alarm, signifying a grave danger or calamity, such as an invading army or fire, that demanded immediate attention from all Makkans. Hearing the urgent call, people rushed from every quarter, opening the doors of their tribal quarters and sending representatives if they could not come themselves, until the entire populace of Makkah, or at least a representative from each tribe, had gathered before him.

Once the crowd had assembled, the Prophet (s) began his address by asking them, "O people of Quraysh! If I were to tell you that behind this mountain, an army is gathering to attack you, would you believe me?" Unanimously, they affirmed, "Indeed! We have never known you to speak anything but the truth. We have always found you to be *Sadiq* and *Amin*."

With their trustworthiness affirmed, the Prophet (s) then declared, "Then know that I am a warner to you before a severe punishment! Proclaim ***La ilaha illa Allah*** (**There is no god but Allah**), and you will be saved. If you refuse, no one can protect you from the fire of Hell!" He then promised them worldly dominion, saying that if they accepted his message, they would become masters of all Arabs, and even the non-Arabs would be subjugated to them, besides the promise of paradise in the Hereafter.

The immediate reaction was intense hostility. **Abu Lahab**, once again, was the first to openly reject the message, exclaiming, "**Tabban laka!** (Perish you!) Is it for this that you have gathered us?" His outburst marked the beginning of open and fierce opposition. In response to Abu Lahab's condemnation, divine revelation descended in the form of ***Surah Al-Masad*** (also known as ***Surah Lahab***), condemning him and his wife. The atmosphere in Makkah shifted from general curiosity to widespread discussion, debate, and increasing animosity towards the new faith and its Prophet (s).

With the *da'wah* now openly declared, the Prophet (s) began performing his prayers publicly in **Masjid al-Haram**, specifically in the **Ka'bah** itself. This open act of worship, a direct challenge to the idol-worshipping traditions of Makkah, further enraged the Quraysh. Their leaders, particularly **Abu Jahl**, a man known for his excessive pride and self-aggrandizement, found this new conduct intolerable. Abu Jahl would typically forbid others from wearing similar clothes, riding similar mounts, or even worshipping before him. Seeing the Prophet (s) prostrating openly in the **Ka'bah**, oblivious to his presence, filled him with fury.

One day, Abu Jahl confronted the Prophet (s) during his prayer, threatening him if he continued. The Prophet (s) responded sternly, warning Abu Jahl of grave consequences. Undeterred, Abu Jahl later attempted to carry out his threat. As the Prophet (s) prostrated in prayer near the **Ka'bah**,

Abu Jahl approached with a large stone, intending to strike the Prophet (s) on the head and crush his neck. However, as he drew near, he froze in his tracks, horrified. He returned to his companions, trembling, reporting that he had seen a great ditch of fire and terrifying, large-headed birds with fearsome claws between himself and Muhammad (s), preventing him from reaching the Prophet (s). The Qur'an itself alludes to this event in ***Surah Al-Alaq***, stating: **"Have you seen the one who forbids a servant when he prays? ...No! If he does not desist, We will surely drag him by the forelock..."** This incident clearly demonstrated divine protection over the Prophet (s).

Another formidable adversary who emerged during this period was **Walid ibn al-Mughirah**, a man of immense wealth, influence, and overbearing arrogance. The Qur'an condemned him severely in ***Surah Al-Qalam*** (68:10-16), exposing his character as one who swears excessively, slanders, walks with mischief, hinders good, transgresses, and is of illegitimate birth—a scandalous truth revealed by the Qur'an, leading Walid to violently confront his mother, who ultimately confirmed it. His pride was such that he refused to humble himself even to save his own life.

The divine promise of protection against the mockers (from ***Surah Al-Hijr***, 95) was manifested through miraculous punishments that befell several prominent enemies who ridiculed and opposed the Prophet (s). *Jibreel* (a) would appear to the Prophet (s), point out a mocker, and the Prophet (s) would simply nod, signifying his consent for divine retribution, without uttering a word.

Among these mockers were: 1. **Walid ibn al-Mughirah**: While walking, he stepped on a small splinter of wood. Due to his arrogance, he refused to bend down and remove it, leading to a severe infection that ultimately caused his excruciating death. 2. **Al-Aas ibn Wa'il**: As he walked, he stepped on a thorn, causing paralysis and eventual death, ex-

claiming, "God has killed me!" 3. **Aswad ibn al-Muttalib**: He became blind and repeatedly struck his head against a wall, leading to his demise. 4. **Aswad ibn Abd-e Yaghuth**: *Jibreel* (a) struck him with a leaf, rendering him blind. He did not die immediately but became helpless. News of his son's death in the Battle of Badr reached him, leading his wife to commit suicide. 5. **Al-Harith ibn Qays (also known as Qalqatla)**: His face miraculously transformed and became disfigured. When he returned home, his family, horrified by his appearance, did not recognize him and beat him to death, unable to comprehend that this disfigured man was their kinsman. 6. **A tyrannical, small man** (who previously robbed a Yemeni merchant and was confronted by the Prophet (s) with divine assistance): His leg swelled and burst open, leading to a humiliating and painful death.

These divine interventions served as clear signs of God's power and support for His Prophet (s), striking fear into the hearts of some opponents while further hardening the resolve of others. The period of open proclamation had begun, marked by both the courage of the Prophet (s) and the immediate, fierce opposition of the Quraysh, setting the stage for future conflicts and trials.

Chapter 27

The Enduring Blueprint: The Universal Nature of the Prophet's *Seerah*

As the blessed mission of Prophet Muhammad (s) moved from a period of hushed, clandestine propagation to open and public proclamation, the profound essence of his life—his ***Seerah***—began to unfold as a complete and perfect blueprint for humanity. It became evident that his existence was not merely a sequence of historical events but a divinely orchestrated, comprehensive guide meant for all ages and all walks of life. The very path he illuminated, the actions he undertook, and the words he uttered were established as the ultimate standard for living a life aligned with divine will.

The Prophet's (s) *Seerah* stands as a clear exposition of the divine mandate for humanity, encompassing every aspect of existence, from the most personal to the most public. It is a universal guide, perfectly tailored to the needs of every individual, transcending the limitations of time and place. Every teaching, every decision, every interaction of the Prophet (s) was imbued with divine wisdom, serving as an unimpeachable source of truth. As previously established, even his words beyond the direct reve-

lation of the Holy Qur'an were divinely inspired, ensuring the complete infallibility of his guidance.

This ***Seerah*** is not merely a historical account; it is an active, living guide that illuminates the difference between what is permissible (***Halal***) and what is forbidden (***Haram***), what is beneficial and what is detrimental. It offers the most excellent way to navigate the complexities of life, providing a shield against misguidance and a clear path toward purification and spiritual elevation. The Prophet (s) arrived as the definitive exemplar, embodying divine laws in their purest form, providing a practical demonstration of faith and righteousness.

His life, from beginning to end, serves as the ultimate benchmark for human conduct. It is a source of profound wisdom, teaching humanity how to live with *taqwa* (God-consciousness), justice, and compassion. The *Seerah* of the Prophet (s) is thus the embodiment of divine mercy and guidance, an enduring light that continues to illuminate the path for all who seek truth and salvation. It is through understanding and emulating this sacred *Seerah* that believers can attain success in this world and the eternal bliss of the hereafter, safeguarded from the whisperings of *Shaytan* and the pitfalls of worldly allurements.

Chapter 28

The Dawn of Persecution and the Unwavering Faith of Early Muslims

The ***Seerah*** of Prophet Muhammad (s) stands as a comprehensive and perfect blueprint for humanity, an eternal guide for navigating life's complexities. This profound truth is encapsulated in the Prophet's (s) famous declaration: **"Whosoever turns away from my *Sunnah* has no relation to me."** While often recited in the context of marriage ceremonies, this divine pronouncement extends far beyond it, encompassing every aspect of life, every act of worship, every form of conduct. It signifies that the Prophet's (s) way, his ***Sunnah***, is the singular path for those who seek divine connection and ultimate success. Deviating from it, in any sphere—from the daily prayers to the methods of propagating Islam—leads inevitably to loss, for only the Prophet's (s) divinely ordained methodology ensures true gain.

After three years of clandestine ***da'wah*** and the conversion of approximately 134 individuals, the divine command arrived, signaling the transition to open proclamation. As previously recounted, the Prophet (s) first delivered his message to the **Bani Hashim** at the ***Da'wat Dhul Asheerah***,

followed by his public address from **Mount Safa**. These courageous acts, though met with fierce opposition, particularly from **Abu Lahab**, ignited a new phase for the nascent Muslim community. The *Quraysh* had for three years sensed an underlying change, a "new thing" stirring in Makkah, evidenced by the subtle shifts in behavior of those who had quietly embraced Islam. They observed individuals abstaining from pagan rituals, refraining from *haram* practices, and refusing to bow before idols, yet without openly declaring their new faith. This period of hidden growth, akin to "latent energy" in physics—where heat is absorbed without a visible rise in temperature—was a strategic preparation. It ensured that when the message finally burst forth, it would not be met by universal opposition, but rather by a segment of society already receptive, their hearts having absorbed the truth in silence.

With the public declaration, the *Quraysh* became fully aware of the source of this "new thing." They recognized the Prophet (s) as the one "misguiding" their youth. However, they faced a formidable obstacle: the unwavering support of **Abu Talib**, the chief of the **Bani Hashim**. **Abu Talib's** subtle, yet potent, protective strategy—maintaining an outward appearance of neutrality while steadfastly shielding the Prophet (s)—created an illusion that kept the *Quraysh* at bay, buying crucial time for Islam to establish its roots. Unable to directly harm the Prophet (s), the *Quraysh* devised a new, two-pronged strategy of persecution.

Their first tactic involved placing the responsibility of punishing converts on their own families and tribes. The tribal ethos of the Arabs dictated that harming a tribesman by an outsider would ignite a fierce clan war. Thus, if a convert had a tribal affiliation, their own kin were expected to inflict punishment to bring them back to the ancestral faith. Secondly, for those converts without tribal protection—the enslaved, the poor, the marginalized—the *Quraysh* reserved the most brutal public torture. This public display served a dual purpose: to break the will of the convert and

to deter any potential new adherents from even considering Islam.

This approach mirrored a pattern observed throughout prophetic history: the initial acceptance of divine messages often comes from the poor and the downtrodden. As the **Qur'an** relates regarding **Prophet Nuh** (a), his antagonists dismissed his followers as "the lowliest amongst us." Similarly, the *Quraysh* questioned why the **Qur'an** had not been revealed to a "great man" from Makkah or Ta'if, implying that wealth and status were prerequisites for divine favor. It was precisely these "lowly" and "destitute" individuals who, lacking societal prestige or tribal power, found profound truth and dignity in Islam, embracing it wholeheartedly.

The history of early Islam stands as a testament to the unyielding faith of these initial converts. Despite the relentless and horrific tortures inflicted upon them, not a single one renounced Islam in Makkah. This unwavering steadfastness is a defining miracle of the ***Seerah***. Among these courageous souls were figures like:

Khalid ibn Sa'eed, the sixth Muslim convert, hailed from the **Banu Umayyah**—a powerful clan fiercely opposed to Islam, whom the **Qur'an** describes as a "cursed tree." *Khalid*, however, was distinct. One night, he experienced a vivid dream: he saw himself being dragged towards a deep, fiery pit, about to fall in. Suddenly, a dignified figure appeared, seizing his arm and pulling him away from the abyss, guiding him to a place of safety and light. He recognized the figure as the Prophet Muhammad (s), the orphan of **Abdullah** from the **Bani Hashim**. Deeply disturbed, *Khalid* sought out the Prophet (s) the next morning, confirming that the Prophet (s) was indeed saving him from eternal damnation. Upon hearing the call to ***La ilaha illa Allah***, *Khalid* immediately embraced Islam. When his father discovered his conversion, he flew into a rage, beating *Khalid* so severely with a stick that it broke in two. *Khalid* defiantly proclaimed his refusal to abandon Islam, repeating the ***Kalima***. His father

then imprisoned him for three days, denying him food and water, hoping to break his spirit. Yet, *Khalid* endured, sustaining himself only on the sustenance of faith. He eventually managed to escape, finding refuge in the hills surrounding Makkah, and later migrated to Abyssinia, enduring extreme hardship for his faith. His story powerfully illustrates the transformative power of divine guidance and the resilience of true belief.

Khabbab ibn Aratt, the seventh Muslim convert, was a skilled blacksmith from Iraq, bought as a slave by a Makkan woman named *Umm Ammara*. His former owner, upon discovering his conversion, subjected him to unimaginable cruelty. She would heat iron plates to a searing temperature and place them on *Khabbab's* head, forcing him to stand motionless as the burning metal scorched his scalp. The Prophet (s), witnessing *Khabbab's* agony, raised his hands in fervent prayer: **"O Allah! Grant victory to Khabbab!"** Miraculously, *Umm Ammara* soon contracted a severe illness that caused her constant, unbearable head pain. The Makkan physicians prescribed the very torture she had inflicted: heating iron plates and placing them on her head. Thus, the very ***fitnah*** (trial) that afflicted *Khabbab* became the means of divine retribution upon his tormentor. For a long period, *Khabbab* himself, the victim, was forced to heat the iron and place it on his mistress's head, until she finally succumbed to her illness. After her death, *Khabbab*, now without a protector, became a target for the entire *Quraysh*. He was dragged into the open desert, forced to lie on burning coals until the fire was extinguished by the melting fat and flesh from his back, leaving permanent white scars. This torture was repeated daily, yet *Khabbab* remained unwavering, his resolve burning brighter than the coals. Even in later life, when *Abu Bakr* and *Umar* ruled, Muslims would often express a desire to kiss his scarred back, a testament to his immense sacrifice.

The Prophet (s) did not merely convert people; he established a structured system of education and training for new Muslims. This is exem-

plified in the incident involving *Umar's* conversion, where **Khabbab ibn Aratt** was found teaching the **Qur'an** to *Umar's* sister, *Fatimah*, and her husband. This highlights the Prophet's (s) foresight in ensuring that new converts were not left unguided but were educated in the tenets of Islam by older, more experienced believers.

Among other early converts was **Zimad ibn Tha'laba**, a skilled physician of Makkah. Upon seeing children taunting the Prophet (s) with the epithet "madman"—a label propagated by the *Quraysh*—*Zimad* approached, offering his medical services, believing the Prophet (s) to be afflicted. The Prophet (s) responded by reciting verses of the **Qur'an**. Having no prior exposure to the message, *Zimad*, a man of reason and healing, immediately recognized the divine truth in the words and embraced Islam.

Similarly, **Tufayl ibn Amr al-Dawsi**, a prominent poet and leader from the powerful Daws tribe of Yemen, arrived in Makkah. The *Quraysh*, fearing his influence, immediately warned him against approaching the Prophet (s), claiming he was a dangerous sorcerer whose words could bewitch anyone. They even urged him to block his ears with cotton to avoid hearing the Prophet's (s) words. *Tufayl*, a poet himself, found this absurd, reasoning that he, too, was a master of words and could discern truth from falsehood. He decided to listen to the Prophet (s). Upon hearing the Prophet (s) recite the **Qur'an**, the profound beauty and truth of the verses overwhelmed him, and he instantly converted to Islam.

Despite the relentless persecution and propaganda from the *Quraysh*, the message of Islam continued to spread, gaining adherents among those who were receptive to its truth, often through direct encounters with the Prophet (s) and the powerful impact of the **Qur'an**. This continuous growth forced the *Quraysh* to contemplate new, more severe tactics to suppress the burgeoning Islamic movement.

Chapter 29

The Intensifying Ordeal: Steadfastness Amidst Unrelenting Persecution

The journey of **Prophet Muhammad** (s) from the clandestine propagation of Islam to its public proclamation marked a profound shift, unveiling the stark realities of his divine mission. As the message of truth began to resonate openly in Makkah, the nascent Muslim community and the Prophet (s) himself were plunged into an era of unprecedented trials. Every step taken to convey the message of *Haqq* (truth) was met with escalating hostility, and every individual who embraced Islam faced a crucible of unwavering faith.

Following the public declaration from Mount Safa, the *Quraysh* swiftly coalesced their efforts against the Prophet (s) and his followers. While they were hesitant to directly harm the Prophet (s) due to the protective shield of **Abu Talib** and the ***Banu Hashim***, they unleashed their fury upon the vulnerable. Their strategy involved coercing families to punish their converting kin and, more brutally, torturing slaves and the impoverished believers in public, aiming to deter others and extinguish the burgeoning faith.

The early Muslims, primarily from marginalized segments of society, exhibited extraordinary resilience. Their commitment to ***La ilaha illa Allah*** was unshakeable, even in the face of excruciating torment. An early and poignant example of this unwavering faith came from **Abdullah ibn Mas'ud**, a devout companion. Despite the Prophet's (s) earlier command for discretion during the initial years, the fervent desire to share the Qur'an overwhelmed him. He courageously stood before the **Ka'bah**, openly reciting ***Surah Ar-Rahman***, a captivating chapter of the Holy Qur'an, in the presence of the *Quraysh*. This bold act incurred their wrath, leading to a brutal beating that left his face severely swollen. Yet, upon regaining consciousness, **Abdullah ibn Mas'ud** expressed profound joy, declaring that his suffering in the path of Allah was a testament to his success. This incident marked the first shedding of blood in defense of Islam by a companion, born of a passionate, albeit premature, zeal that momentarily overrode the strategy of patience.

Indeed, the early injunction from the Prophet (s) was one of absolute ***sabr*** (patience) and non-retaliation. Even when faced with direct physical assaults, such as the brutal torture endured by **Khabbab ibn Aratt** (as previously described), the Muslims were commanded not to respond in kind. This disciplined restraint was crucial to prevent their nascent movement from being misconstrued as a mere rebellion.

For two arduous years following the public declaration, the torture of Muslims became systematic and brutal. Many endured horrific trials, some even attaining martyrdom. **Bilal al-Habashi**, a powerful young Ethiopian slave, was subjected to unimaginable cruelty. His master, *Umayyah ibn Khalaf*, would lay him on scorching sand under the blistering sun, placing heavy rocks on his chest, and ordering children to drag him around by his neck, demanding he renounce Islam. Yet, **Bilal** remained steadfast, uttering only "Ahad! Ahad!" (One! One!), affirming the oneness of God.

Among the most harrowing accounts is that of the **Family of Yasir**. This was not a family of slaves, but free individuals—**Yasir** (the father), **Sumayyah** (the mother), **Ammar**, and **Abdullah** (their sons)—who had embraced Islam together. **Yasir**, originally from Yemen, had sought protection in Makkah under **Abu Jahl's** tribe, making him vulnerable to the chieftain's malice. **Abu Jahl** subjected them to unspeakable tortures. They were wrapped in animal hides and sewn into them, then submerged in water until they neared suffocation. They were also forced to wear iron armor under the searing desert sun, causing their skin to peel off when the armor was removed.

The Prophet (s) often witnessed their suffering, unable to intervene physically. He would pass by, offering words of profound solace and divine promise: "***Sabran Ya Aala Yasir! Fainna Maw'idukum al-Jannah***" (**Patience, O family of Yasir! Indeed, your promised abode is Paradise**). In the end, **Yasir** succumbed to the torture, becoming the first male martyr in Islam. His noble wife, **Sumayyah**, displayed even greater fortitude. **Abu Jahl**, in a fit of rage, savagely stabbed her with a spear, making her the first female martyr and indeed, the very first martyr in Islam.

Ammar ibn Yasir, after witnessing the martyrdom of both his parents and enduring unimaginable suffering, was forced under extreme duress to utter words of disbelief to save his life. Distraught, he immediately went to the Prophet (s), confessing his action and fearing for his faith. In response, a momentous revelation descended: ***Surah An-Nahl***, verse 106, which distinguishes between verbal denial under duress and true disbelief of the heart: "**Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief, except for one who is forced [to do so] while his heart is at peace with faith – but those who open their breasts to disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allah, and for them is a great punishment.**" This divine validation provided immense comfort and clarity to the early Muslims, assuring them that actions under duress, when the heart remained firm in faith, did not

nullify their belief.

Other courageous individuals also endured severe trials. **Suhaib ar-Rumi**, originally from Iraq but captured and brought to Makkah, suffered immensely. His skin was flayed with iron combs, yet he remained resolute. The Prophet (s) remarked upon his profound trade, exchanging worldly suffering for divine reward. Similarly, **Abu Fakihah**, a robust young man, was repeatedly forced onto scorching rocks by his master, *Umayyah*, who would demand his denial of God. **Abu Fakihah** consistently refused, often fainting from the pain, only to be revived and reaffirmed in his faith by other Muslims.

Amidst these escalating trials, the early Muslims, through **Khabbab ibn Aratt**, once asked the Prophet (s) when divine help would arrive. In response, ***Surah Al-Ankabut*** (The Spider) was revealed, specifically its opening verses (***Surah Al-Ankabut*** 29:1-3): "**Do people think that they will be left alone after saying, 'We believe,' and they will not be tested? And We have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars.**" This Qur'anic revelation served as a potent source of consolation and reinforced the inevitability of trials as a means of distinguishing true believers from false ones. It also addressed another form of pressure faced by young converts: parental coercion. ***Surah Al-Ankabut*** (29:8) provided guidance, warning against obeying parents who compel one to idolatry, clearly prioritizing devotion to Allah above all else.

Despite the relentless persecution of his followers, the Prophet (s) never wavered in his ***da'wah***. Driven by an overwhelming concern for humanity's salvation, he intensified his public preaching efforts. He began to sit openly in the courtyard of the **Ka'bah** and actively sought out travelers and caravans. He frequented the three major annual Arab fairs: *Ukaz*, *Dhu al-Majaz*, and *Minah*. At these gatherings, where tribes from all over

Arabia converged for trade, dispute resolution, and cultural exchange, the Prophet (s) would go from tent to tent, from tribe to tribe, reciting the Qur'an and extending his invitation to Islam. He would declare: "**Say *La ilaha illa Allah* and you will succeed! You will rule the Arabs, Persia will fall at your feet, and you will inherit the gardens of Paradise, safe from Hellfire.**" This bold proclamation, combining spiritual salvation with earthly prosperity, resonated with many.

During one such fair at *Dhu al-Majaz*, a narrator vividly recounts witnessing the Prophet (s) engaging with various tribes. He also describes an incident where **Sayyidah Zainab** (the Prophet's (s) daughter or niece, as some traditions suggest) brought him a bowl of milk. Even though the full injunction of *hijab* had not yet been revealed, the Prophet (s) gently advised her to adjust her shawl to cover her throat, underscoring the importance of modesty from early on. These public endeavors were often accompanied by **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a), whose support and presence further affirmed the Prophet's (s) mission.

The *Quraysh*, realizing they could not directly harm the Prophet (s) due to the protective stance of **Abu Talib** and the ***Banu Hashim***, resorted to a different strategy. They enlisted **Abu Lahab**, the Prophet's (s) paternal uncle, who, despite his familial bond and previous affection for the Prophet (s), sided with the *Quraysh* for worldly gain. **Abu Lahab**, whose real name was **Abd al-Uzza**, earned his nickname, meaning "father of flame," due to his remarkably fair and radiant complexion. He became one of the Prophet's (s) most venomous adversaries, defying both the laws of Islam and the ingrained tribal custom of supporting one's kin.

Abu Lahab's house was conveniently adjacent to the Prophet's (s) home. He and his wife, *Umm Jamil* (sister of **Abu Sufyan** and aunt of **Mu'awiyah**), engaged in relentless harassment. They would frequently climb onto their rooftop and hurl stones at the Prophet (s) as he prayed or rested. They

would defile his cooking pots by throwing filth into them. *Umm Jamil* would also collect thorny branches from the desert and spread them around the Prophet's (s) doorway at night, hoping he would injure his feet when he stepped out for the morning prayers.

The malice of **Abu Lahab** extended even to his own family. Before the advent of Islam, the Prophet (s) had arranged the marriages of his two daughters (or nieces, **Ruqayyah** and **Umm Kulthum**) to **Abu Lahab's** sons, *Utbah* and *Utaibah*. After the public declaration of Islam, **Abu Lahab**, at the instigation of the *Quraysh*, forced his sons to divorce them. *Utbah* personally delivered the divorce message to the Prophet (s) and, in an act of extreme insolence, spat towards the Prophet's (s) blessed face. Miraculously, the saliva did not reach him. The Prophet (s) responded with a solemn prayer, invoking Allah to send a wild animal, a "dog from amongst His dogs," to devour *Utbah*.

The consequences of this prayer soon manifested. During a trade journey, **Abu Lahab**, despite his disbelief, harbored an underlying fear of the Prophet's (s) curse. He took extraordinary measures to protect *Utbah*, having a protective barrier constructed around their sleeping area. Yet, during the night, a lion bypassed their defenses, leaping over the barrier and brutally killing *Utbah* by tearing his throat, just as the Prophet (s) had foretold. This chilling fulfillment of the prophecy further solidified the Prophet's (s) truth in the hearts of his enemies, even as they continued their outward denial.

The depths of **Abu Lahab's** animosity were further exposed when the Prophet (s) suffered personal tragedy. Before the birth of **Sayyidah Fatimah** (a), the Prophet (s) had two or three sons (**Qasim**, **Abdullah**, and **Tayyib** or **Tahir**), all of whom passed away in infancy or early childhood. When the last of them passed away, the *Quraysh* mocked the Prophet (s), calling him "Abtar," meaning one whose lineage is cut off, implying his

mission would end with him. **Abu Lahab** openly rejoiced at this, running through the streets to announce to the *Quraysh* leaders that Muhammad's lineage was cut off, reveling in his nephew's profound grief.

Despite these layered acts of aggression, the Prophet (s) remained steadfast in his ***da'wah***. The narrator from the *Dhu al-Majaz* fair recounts another profound sight: as the Prophet (s) concluded his invitation to a tribe, **Abu Lahab** would immediately follow, publicly denouncing his nephew. He would declare, "O people of Arabia, do not listen to him! He is my nephew, a liar, and a magician. He is misleading you." The narrator even witnessed **Abu Lahab** picking up stones and throwing them at the Prophet's (s) feet, causing him to bleed, in a desperate attempt to hinder his movement and speech. Yet, the Prophet (s) persevered, his determination unwavering, continuing to convey his message regardless of the obstacles.

This period of the Prophet's (s) life showcases the unparalleled resilience of early Muslims and the Prophet's (s) unwavering commitment to his divine mission. Their suffering, met with divine consolation and the promise of ultimate reward, forged a community of unshakeable faith. The relentless efforts of **Abu Lahab** and the *Quraysh* only served to highlight the miraculous steadfastness of the believers and the undeniable truth of Islam.

Chapter 30

The Quraysh's Desperate War on Islam and the Qur'an

The blessed twenty-three-year mission of the Prophet Muhammad (s) can be distinctly divided into three pivotal phases, each marked by unique challenges and triumphs. The first, and arguably most foundational, spanned thirteen arduous years in Makkah, a period dominated by the overt and formidable power of the *Quraysh* polytheists. Their control over Makkan society, its customs, and its governance meant that the nascent message of Islam faced relentless opposition. This initial phase serves as an indispensable blueprint for anyone seeking to convey truth in a hostile environment, whether reshaping a nation, a city, a neighborhood, or even one's own family. It illuminates the profound resistance encountered when a new, divinely revealed truth confronts deeply ingrained traditions, ancestral habits, and perceived self-interest. Even when hearts might instinctively recognize the veracity of the message, the established norms of life often compel people to resist, leading to an internal struggle that frequently manifests as anger directed at the messenger.

The second phase of the prophetic mission began with the Prophet's (s)

migration to Madinah, where an Islamic government was established. For the initial eight years in Madinah, the Makkan *kuffar* persisted in their relentless efforts to dismantle this burgeoning Islamic state. The final and culminating phase, lasting approximately two and a half years, saw the conquest of Makkah and the widespread acceptance of Islam across the Arabian Peninsula, effectively neutralizing any significant challenges to the Prophet (s) or the Islamic government. Of these, the Makkan period remains paramount, offering profound lessons in perseverance and strategy.

During the first three years of ***da'wah***, Islam spread discreetly and strategically. As previously recounted, the Prophet (s) ensured that the approximately fifteen hundred early converts were drawn from various families, securing a quiet foothold in almost every household in Makkah. This deliberate, clandestine dissemination proved to be a formidable advantage when the call to Islam became public. Once the *Quraysh* leaders realized the extent of the Prophet's (s) public proclamation and the unexpected prevalence of Muslim converts within their own tribes, their reaction was swift and brutal.

The *Quraysh* implemented a systematic campaign of oppression, mandating that each tribe or family should punish its own members who had embraced Islam. This policy primarily targeted the most vulnerable—slaves, the poor, and those without robust tribal protection. As seen with the likes of **Bilal al-Habashi**, **Suhaib ar-Rumi**, and the **Family of Yasir**, these unprotected believers endured unimaginable tortures, yet their faith remained steadfast. For those affiliated with powerful clans, like **Khalid ibn Sa'eed** from *Banu Umayyah*, the persecution came from within their own families.

A particularly bitter adversary emerged from within the Prophet's (s) own clan, *Bani Hashim*: **Abu Lahab**, his paternal uncle. He was the sole

member of *Bani Hashim* who actively opposed the Prophet (s), largely influenced by his wife, *Umm Jameel*, sister of **Abu Sufyan** and aunt of **Mu'awiyah**, who hailed from the rival *Banu Umayyah* clan. While *Bani Hashim*, led by **Abu Talib**, stood firm in its protective stance over the Prophet (s), **Abu Lahab** not only refused to join his clan during the severe boycott in *She'ab Abi Talib* but actively colluded with the *Quraysh* to intensify their suffering. He would intercept trading caravans arriving in Makkah, preventing them from selling goods to the besieged *Bani Hashim* by offering greater sums or issuing threats. This act of disloyalty and deep-seated animosity set him apart from all other enemies of the Prophet (s).

It was in response to **Abu Lahab's** relentless hostility that ***Surah Al-Masad*** (Chapter 111 of the Holy Qur'an) was revealed, marking a unique instance where a specific individual is named and condemned in the divine scripture. The surah declares: ***"May the hands of Abu Lahab be ruined, and ruined is he. His wealth will not avail him or what he gained. He will [enter to] burn in a flaming fire, and his wife [as well], the carrier of firewood, around her neck will be a rope of [twisted] palm fiber."*** (Qur'an 111:1-5)**

Upon hearing these verses, *Umm Jameel*, enraged, set out in search of the Prophet (s), clutching large stones in her hands. She vowed to shatter his head, demanding to know where "the reviler" (Muhammad) was, the one who had mocked and satirized her. Though the Prophet (s) was seated nearby with a companion, divine intervention prevented her from seeing him directly in front of her. She furiously questioned the companion about the Prophet's (s) whereabouts, hurling insults. The companion calmly explained that these were divine words, not the Prophet's (s) personal attacks. Disappointed and frustrated, she eventually left, but her malice never waned. She was known to gather thorns and scatter them along the Prophet's (s) path at night, hoping to injure him. The Qur'an's

description of her as "carrier of firewood" held a dual meaning: both literally carrying thorns and metaphorically carrying slander and discord.

Abu Lahab's end was a grim fulfillment of the divine prophecy. He contracted a severe, highly contagious, and repulsive disease known as *'adasa*, which caused his body to fester and decompose, rendering him utterly helpless. Fearful of contagion, no one, not even his own sons, dared to approach him. He lingered in agony, deserted by all. After his death, his body lay unburied for days. Finally, under immense pressure from the *Quraysh* leaders and after bribing some Habashi slaves, his sons reluctantly pushed his decaying corpse into a pit using long poles, sealing it quickly to avoid contact. This humiliating end underscored the divine retribution for his relentless and unparalleled enmity towards the Messenger of Allah.

With the inability to physically harm the Prophet (s) or extinguish the flame of Islam through torture, the *Quraysh* pivoted to a new strategy: a war against the Qur'an itself, aiming to prevent its message from reaching receptive ears.

Their initial tactic was to widely proclaim: ***"And those who disbelieved say, 'Do not listen to this Qur'an and make noise during*** [***its recitation***] ***that perhaps you will overcome.'"*** (Qur'an 41:26)** They instructed people not to listen to the Qur'an, warning them that it was dangerous and harmful. If they couldn't prevent listening, they resorted to making loud noises—clapping, shouting, whistling—to drown out the Prophet's (s) recitations, especially during his *Fajr* (dawn) prayers at the *Ka'bah*.

Some *Quraysh* leaders even attempted to use the concept of *nazar* (evil eye) against the Prophet (s). They brought individuals believed to possess a potent "evil eye" and instructed them to stare intently at the Prophet (s) during his recitation, hoping to inflict harm or silence him. The Holy Qur'an alludes to this attempt, stating: ***"And indeed, those who disbe-***

lieved would almost make you slip with their [evil] looks when they hear the message, and they say, 'Indeed, he is mad.'" (Qur'an 68:51)**

When these crude methods failed, **Nadr ibn Harith**, a well-traveled and cunning *Quraysh* leader, proposed a more sophisticated distraction. Having observed the professional storytellers and entertainers of Persia, he suggested importing such talent to Makkah to divert people's attention from the Prophet (s) and the Qur'an. A committee of fourteen *Quraysh* leaders, including **Nadr**, funded this initiative, bringing Iranian storytellers (*dastan go*), singers, and dancers to Makkah. These entertainers would recount ancient Persian tales of kings and heroes, sing songs, and perform dances, offering a novel form of amusement to the Makkan populace.

Initially, this tactic seemed to work. People, intrigued by the exotic performances, flocked to these gatherings, temporarily abandoning the Prophet's (s) recitations. The Qur'an addresses this scheme in ***Surah Luqman***: ***"And among the people is he who buys diverting discourse to lead [others] astray from the way of Allah without knowledge and takes it [the way of Allah] in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment."*** (Qur'an 31:6)** This verse directly refers to those who expended wealth to acquire "diverting discourse" (meaningless tales, songs, and entertainment) to prevent people from hearing the divine message.

However, when this general distraction proved insufficient to completely halt the *da'wah*, one *Quraysh* leader, in a desperate escalation, proposed an even more insidious plan. He offered to personally fund the assignment of a singing or dancing woman to *each* individual who persisted in listening to the Qur'an, ensnaring them in a web of sensuality and entertainment to keep them away from the *Ka'bah* and the Prophet's (s) message. Yet, even this extreme measure ultimately failed to extinguish the light of Islam or silence the divine words of the Qur'an. The tenacity of

the Prophet (s) and the inherent power of the Qur'an proved too strong for any human scheme to overcome.

Chapter 31

Divine Safeguards: The Unseen Protection of the Prophet

As the Prophet Mohammad's (s) public declaration of prophethood entered its third, fourth, and fifth years, the opposition from the *Quraysh* escalated. While the initial three years of secret *da'wah* had allowed Islam to spread subtly within families, the public call had intensified the *Quraysh's* persecution. They had already mandated family-based punishments for converts and had demonstrated unique hostility through individuals like **Abu Lahab**. Now, their strategies evolved beyond mere harassment, aiming to erect significant barriers to Islam's spread, particularly targeting the very source of its message: the **Holy Qur'an** and the person of the Prophet (s) himself.

The *Quraysh's* primary objective became to silence the Qur'an, which was the Prophet's (s) greatest tool and weapon. One method was to prevent people from listening to its recitation. They resorted to crude tactics: whistling, clapping, and making noise to drown out the Prophet's (s) voice. Entrants to Makkah were advised to plug their ears with cotton. A more sophisticated tactic, spearheaded by individuals like **Nadr**

ibn Harith, involved importing professional storytellers (*qissa-go*) and singing girls from Rome and Persia. These entertainers, often enslaved, were deployed to distract anyone showing interest in the Prophet's (s) message. Wealth was lavishly spent on this, with hundreds of such individuals brought in, ensuring that any new convert or seeker of truth would be immediately diverted by music, stories, and frivolous entertainment. The intent was to engross people in trivialities, drawing their attention away from the profound message of the Qur'an. This strategy directly addressed the Divine warning in ***Surah Luqman*** (31:6) against those who "buy diverting discourse to lead astray from the way of Allah without knowledge."

Beyond preventing listening, they also tried to impede the Prophet's (s) recitation. They sought out individuals skilled in the "evil eye" (*nazar*) to attempt to harm the Prophet (s) or render him unable to recite. The Qur'an itself alludes to this in ***Surah Al-Qalam*** (68:51-52), stating: **"And indeed, those who disbelieve would almost make you slip with their eyes when they hear the message, and they say, 'Indeed, he is mad.' But it is not except a reminder for the worlds."**

When these methods failed to entirely suppress the message, the *Quraysh* resorted to intellectual attacks and mockery. They would surround new, less knowledgeable converts, initiating complex debates about Qur'anic verses, twisting their meanings to confuse and mislead. ***Surah Ash-Shu'ara*** (26:224-227) indirectly addresses the accusations of poets and deceivers. They created a narrative that the Qur'an was merely "tales of the ancients" (***asateer al-awwaleen***) that the Prophet (s) had somehow memorized and was now presenting as divine revelation.

The mockery extended to the Qur'an itself and the Muslims. The **Holy Qur'an** in ***Surah Al-Mutaffifeen*** (83:29-32) describes their contempt: **"Indeed, those who committed crimes used to laugh at those who believed.**

And when they passed by them, they would exchange scornful glances. And when they returned to their people, they would return jesting. And when they saw them, they would say, 'Indeed, these are the astray.' " This constant ridicule, taunts, and insults were a persistent form of torture, perhaps more psychologically damaging than physical beatings.

Illustrative incidents of this mockery were abundant. When verses describing the nineteen angels appointed over Hellfire were revealed (***Surah Al-Muddaththir*** 74:30), **Abu Jahl** openly mocked, declaring that the *Quraysh* would easily overcome nineteen angels. Similarly, **Suldah**, a renowned wrestler of Makkah, challenged the Prophet (s) to a wrestling match ten times, losing each time. Upon hearing about the nineteen angels, he audaciously suggested, "If we take care of two, I can handle the remaining seventeen!"—a clear taunt implying the Prophet (s) needed angelic help.

Beyond the ideological and public attacks, the *Quraysh* also attempted to destabilize the Prophet's (s) personal and family life. **Abu Lahab** famously celebrated the deaths of the Prophet's (s) infant sons. Attempts were made to separate the Prophet (s) from **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a), though her unwavering faith and character made this impossible. Their efforts then turned to the Prophet's (s) daughters. Abu Lahab forced his sons, *Utbah* and *Utaybah*, to divorce the Prophet's (s) daughters, *Ruqayyah* and *Umm Kulthum*, even before consummation. They then pressured the husband of **Sayyidah Zaynab** (a), the Prophet's (s) eldest daughter, to divorce her, despite her having children. Their aim was to inflict domestic distress upon the Prophet (s), hoping to divert him from his mission. This included disturbing his neighbors, sending filth to his doorstep, and attempting to sow discord within his extended family.

Despite the intensity of this multi-pronged opposition, a striking observation emerges: the *Quraysh* did not launch direct, open attacks on the Prophet (s) himself, at least not in the early years. While his companions

like **Ammar ibn Yasir**, **Sumayyah**, **Bilal al-Habashi**, and **Khabbab ibn Aratt** suffered brutal tortures and martyrdom, the Prophet (s) remained relatively untouched by direct physical harm during public displays of faith like reciting the Qur'an in the **Ka'bah** or performing *Salat*. There were several profound reasons for this:

1. **Witnessing His Unique Life:** The *Quraysh* had witnessed the Prophet's (s) entire life, from his miraculous birth, protected childhood, and journeys with **Abu Talib** to his early business dealings with **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a). They had seen the signs, the divine interventions that protected him from assassins and sorcerers. They inherently knew he was no ordinary individual, fostering an unspoken awe.
2. **His Impeccable Character:** He was universally known as **al-Amin** (the Trustworthy) and **as-Sadiq** (the Truthful). Even his staunchest enemies, like **Abu Jahl**, privately acknowledged his truthfulness, though their pride and tribal jealousy prevented open acceptance. **Abu Jahl** himself admitted that he did not consider the Prophet (s) a liar, but rather rejected the message due to the *Quraysh*'s unwillingness to concede prophethood to **Banu Hashim**, who already held significant religious and administrative roles in Makkah.
3. **Latent Belief:** Deep down, many *Quraysh* leaders recognized the truth of his prophethood. Their opposition stemmed from material gains, pride, and the fear of losing their social status and power, rather than a genuine disbelief in his message. This internal conflict prevented them from fully committing to harming him.
4. **Fear of His Prayers (*Bad Dua*):** They genuinely feared that if they crossed certain lines and provoked the Prophet (s) to curse them, his prayers would be answered, bringing divine retribution upon them. This fear was evident in several incidents:
    - After the Prophet (s) cursed **Abu Lahab's** son, **Utaybah**, by praying that a wild animal would devour him, **Abu Lahab** himself,

despite his enmity, became terrified and pleaded with the *Quraysh* to protect his son.

- During the recitation of ***Surah Fussilat*** (41:13), when the Prophet (s) mentioned the destruction of the people of *'Ad* and *Thamud*, a leading *Quraysh* figure (reportedly *Utbah ibn Rabi'ah*) immediately put his hand over the Prophet's (s) mouth, fearing that the Prophet (s) would pray for similar destruction upon them.
- When a severe drought struck Makkah, leading to starvation so extreme that people resorted to eating carrion, the *Quraysh* leaders, including the Prophet's (s) fiercest enemies, approached him, pleading for rain. Despite their earlier animosity, they recognized that only he could intercede for them. The Prophet (s) raised his hands in *dua*, and torrential rain poured down. Later, when the rain became excessive and threatened their homes, they again approached him, and he prayed for the rain to cease, redirecting it to surrounding hills and valleys. This reliance on him, even in their distress, underscored their underlying belief in his connection to the Divine.

5. **Divine and Miraculous Protection:** Perhaps the most compelling reason was the direct divine protection the Prophet (s) experienced. One significant incident occurred early in his public *da'wah*. The Prophet (s) publicly declared his mission from Mount Safa, then Mount Marwah, and finally from **Kuh-e-Abu Qubays**, a tall mountain near the **Ka'bah** from which his voice would echo across Makkah. Each time, the *Quraysh* followed, growing increasingly enraged. At **Kuh-e-Abu Qubays**, they began pelting him with stones. So fierce was the assault that the Prophet (s) was entirely buried under the rocks, his blessed body bleeding from head to toe.

Upon hearing of this, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) and *Imam Ali* (a) rushed to the mountain. While they searched, ***Jibreel*** (a) descended, clearing the

stones from the Prophet (s) with his wings. Miraculously, despite the severe injuries, the Prophet (s) was seen in a state of prayer. Then, the angel of the mountains, the angel of the winds, and the angel of the earth all presented themselves to the Prophet (s), seeking permission from Allah (SWT) to unleash divine punishment upon the *Quraysh*. The mountain angel offered to crush them between the two mountains. The wind angel offered to annihilate them with a tempest. The earth angel offered to swallow them into the ground. Yet, the Prophet (s), in his infinite mercy, refused all these offers. He said, "I have been sent as a mercy to the worlds, not as a torment. They know not what they do. O Allah, guide my people, for they know not."

Sayyidah Khadijah (a) and *Imam Ali* (a) found him in this state, his blood still flowing. **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) expressed her grief and concern, but the Prophet (s) meticulously collected every drop of his blood, preventing it from falling onto the ground of Makkah. When asked why, he replied, "If a single drop of my blood were to fall on this land, Allah's wrath would descend upon them, and they would have no escape. I do not wish for Allah's punishment to befall them."

As **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) and *Imam Ali* (a) helped the Prophet (s) descend from the mountain and returned towards his home (which was connected to **Abu Talib's** house, next to **Abu Lahab's**), **Abu Lahab** publicly announced the Prophet's (s) injured state to the *Quraysh*, gloating that the "magic" of the Prophet (s) had been broken. The *Quraysh* gathered, again attempting to throw stones, but this time, every stone thrown miraculously veered off course, or even flew back towards the thrower. The spectacle instilled a deep fear.

Finally, **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) stepped out, addressing the hostile crowd. Despite their profound animosity towards the Prophet (s), her words as "the noblest woman of Makkah," recounting her past favors to the city

and appealing to their sense of honor, instantly dispersed the crowd. Her single plea had a profound effect, demonstrating the enduring respect she commanded.

These incidents underscore the extraordinary divine protection afforded to the Prophet (s), combined with the *Quraysh's* own internal contradictions and underlying fear. While they mercilessly persecuted his followers, an invisible shield prevented them from directly harming the Prophet (s) himself, a testament to his unique status and Allah's (SWT) unwavering promise to protect His Messenger.

Chapter 32

The Divine Shield and Failed Overtures

The third year of public prophethood ushered in an intensified phase of the *Quraysh's* oppressive campaign against the nascent Muslim community. While the vulnerable among the believers faced relentless torture and severe persecution—from the brutal treatment of **Bilal al-Habashi** to the martyrdom of the **Family of Yasir**—a striking paradox emerged: the very source of this "new religion," Prophet Muhammad (s) himself, remained untouched by direct physical harm. The *Quraysh*, despite their animosity, never launched a full-scale physical assault on the Prophet (s). This restraint stemmed from a confluence of factors, each a testament to his unique standing and divine protection.

Firstly, the Prophet's (s) inherent aura, his *ro'b* or awe-inspiring presence, profoundly affected even his staunchest enemies. His entire childhood and youth, marked by unimpeachable character as **al-Amin** and **as-Sadiq**, and by manifest divine interventions, were witnessed by many *Quraysh* leaders. They had seen miracles from his early life, cementing a subconscious respect and fear within their hearts.

Secondly, a deeply ingrained apprehension of his *bad dua*—his prayers for divine punishment—deterred them. They had witnessed instances

where the Prophet's (s) prayers had direct, tangible consequences, making them wary of provoking his wrath directly.

Thirdly, sporadic minor miracles and clear signs of divine protection further solidified their reluctance. On one occasion, when the Prophet (s) prostrated in prayer in the **Ka'bah**, **Abu Jahl** declared his intention to stomp on his neck. Yet, as he advanced, he suddenly retreated in terror, claiming he saw a terrifying ditch of fire and a monstrous creature preventing his approach. Similarly, when the Prophet (s) was stoned and buried under rocks on **Kuh-e-Abu Qubays** (as recounted in a previous chapter), he miraculously emerged unharmed, and the stones thrown at his courtyard would veer off course, never reaching him. These events, though often attributed to "magic" by the *Quraysh* to save face, nevertheless instilled a profound fear and a sense of his invincibility.

However, perhaps the most immediate and significant deterrent was the unwavering and formidable support of his family, particularly **Sayyidah Khadijah** (a) and his uncle, **Abu Talib**. Both belonged to the most respected and influential clans in Makkah—the **Banu Hashim** and the **Banu Asad**, respectively—and their complete solidarity with the Prophet (s) served as an impenetrable shield.

One particularly dramatic incident highlights **Abu Talib's** fierce protectiveness. Not long after the public declaration of prophethood, the Prophet (s) was praying in the **Ka'bah**. **Walid ibn Mughirah**, a prominent *Quraysh* leader, audaciously defiled the Prophet (s) by smearing his blessed back with animal entrails and filth. When the Prophet (s) returned home in this state, **Abu Talib**, who loved his nephew more than his own sons, was consumed by rage. Despite being known for his calm and composed demeanor, he rose in a state of unparalleled fury. He immediately summoned his nephews, the youthful and powerful **Hamza** and **Ja'far al-Tayyar**, who were both in their prime. With drawn swords, their blades

glinting, they accompanied the elderly **Abu Talib** (then around 80 years old) into the sacred precincts of the **Ka'bah**. The *Quraysh* chiefs, witnessing this unprecedented display of wrath from the typically serene **Abu Talib**, were stunned into silence, despite their own strict custom against bringing weapons into the **Ka'bah**.

Abu Talib calmly approached **Walid**. He then commanded **Hamza** to pick up the very filth that had defiled the Prophet (s) and, to the horror of the assembled *Quraysh*, to smear it across **Walid's** face and body. **Hamza** executed the command with brutal efficiency, using his sword to cut and apply the impurities until **Walid** was thoroughly disgraced. Throughout this ordeal, **Abu Talib** stood firm, his presence radiating an unyielding resolve. When the act was complete, he declared in a thunderous voice that echoed through the **Ka'bah**, "Do not think that my nephew is without a protector! As long as **Abu Talib** lives, woe betide anyone who dares to harm him or inflict any injury upon him!" He then departed with the Prophet (s) and his nephews, leaving the *Quraysh* in stunned silence, realizing that direct physical assault on the Prophet (s) was now impossible. This incident, among others, demonstrated that the *Quraysh* could not break the Prophet (s) while he had such formidable backing.

Having failed to suppress Islam through persecution and direct intimidation of the Prophet (s), the *Quraysh* shifted tactics to negotiations and compromises. They first sent **Utbah ibn Rabi'ah**, a respected elder, to the Prophet (s) while he was engaged in prayer. Utbah offered a range of temptations: immense wealth, absolute leadership over Makkah, marriage to any woman he desired from the noblest families, or even medical treatment if he was afflicted by a Jinn. The Prophet (s) listened patiently to Utbah's lengthy proposal. Once Utbah concluded, the Prophet (s) began reciting verses from ***Surah Fussilat*** (41). When he reached the verse warning of a thunderbolt of punishment similar to that which befell **Aad** and **Thamud** (***Surah Fussilat*** 41:13), Utbah was so overwhelmed that

he involuntarily placed his hand over the Prophet's (s) mouth, fearing further revelation. Utbah returned to the *Quraysh* deeply affected, advising them to leave Muhammad (s) alone, for his words were not human, and his mission would either fail (which would solve their problem) or succeed (which would bring them shared glory). **Abu Jahl**, however, scoffed, claiming Utbah had been swayed by the Prophet's (s) magic or bribery. Utbah, stung by the insult, defiantly vowed to oppose the Prophet (s) even more fiercely to prove his sincerity. This first overture ended in complete failure.

Undeterred, the *Quraysh* then assembled a larger delegation of fourteen or fifteen chiefs, representing the full force of their leadership. They approached the Prophet (s) with similar offers of wealth, power, and marriage. Again, the Prophet (s) firmly rejected all worldly temptations, reiterating that he was merely a messenger of God. The *Quraysh* then demanded a miracle, suggesting the splitting of the moon, convinced that magic could not affect celestial bodies and that this would expose him. In response to their demand, the Prophet (s) pointed to the moon, and to the astonishment of all present, it split into two distinct halves, then reunited, a profound miracle later affirmed in the **Holy Qur'an** (***Surah Al-Qamar*** 54:1-2: "***The Hour has drawn near, and the moon has split***"). Yet, **Abu Jahl** and the *Quraysh* chiefs, refusing to acknowledge the divine sign, dismissed it as a powerful act of sorcery, claiming Muhammad (s) had mastered magic to affect even the sky.

Their attempts to buy out or discredit the Prophet (s) having failed, the *Quraysh* made a desperate final offer of religious compromise. They proposed an arrangement where the Prophet (s) would worship their idols for a year, and they would worship his God for a year. They even softened this to a week, or a single prostration before their idols. The Prophet (s), however, remained unwavering in his commitment to absolute ***Tawhid*** (monotheism). His firm rejection led to the revelation of ***Surah Al-Kafirun***

(109), which categorically shut the door on any religious compromise: "***Say, 'O disbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship. And I will not worship what you have worshipped, nor will you worship what I worship. To you be your religion, and to me my religion.'***" Verses from ***Surah Az-Zumar*** (39) also descended, further reinforcing the impossibility of combining ***Tawhid*** with idolatry.

Realizing that direct negotiations with the Prophet (s) were futile, the *Quraysh* turned their attention back to **Abu Talib**. They reasoned that if they could not sway Muhammad (s), perhaps they could persuade his influential uncle to either abandon him or compel him to cease his preaching. They visited **Abu Talib** multiple times, expressing their grievances and concern for Makkah's unity. **Abu Talib**, ever the wise statesman, calmly listened, assured them he would address the matter, and sent them away. These initial visits stretched into almost two years of diplomatic back-and-forth, with **Abu Talib** skillfully deferring their demands, implicitly gaining time for the Prophet's message to spread further.

During one of these visits, **Abu Talib** summoned the Prophet (s) to hear the *Quraysh*'s complaints directly. The Prophet (s), upon entering the assembly, was asked by **Abu Talib** what he wished to say. Pointing to the sun, the Prophet (s) declared that just as the sun could not be separated from its light and heat, he could not abandon his mission as long as he lived. He famously affirmed, "O my uncle, even if they were to place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, I would not abandon this matter until Allah makes it manifest or I perish in its pursuit!" This resolute declaration, spoken with profound conviction, left the *Quraysh* speechless and impressed **Abu Talib**.

Finally, the *Quraysh*, led by **Abu Jahl**, made a last, desperate collective appeal to **Abu Talib**. Their frustration was palpable; they demanded a

definitive answer. **Abu Talib** again called the Prophet (s). This time, the Prophet (s) offered a simple, yet profound, solution: "I am ready to end all disputes and fulfill your demands if you only utter one sentence." The *Quraysh* leaders, eager for an end to the conflict and expecting a compromise, agreed, asking **Abu Jahl** to represent them. **Abu Jahl** confirmed their readiness to accept whatever the Prophet (s) requested. The Prophet (s) then looked at them and declared, "Say: ***La ilaha illa Allah*** (There is no god but Allah)!"

Upon hearing these words, **Abu Jahl** erupted in fury. "This is absurd!" he shrieked. "I have never heard such a thing in my life!" He deemed it a gross insult by **Abu Talib** and immediately led the *Quraysh* delegation out of the assembly, signaling the complete and irrevocable failure of all negotiations. The *Quraysh* had exhausted all direct means of persuasion and pressure. They now turned their attention to a new, more subtle, and seemingly more devious strategy, hoping to finally overcome the Prophet (s) and his steadfast protector, **Abu Talib**.

Chapter 33

Miracles, Steadfastness, and the Birth of Fatimah Zahra (a)

The *Quraysh* had exhausted all their diplomatic and deceptive maneuvers against the Prophet Muhammad (s). Their offers of wealth, power, or even a cure for what they deemed his madness had been firmly rejected. The Prophet's (s) simple demand to utter "***La ilaha illa Allah***" was met with scorn by **Abu Jahl**, marking the definitive end of any hope for compromise. Faced with the Prophet's (s) unyielding stance and **Abu Talib's** unwavering protection, the *Quraysh* shifted their strategy from direct negotiation to a more insidious campaign of discrediting the Prophet (s) and isolating his powerful uncle.

They theorized that **Abu Talib's** profound affection for his orphaned nephew must stem from a lack of a son as handsome and capable as Muhammad (s) himself. Exploiting the societal disregard for orphans prevalent in *Jahiliyyah* Makkah, they concocted a perverse proposal. A delegation, including **Utbah**, **Shaybah**, **Hisham**, **Umayyah**, and **Walid ibn Mughirah** (Makkah's wealthiest and most influential man with thirteen sons), approached **Abu Talib**. They brought with them **Walid's** son, a young man

renowned for his beauty and charm. The *Quraysh* offered **Abu Talib** this youth, saying, "O **Abu Talib**, we bring you a handsome young man, the most beautiful and eloquent in Makkah. Take him as your son, and in return, hand over your nephew, Muhammad, for us to deal with. This way, you gain a son, and we can end this dispute."

Abu Talib, an eighty-year-old man, listened with incredulity and righteous indignation. He rebuked them fiercely, "What kind of monstrous exchange do you propose? Are you telling me to hand over my son to you to be killed, and I take your son to raise? What an absurd and unjust offer!" He looked at his own cousin, Mut'am ibn Adi (from the progeny of Hashim's brother, Nawfal), who had accompanied the *Quraysh* delegation, and reprimanded him for participating in such a depraved proposal. He declared that his support for his nephew was absolute and unwavering, and that they would never again be permitted to meet him with such preposterous demands. This marked the final, decisive failure of the *Quraysh's* attempts to sway **Abu Talib**.

Realizing that diplomacy and deceit had failed to break **Abu Talib's** resolve, he called all the young men of **Banu Hashim** and **Banu Muttalib** to his residence. He addressed them as the chief of the *Quraysh*, declaring that from this day forward, the protection of his nephew was their collective duty. All present, except **Abu Lahab**, publicly pledged their loyalty and support to the Prophet (s), vowing to defend him at all costs. This unprecedented open declaration of allegiance solidified the Prophet's (s) familial protection.

Shortly after this pivotal meeting, an incident occurred that further highlighted **Abu Talib's** fierce protectiveness and publicly humiliated **Abu Jahl**. One day, the Prophet (s) was not seen at **Abu Talib's** residence, an unusual occurrence. Concerned, **Abu Talib** feared that after their failed attempts to pressure him, the *Quraysh* might have directly attacked or cap-

tured his nephew. He swiftly gathered the young men of **Banu Hashim** who had recently sworn their oath. Arming them, he led them to the **Ka'bah**, where the *Quraysh* chiefs often gathered.

Upon entering the sacred precinct, **Abu Talib** commanded each of his armed kinsmen to stand by the head of a *Quraysh* chief. He specifically sought out **Abu Jahl**, convinced that he would know of the Prophet's (s) whereabouts if any harm had befallen him. As he made his way through the gathering, he spotted **Zayd ibn Harithah**, who had been emancipated by Sayyidah Khadijah (a) and dedicated to the Prophet's (s) service. **Abu Talib** quickly approached **Zayd**, who, seeing his guardian's stern demeanor, was startled and reported that he had been with the Prophet (s) at a certain location. Reassured, **Abu Talib** approached **Abu Jahl** with an air of dignified composure.

"O **Abu Jahl**," **Abu Talib** announced, "had it not been for the information I just received, I was fully prepared to kill you and your entire tribe right here and now." He then commanded the **Banu Hashim** youths to draw their swords. Thirteen gleaming blades instantly appeared above the heads of the shocked *Quraysh* chiefs. **Abu Jahl**, pale and trembling, immediately appealed to **Abu Talib**, "O **Abu Talib**, we respect you! Why would you think we would harm your nephew?" **Abu Talib**, unyielding, retorted, "Nevertheless, I was determined. Now, come with me." This dramatic confrontation cemented **Abu Talib's** position as an unassailable protector and left the *Quraysh*, especially **Abu Jahl**, in no doubt about the immense challenge they faced. They realized that to harm Muhammad (s), they would first have to contend with **Abu Talib**.

With direct confrontation proving futile, the *Quraysh* intensified their psychological warfare and slander campaigns. They renewed efforts to portray the Prophet (s) as a madman, a sorcerer, or a poet, seeking to discredit his message and prevent people from listening to him. They dis-

patched traders to other cities, spreading false rumors to deter visitors from coming to Makkah and encountering the Prophet (s). However, these tactics often backfired, piquing the curiosity of outsiders who, upon hearing about this "sorcerer," would travel to Makkah specifically to investigate.

One morning, a young man, the son of Muzdar, entered Makkah with seventeen powerful camels laden with precious goods and attended by beautiful, richly adorned slaves. He was seeking a man named Muhammad, to whom his deceased father had willed this inheritance. The young man, unfamiliar with Makkah, first encountered **Abd al-Bukhtari**, who, surprised by the newcomer's regal presence and his query about Muhammad, directed him to **Abu Jahl's** house, falsely claiming it was the Prophet's (s) residence.

When the young man arrived and asked **Abu Jahl** if he was Muhammad, **Abu Jahl**, ever opportunistic, eagerly confirmed it and demanded the inheritance. The young man, however, had specific identifying marks for Muhammad from his father's will, none of which matched **Abu Jahl**. Recognizing the deception, he left **Abu Jahl** and was eventually directed to the Prophet's (s) true home. He found the Prophet (s) sitting there, immediately recognizing the signs his father had described. He saluted the Prophet (s), explaining his journey and purpose. The Prophet (s), by divine inspiration, not only confirmed his identity but also addressed him by name, **Naji**, and recounted the details of his father's will, including the description of the camels and their adornments.

Overwhelmed, **Naji** exclaimed, "Indeed, you are the one my father spoke of!" He then presented the camels and their goods to the Prophet (s), who accepted them. Fearing the hostile environment of Makkah, **Naji** quickly departed. **Abu Jahl**, upon hearing of the young man's departure and the Prophet's (s) receipt of the camels, was enraged. Drawing his sword, he

rushed through the streets of Makkah, inciting the *Quraysh* by falsely accusing the Prophet (s) of seizing the Ka'bah's property and calling upon them to reclaim their "right."

News of **Abu Jahl's** uproar reached **Abu Talib**, who immediately came to the scene. **Abu Jahl**, seeing **Abu Talib**, declared, "Today, we will not listen to you! Your nephew has seized the Ka'bah's property!" **Abu Talib**, feigning calm, replied, "Let me speak with my nephew. I will bring you his answer." He went to the Prophet (s), who, after listening to the situation, calmly stated, "Tell them to gather tomorrow morning. I will bring the camels, and they will themselves bear witness to the truth."

Abu Talib relayed the message, and the *Quraysh*, surprised but intrigued, agreed. **Abu Jahl** spent the night supplicating to his idol, **Hubal**, offering gold and silver if it would prevent the camels from speaking. The next morning, the entire population of Makkah gathered. The Prophet (s) arrived with the seventeen camels. He approached **Abu Jahl** and said, "Ask them." **Abu Jahl**, still skeptical but desperate, addressed the camels, "By **Hubal**, speak!" The camels remained silent. **Abu Jahl** scoffed, "Do animals speak?" The Prophet (s) then prostrated to Allah, and upon rising, addressed the camels. Miraculously, one of the camels spoke in clear Arabic, testifying that they belonged to Muzdar, who had vowed to send them to Muhammad if he recovered from an illness, and that his son, **Naji**, was fulfilling this vow. The camel explicitly stated that they were the Prophet's (s) rightful property.

This public miracle left **Abu Jahl** utterly humiliated and speechless, his face a mask of shame. The *Quraysh*, who had previously dismissed the splitting of the moon as sorcery, could not deny the clear testimony of the camels. This event profoundly impacted many, leading to an increase in Muslim converts and providing much-needed financial support for the nascent Muslim community, especially in anticipation of future migra-

tions.

As persecution intensified, a profound divine event unfolded in the 5th year of *Bi'that*. One day, as the Prophet (s) sat outside Makkah with *Imam Ali* (a), *Ammar ibn Yasir*, and **Abu Talib**, *Jibreel* (a) descended with a new revelation. He commanded the Prophet (s) to embark on a forty-day spiritual separation from his wife, Sayyidah Khadijah (a). This meant forty days and nights of continuous worship, during which he was not to return to his home. The Prophet (s) sent *Ammar* to inform Sayyidah Khadijah (a) of this divine directive, instructing her not to await his return and to sleep alone. He also conveyed a message of reassurance to her, affirming that her separation was not due to any fault of hers, but rather a divine decree. He emphasized that Allah Himself boasts about her devotion to His angels.

After forty days and nights of intense worship and spiritual preparation, as night approached, *Jibreel* (a) again descended to the Prophet (s) in the mountains. This time, *Jibreel* (a) was accompanied by *Israfil* (a) and *Mika'il* (a). *Jibreel* (a) conveyed Allah's salutations and brought with him a plate of heavenly fruits—fresh dates and grapes—from Paradise. The Prophet (s) consumed these fruits and drank from the heavenly water. Then, *Jibreel* (a) washed the Prophet's (s) hands, and *Israfil* (a) presented a heavenly towel to dry them. After this sacred repast and purification, *Jibreel* (a) conveyed Allah's command for the Prophet (s) to return to Sayyidah Khadijah's (a) house without delay, not even pausing for *wudu* or *Salat al-Layl*.

That very night, on the 20th of Jumada al-Thani in the 5th year of *Bi'that*, through this divine union, the blessed daughter, **Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra** (a), was born to the Prophet Muhammad (s) and Sayyidah Khadijah (a).

Her birth was a profound divine answer to the *Quraysh's* taunts, particu-

larly **Abu Lahab's** cruel mocking of the Prophet (s) as "***abtar***" (heirless) after the passing of his infant sons. With the birth of **Sayyidah Fatimah** (a), Allah revealed the true inheritor of the Prophet's (s) lineage and the guarantor of his enduring legacy. The *Quraysh* had boasted that Muhammad's name would be erased, but Allah's wisdom ensured that through **Sayyidah Fatimah** (a), the Prophet's (s) name would endure in this universe until the Day of Judgment. It is through her blessed progeny that the **Imamate** would continue, and it is through her grief and sacrifice, as history would later bear witness, that the name of Islam and the Prophet (s) would be preserved against all odds. Her existence, her profound mourning for her father after his passing, and the sacrifices of her descendants ensured the survival of the Prophet's (s) mission. Her station was so elevated that even *Imam Ali* (a), the 'Resolver of Difficulties', found his patience tested to its limits by the injustices inflicted upon her and was prepared to defend her dignity with his sword.

The birth of **Sayyidah Fatimah** (a) marked a turning point, not only providing spiritual solace to the Prophet (s) but also affirming divine support amidst intensifying persecution. This period saw the *Quraysh*, frustrated by their repeated failures, escalate their cruelty against the burgeoning Muslim community, paving the way for the first forced migration of Muslims from Makkah to Abyssinia.

Chapter 34

The Quraysh's Unified Campaign of Slander and the First Migration to Abyssinia

Having failed in their attempts to entice the Prophet (s) with worldly offers and to persuade his uncle, **Abu Talib**, to withdraw his steadfast protection, the *Quraysh* now resolved to escalate their opposition to an open, comprehensive campaign. They realized that their earlier tactics had merely contained the message within Mecca, but the approaching *Hajj* season, when tribes from all over Arabia would converge, presented a critical juncture. It was imperative to defame the Prophet (s) among these pilgrims before his message could spread beyond the city walls.

To devise a unified strategy, the *Quraysh* convened a special meeting at *Dar al-Nadwah*, a council house near the **Ka'bah**, close to the *Hajar al-Aswad*. This significant assembly was presided over by *Walid ibn al-Mughirah*, a formidable and influential chieftain, known for his wisdom and experience. *Walid*, uncle to **Abu Jahl** and father to *Khalid ibn Walid*, commanded respect among the *Quraysh* elders, some of whom were even older than

Abu Talib.

Walid presented his concern: if different *Quraysh* members offered conflicting accusations against Muhammad (s) to the pilgrims, it would breed doubt and suspicion among the outsiders. He argued for a single, consistent narrative. The *Quraysh* had already circulated various accusations: that Muhammad (s) was a poet (*sha'ir*), a soothsayer (*kahin*), a madman (*majnun*), or a sorcerer (*sahir*). *Walid* systematically dismissed each, demonstrating why they would not be convincing to a discerning audience. A poet's words differed from the Qur'an's unique eloquence; a soothsayer relied on jinn for information, which was not the case with Muhammad (s); a madman's incoherent ramblings did not match the Prophet's (s) profound and consistent message.

Abu Jahl, impatient, pressed *Walid* for a decisive plan. After much deliberation, *Walid* proposed that they accuse Muhammad (s) of being a sorcerer who sowed discord. This specific accusation, he argued, was verifiable and evident within Meccan society itself. Indeed, Islam had caused families to divide, separating sons from fathers, wives from husbands, and friends from one another, as individuals chose to follow the Prophet (s) despite their kin's opposition. This particular slander, *Walid* asserted, was the most effective and difficult to refute, as its "proof" lay within the fractured social fabric of Mecca. The *Quraysh* unanimously agreed to this unified propaganda campaign.

The desperation of the *Quraysh* deepened with a divine sign: the miraculous birth of **Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra** (a) in the 5th year of *Bi'that*. This blessed event served as a profound refutation of the *Quraysh's* taunt of the Prophet (s) being "***abtar***" (heirless), signifying the continuation of his blessed lineage and the preservation of his legacy. The birth of this pure daughter, an embodiment of divine grace, intensified the *Quraysh's* resolve to extinguish the nascent light of Islam, as they now realized that

the Prophet's (s) influence would not end with his lifetime.

The escalating persecution became unbearable for many vulnerable Muslims. Witnessing their suffering, the Prophet (s) advised his companions to seek refuge in Abyssinia (*Habasha*), a land across the Red Sea, known for its just Christian ruler, *Najashi* (King Asma). The Prophet (s) declared, "Indeed, there is a king in Abyssinia under whom no one is wronged."

Thus, the first migration to Abyssinia took place in the month of Rajab, in the 5th year after the proclamation of prophethood. This initial group was a smaller party, comprising 16 individuals—12 men and 4 women—sent ahead as an advance group to assess the conditions and prepare the ground. Notable among them were *Uthman ibn Affan* and his wife *Ruqayyah* (the Prophet's (s) niece, adopted as his daughter), *Abu Salamah* and his wife *Umm Salamah*, *Mus'ab ibn Umayr*, and *Uthman ibn Maz'oon*.

Their departure was quickly discovered by the *Quraysh*, who dispatched a party to intercept them. The Muslims, realizing they were being pursued, rushed towards the coast, reaching a port near *Shu'aibiya* (modern-day Jeddah). Fortuitously, they found a small merchant ship preparing to depart for Abyssinia. Despite the ship being almost full and the exorbitant fare of five *dirhams* per person, they managed to board just as the *Quraysh* pursuers arrived, successfully escaping across the Red Sea to Abyssinia.

After a few months in Abyssinia (from Rajab to Shawwal), news, albeit false, reached the migrants in Abyssinia that a reconciliation had occurred between the *Quraysh* and the Prophet (s). This fabricated report, prevalent in some historical accounts but consistently refuted by the speaker's school of thought, alleged that during the recitation of ***Surah an-Najm***, the Prophet (s) had uttered verses acknowledging the intercession of the pagan goddesses *Lat*, *Uzza*, and *Manat*, leading to a collective prostration

by both Muslims and *Quraysh* in the **Ka'bah**. The speaker emphatically rejects this narrative, viewing it as a desperate *Quraysh* fabrication to explain their inexplicable prostration to the Qur'an's power and attributing the collective prostration to the sheer awe inspired by the divine words, rather than any compromise. Regardless of the truth of this report, the news prompted the 16 migrants to return to Mecca.

Upon their return in Shawwal, they discovered the harsh reality: the persecution was as fierce as ever. Entering Mecca required obtaining protection from a chieftain, as those who left without tribal permission forfeited their clan's protection. Most of the returning 15 Muslims (excluding *Abdullah ibn Mas'ud*, who continued his journey elsewhere) secured *hilf* or *jiwar* (pledges of protection) from their respective tribes or allies.

Uthman ibn Maz'oon, however, initially accepted the protection of *Walid ibn al-Mughirah*. But after a few days, his conscience, fueled by his unwavering faith, rebelled against seeking protection from a polytheist when Allah was his ultimate Protector. He returned to *Walid* and publicly renounced his protection at the **Ka'bah**, declaring that he sought only Allah's sanctuary. This defiant act occurred while a renowned Yemeni poet, *Labid*, was reciting his verses. *Uthman* audaciously interrupted *Labid*'s poem, correcting his line that "everything besides Allah must perish," asserting that the blessings of Paradise were eternal. This public correction in front of the *Quraysh* leadership enraged them. *Uthman* was struck violently in the eye by one of the *Quraysh*, sustaining a severe injury. He, however, expressed joy at his suffering in the path of Allah, wishing his other eye had been injured as well. This display of steadfast faith further solidified the Muslims' resolve.

Meanwhile, another significant event transpired. *Abu Salamah*, husband of *Umm Salamah* (the Prophet's (s) first cousin, daughter of his aunt), found himself targeted by his own tribe, Banu Makhzoom. His mother

was **Abu Talib's** sister, making *Abu Salamah* **Abu Talib's** nephew. Seeking sanctuary, *Abu Salamah* approached **Abu Talib**, who readily granted him protection. When Banu Makhzoom protested, **Abu Talib** firmly stood his ground, asserting his right to protect his own nephew. Surprisingly, **Abu Lahab**, despite his animosity towards the Prophet (s), intervened on **Abu Talib's** behalf, supporting the tribal right to protect a kinsman. He warned Banu Makhzoom that alienating both him and **Abu Talib** would severely undermine their efforts to discredit the Prophet (s) during the upcoming *Hajj* season, as **Abu Lahab** was instrumental in their anti-Prophet propaganda. This unexpected intervention by **Abu Lahab** allowed *Abu Salamah* to remain safely under **Abu Talib's** formidable protection.

The first group of migrants had returned, and the situation in Mecca remained grim. Observing the continued suffering, the Prophet (s) decided to organize a second, much larger migration to Abyssinia in the 6th year of *Bi'that*. This time, the exodus was carefully planned and executed with greater secrecy and organization. The group comprised approximately 83 men and 18 women, totaling over 100 individuals. The Prophet (s) appointed his courageous cousin, *Jafar ibn Abi Talib*, as their leader, accompanied by his wife *Asma bint Umays*. This powerful and well-organized group successfully reached Abyssinia, where they would face new challenges, including the *Quraysh's* desperate attempts to reclaim them from the just *Najashi*, a Christian king whose principles of justice would remarkably contrast with the future tyranny faced by the ***Ahlulbayt*** in the courts of Muslim rulers. During their journey or shortly after their arrival, they were joined by *Abu Musa al-Ash'ari* and 52 other Yemenis who, initially intending to travel to Mecca, were driven by adverse winds to the shores of Abyssinia.

Chapter 35

The Lion of Allah: Hamza's Pivotal Embrace of Islam

The *Hijrah* to Abyssinia, undertaken by the early Muslims seeking refuge from the relentless persecution in Mecca, proved to be far more than a mere escape. Its significance resonated deeply throughout the burgeoning Islamic movement, marking a pivotal turning point in the unfolding narrative of Islam. Beyond offering a safe haven for over a hundred beleaguered believers, this migration unwittingly laid the groundwork for an ideological confrontation between Islam and established religions like Judaism, a confrontation that would later define much of the Prophet's (s) era in Medina.

The two waves of migration to Abyssinia had firmly established a secure base for the Muslims. King *Najashi* (Asma), known for his justice and piety, welcomed them warmly. The Prophet (s) had judiciously chosen those who would migrate, not solely the most vulnerable, but also individuals from influential families. This strategic decision signaled that the *Hijrah* was not merely about survival but also a crucial step in the wider propagation of Islam (*da'wah*). Accounts from Abyssinia speak of the im-

mense peace and security enjoyed by the Muslim community there. *Najashi* himself demonstrated profound respect for the Prophet (s) and his message, even expressing a desire to humble himself before the Messenger of Allah. The Muslims' loyalty to *Najashi* was such that they stood ready to support him during a period of conflict with his rivals, though divine intervention ultimately rendered their direct involvement unnecessary.

During their stay in Abyssinia, the Muslim community thrived. Several children were born, including *Sayyiduna Abdullah*, son of *Ja'far at-Tayyar* and his wife *Asma bint Umays*, and *Umama*, son of *Abu Salamah* and *Umm Salamah*. Even King *Najashi* was blessed with a son during this period, whom, remarkably, he named Ahmad—a tribute to the Prophet (s) and a testament to the influence of Islam in his court. It was also during this time that *Umm Salamah* (a future wife of the Prophet) observed the Abyssinian women covering their entire bodies, an observation that would later contribute to the Islamic tradition of shrouding for women.

As the situation in Mecca continued to deteriorate, a gradual return of the Abyssinian migrants began. While some returned to Mecca individually, the full return of the community, led by *Sayyiduna Ja'far at-Tayyar*, coincided with the Prophet's (s) arrival in Medina, specifically during the momentous Battle of Khaybar, years later. This staggered return indicates that the *Hijrah* to Abyssinia had served its purpose, allowing the community to regroup and strengthen.

A powerful testament to Islam's growing reach and truth occurred when a delegation of twenty Christian scholars, priests, and monks, journeyed from Abyssinia to Mecca. They had heard of the Prophet (s) and sought to investigate his claims. Their arrival caused a stir among the *Quraysh* leaders, including *Abu Jahl*, *Walid*, and *Utbah*, who feared the potential impact of such influential foreigners embracing Islam. The Prophet (s) met

them in the courtyard of the ***Ka'bah*** and recited verses of the ***Qur'an***. The scholars, driven by a genuine quest for truth, were profoundly moved. Tears welled in their eyes as they listened, recognizing the divine veracity of the words. Without hesitation, they declared their faith in Allah and what had been revealed, asserting that this message was indeed the truth from their Lord and that they were already Muslims in spirit.

The *Quraysh* chiefs, witnessing this public conversion, were incensed. They taunted the scholars, accusing them of abandoning their people's mission. The Christian scholars, however, responded with dignified wisdom, reciting a verse from the ***Qur'an***: ***"Lana a'maluna wa lakum a'malukum, Salamun alakum, la nahab al-jahilin"*** (***Surah Al-Qasas***, ***Ayat*** 55), meaning, "To us are our deeds, and to you are your deeds. Peace be upon you; we do not seek the ignorant." This powerful declaration solidified their conviction and silenced the *Quraysh*, demonstrating the profound impact of the Qur'anic message on sincere hearts. This event further affirmed the truth of Islam and deepened the resolve of the nascent Muslim community.

Meanwhile, in Mecca, the *Quraysh*'s animosity intensified. Feeling cornered by the success of the Abyssinian *Hijrah* and the growing influence of Islam, they ramped up their persecution of the remaining Muslims, especially targeting the Prophet (s). *Abu Jahl*, ever the leader of opposition, grew bolder in his verbal assaults. On one occasion, he encountered the Prophet (s) near the *Jannat al-Mu'alla* cemetery and subjected him to a barrage of insults and profanity. The Prophet (s), embodying the ***Quluqin Azeem*** (***noble character***) mentioned in the ***Qur'an***, remained silent, enduring the abuse with dignified patience.

This deplorable scene, however, did not go unnoticed. Various accounts suggest it was witnessed either by *Sayyidah Safiyyah* bint Abd al-Muttalib (the Prophet's aunt), a slave woman from Banu Tamim, or two other

women. The news quickly reached *Hamza* (a), the Prophet's uncle, foster brother, maternal cousin, and brother-in-law through marriage. *Hamza* (a) was a man of great strength and courage, known for his love of hunting and his general detachment from the political squabbles of Mecca. His loyalty, however, was unwavering when it came to his kin, particularly his nephew, the Prophet (s).

Upon hearing of *Abu Jahl*'s egregious insult to the Prophet (s), *Hamza* (a) was consumed by a righteous fury. The insult was not merely directed at an individual but at the very honor of his family. Without a moment's hesitation, he strode into the ***Ka'bah***, where *Abu Jahl* was seated amongst the *Quraysh* elders. With a powerful swing, *Hamza* (a) brought his hunting bow down upon *Abu Jahl*'s head, splitting it open and drawing blood.

"O *Abu Jahl*," *Hamza* (a) declared, his voice thundering, "Do you dare to insult my nephew while I am still here to protect him? Now, I announce that I am on his religion!" This direct, public declaration of faith, made with such force and conviction, stunned the *Quraysh*. *Abu Jahl*'s companions urged him to retaliate, but, surprisingly, *Abu Jahl* admitted that *Hamza* (a) was justified, acknowledging his own transgression against the Prophet (s).

Hamza (a) then proceeded directly to the Prophet (s) and formally recited the ***Shahadah***, proclaiming his full submission to Islam. This momentous conversion sent shockwaves through Mecca. *Hamza* (a)'s embrace of Islam was a colossal victory for the struggling Muslim community and a crushing blow to the *Quraysh*. It not only provided a formidable physical protector for the Prophet (s) but also added immense moral and psychological strength to the believers. The *Quraysh*, who had previously dared to publicly humiliate the Prophet (s), now faced a powerful, courageous, and influential adversary who had openly declared his allegiance to Islam. The impact of *Hamza*'s (a) conversion was so profound that it con-

tinued to echo through Islamic history, a testament to the indomitable spirit and unwavering conviction of this great companion.

Chapter 36

The Dawn of Strength: Abyssinia's Embrace and Hamza's Mighty Stand

The tapestry of early Islam continued to unfold, weaving threads of refuge, revelation, and steadfastness against the relentless backdrop of *Quraysh* oppression. As the sixth year of Prophethood dawned, the *Hijrah* to Abyssinia, far from being a mere escape, began to yield profound and unexpected fruits, setting the stage for crucial shifts in the burgeoning Islamic movement.

The Abyssinian migration had been a strategic imperative, providing a safe haven for over a hundred Muslims under the just rule of King *Najashi*. Their presence there was not only for survival but also, unbeknownst to many at the time, for the propagation of Islam in a new land. *Najashi*, a Christian monarch, had not only protected them from the *Quraysh* envoys but had also declared a solemn commitment to their safety. His pronouncements indicated a deep respect for the Prophet (s) and his message, echoing the very essence of Islamic teachings concerning justice and truth. His profound appreciation for Islam was further underscored by his naming his own son Ahmad, a name deeply cherished and associated

with the Final Prophet (s), a testament to the influence of the Muslims in his court.

During their stay in Abyssinia, several significant events transpired, marking the growing strength of the Muslim community even in exile. Among these was the birth of *Abdullah*, son of *Ja'far ibn Abi Talib*, and *Umamah*, son of *Abu Salamah*, both born on foreign soil, symbols of a faith that was taking root and thriving.

One remarkable testament to the divine orchestration of events was the story of *Umm Habibah bint Abi Sufyan*. She had migrated to Abyssinia with her husband, *Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh*. However, her husband apostatized and embraced Christianity, abandoning her in an alien land, far from her family and tribe. In this desolate situation, the Prophet (s), recognizing her plight and perhaps a divine sign, sent *Amr ibn Umayyah al-Damri* to *Najashi* with a proposal of marriage to *Umm Habibah*. King *Najashi* himself, out of immense respect and faith, officiated the *nikah* (marriage contract) on behalf of the Prophet (s) and paid the *mahr* (dowry) from his own wealth. This marriage not only provided solace and honor to *Umm Habibah* but also further solidified the unique bond between the Islamic community and the Abyssinian king, demonstrating Allah's constant care and support for His Prophet (s) and the believers.

While many Muslims gradually returned from Abyssinia, others, like *Ja'far ibn Abi Talib*, remained there, ultimately returning seven years later, after the Prophet's (s) *Hijrah* to Medina and the conquest of Khaybar. This gradual return underscored the prolonged period of refuge and growth that Abyssinia provided.

Further strengthening Islam's burgeoning influence was the arrival in Mecca of a delegation of twenty (some accounts say forty) Christian scholars and monks from Abyssinia. Hearing of the Prophet (s) and the new faith from the Muslim refugees in their land, they were dispatched by

their own communities to investigate the truth of this new messenger. Upon reaching *Masjid al-Haram*, they sought out the Prophet (s). There, in the very heart of the polytheistic *Quraysh* stronghold, the Prophet (s) recited verses from the ***Holy Qur'an*** to them.

As the divine words resonated, the Christian scholars were deeply moved. Tears welled in their eyes and streamed down their faces, a testament to the profound impact of the ***Qur'an's*** truth. Without hesitation, they declared their immediate belief and embraced Islam. The *Quraysh* chieftains, particularly *Abu Jahl*, who witnessed this profound conversion, were incensed. They began to mock and taunt the newly converted Muslims, accusing them of folly and of being bewitched by the Prophet's (s) words.

However, the Christian scholars, now believers, responded with remarkable composure and wisdom, quoting a verse from the ***Qur'an***: "***Lana a'maluna wa lakum a'malukum, Salamun alakum, la nahab al-jahilin***" (***Surah Al-Qasas***, ***Ayat*** 55), meaning, "To us are our deeds, and to you are your deeds. Peace be upon you; we do not seek the ignorant." This dignified reply silenced the *Quraysh* and underscored the inherent truth and moral superiority of Islam. These conversions, occurring publicly in Mecca, were a significant victory, proving that Islam's message transcended tribal and religious boundaries.

The relentless pressure from the *Quraysh*, however, only intensified. Having failed to deter the Prophet (s) through inducements, demands for miracles, or even a boycott, they now sought to escalate their physical and verbal abuse. *Abu Jahl*, ever the spearhead of opposition, declared his personal responsibility to undermine the Prophet (s).

One day, while the Prophet (s) was near the *Ka'bah*, *Abu Jahl* confronted him. He unleashed a torrent of vile insults and abusive language, unprecedented in its public audacity. The Prophet (s), embodying the ***Qur'anic*** description of his "***akhlaq azimah***" (great character), remained silent,

his composure unwavering despite the venomous attack. This abhorrent scene was witnessed by several women, including, as some accounts suggest, the Prophet's (s) aunt, *Safiyyah bint Abd al-Muttalib*.

Upon hearing of this egregious act from one of the women, *Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib*, the Prophet's (s) uncle, was overcome with a righteous fury. *Hamza* was a man of immense physical strength, courage, and tribal standing, known for his prowess in hunting. Though often detached from the daily political machinations of Mecca, he held deep affection for his nephew and a fierce loyalty to his clan, *Banu Hashim*. His sister, or the maid, shamed him by asking how he could tolerate such a humiliation inflicted upon his orphaned nephew by an enemy of their clan.

Enraged, *Hamza* did not even bother to enter his house. Still clad in his hunting attire, bow in hand, he strode directly to the *Ka'bah*. There, he found *Abu Jahl* seated amongst his companions. Without a word, *Hamza* raised his bow and struck *Abu Jahl* forcefully on the head, drawing blood. He then declared in a booming voice for all to hear, "You dared to insult my nephew while I am alive? I declare that I am now a follower of his religion! Repeat what you said, if you dare!"

Abu Jahl's companions sprang to his defense, but *Abu Jahl* himself, knowing *Hamza*'s fierce nature and the tribal laws of retaliation, restrained them. He conceded *Hamza*'s right to defend his nephew, an acknowledgement of *Hamza*'s formidable presence and the gravity of his conversion.

Hamza then proceeded to the Prophet (s) and formally recited the *Shahada*, declaring his embrace of Islam. This pivotal moment sent shockwaves through the *Quraysh*. The conversion of *Hamza*, a man of such stature and courage, provided an immediate and tangible source of strength and protection for the nascent Muslim community. It intimidated the *Quraysh* and fundamentally altered the dynamics of the conflict, making it clear that Islam now had a formidable defender. This event, occurring

in the sixth year of prophethood, was a significant turning point, inspiring further conversions and bolstering the morale of the believers. It marked a new phase in the Prophet's (s) *da'wah*, signaling the dawn of greater strength and resilience for the Muslim community.

Chapter 37

The Shifting Sands of Opposition: Quraysh's Alliance with the Jews and the Prophecy of Ar-Rum

Seven years had elapsed since the declaration of Prophethood, and with each passing year, the nascent Muslim community gained strength and resilience, despite the unrelenting persecution. The conversion of **Hamza** (a) had been a particularly significant turning point, further bolstering the believers and causing deep consternation among the *Quraysh*. The migration of Muslims to Abyssinia (*Habasha*) under the just rule of King *Najashi* (Asma) had opened a new, safe haven, much to the chagrin of the Meccans. This act of refuge, extended by a Christian king, ignited a new animosity within the *Quraysh* towards Christians.

Historically, the *Quraysh* had maintained trade relations with both the Persian Empire, whose people were fire-worshippers and polytheists like themselves, and the Roman Empire, whose people were Christians and adhered to a monotheistic faith. While initially neutral, the rise of Islam shifted their allegiances. The *Quraysh* found ideological common ground

with the Persians, who shared their polytheistic inclinations. Conversely, their hatred for the Christians grew, fueled by the *Najashi's* protection of the Muslim refugees. This geopolitical and religious shift prompted the *Quraysh* to seek new alliances in their campaign against the Prophet (s). They turned their gaze towards the Jews of Medina, who had long-standing enmities with the Christians. This marked a new and significant phase in the Prophet's (s) struggle, as Jewish scholars and their ancient knowledge were now brought into the fold of opposition.

It was during this period of intense external and internal strife that a monumental event unfolded on the global stage. The two great superpowers of the era, the Persian Empire (Saassanids), who were Zoroastrians, and the Roman Empire (Byzantines), who were Christians, were engaged in a devastating war. The Persians, under King Khosrow Parvez, had inflicted a series of crushing defeats upon the Romans, conquering vast territories including Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, and even capturing Jerusalem. The Persian forces desecrated Christian churches and seized the Holy Cross, a deeply revered relic. This catastrophic defeat for the Romans was celebrated by the *Quraysh* in Mecca. They openly mocked the Muslims, stating triumphantly, "See how our brothers (the Persians) have defeated your brothers (the Christians)! Soon we will likewise defeat you, as your faith is akin to theirs in its monotheism."

Amidst this gloating and the Muslims' deep sorrow over the defeat of their monotheistic brethren, a profound and astonishing divine revelation descended upon the Prophet (s). ***Surah Ar-Rum*** (Chapter of the Romans), verses 1-4, was revealed: **"**_Alif, Lam, Mim. The Romans have been defeated. In the nearest land. But they, after their defeat, will overcome. Within a few years. To Allah belongs the command before and after; and on that day the believers will rejoice_**."**

This prophecy, delivered at a moment when the Roman Empire seemed

on the brink of total collapse, appeared utterly inconceivable. It made two impossible declarations: first, that the defeated Romans would soon achieve victory, and second, that on the day of their victory, the Muslims would also rejoice in Allah's help. The Arabic term ***bid'sinin*** used in the ***Ayat*** signified a period of three to nine years.

A notable incident related to this prophecy involved a prominent Muslim who, hearing the *Quraysh's* taunts, engaged in a wager with *Ubayy ibn Khalaf* (or *Abdullah ibn Ubayy* according to some accounts). Initially, a three-year timeframe was set for the Roman victory. However, the Prophet (s) corrected him, explaining that ***bid'sinin*** encompassed a range from three to nine years, and advised him to extend the wager to nine years and increase the stakes to a hundred camels, confident in the divine promise. Indeed, the prophecy was fulfilled approximately nine years later. Emperor Heraclius launched a counter-offensive that decisively defeated the Persians. Coincidentally, this Roman victory occurred around the time of the Battle of Badr, where the Muslims achieved their first major triumph over the *Quraysh*. Thus, both parts of the divine prophecy were miraculously fulfilled simultaneously: the Romans were victorious, and the Muslims rejoiced in Allah's help at Badr.

Meanwhile, the *Quraysh*, reeling from their inability to silence the Prophet (s) or stem the tide of conversions, dispatched envoys—notably **Nadr ibn Harith** and **Uqba ibn Abi Mu'ayt**—to Medina to seek counsel from Jewish scholars. The Jews, who harbored generations of animosity towards the Prophet's (s) lineage, saw this as an opportunity. They advised the *Quraysh* on two primary tactics to discredit the Prophet (s) and the ***Qur'an***:

1. **Distraction through Storytelling:** They suggested that the *Quraysh* counter the captivating effect of Qur'anic recitation by introducing equally engaging, albeit fabricated, narratives. **Nadr ibn Harith**, who

traveled extensively to Persia and Syria, was tasked with bringing back professional storytellers. These individuals would recount ancient Persian epics and tales of kings and heroes in public gatherings, hoping to divert people's attention from the ***Qur'an***. However, this tactic proved ineffective. The truth and profound depth of the ***Qur'an*** far surpassed the transient entertainment of these stories. This tactic was condemned by ***Surah Luqman***, verse 6: **"**_And among the people is he who buys idle talk to mislead [others] from the way of Allah without knowledge and takes it [the way of Allah] as ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment._**"**

2. **Accusations of Plagiarism:** The Jews advised the *Quraysh* to spread rumors that the Prophet (s) was not receiving divine revelation but was being taught by a human. They specifically pointed to a Christian individual named Jabr (or Bal'am in some accounts) who lived in a small hut near Mount Safa. He was known to possess knowledge of the ***Torah*** and ***Injil*** (Gospel). The *Quraysh* propaganda machine began to assert that Muhammad (s) would frequent Jabr's dwelling, learn from him, and then present these borrowed narratives as divine revelations. This accusation was directly refuted by ***Surah An-Nahl***, verse 103: **"**_And We certainly know that they say, 'It is only a human being who teaches him.' The tongue of the one they allude to is foreign, and this is a clear Arabic tongue._**"** The ***Qur'an*** pointed out the illogic: the person they accused of teaching the Prophet (s) was non-Arab (*ajami*) and barely spoke correct Arabic, whereas the ***Qur'an*** itself was a masterpiece of eloquent and clear Arabic—a language an *ajami* could never compose at such a level.

When these initial tactics failed to diminish the ***Qur'an's*** influence, the Jewish scholars presented the *Quraysh* with two complex questions, convinced that the Prophet (s) would be unable to answer them, thereby proving him an imposter.

1. **"What is the *Ruh* (Spirit)?"** This profound philosophical question had perplexed thinkers for centuries. The Prophet (s) awaited divine revelation. In response, ***Surah Al-Isra***, verse 85, was revealed: **"**_And they ask you concerning the *Ruh*. Say, 'The *Ruh* is from the command of my Lord, and you have not been given of knowledge except a little.'_**" This concise answer affirmed that the *Ruh* is a divine mystery, part of Allah's command, beyond the limited scope of human comprehension.

2. **"Why did the family of Prophet Ibrahim (a) (Bani Isra'il) migrate from Palestine to Egypt?"** This was a specific historical detail, deeply embedded in the ancient scriptures, known only to a select few. In a truly miraculous response, the entire ***Surah Yusuf*** was revealed in one sitting, narrating the complete and detailed story of Prophet Yusuf (a) and his brothers. The *Surah* explained how Yusuf (a) was thrown into a well, sold into slavery, taken to Egypt, rose to a position of power, and eventually brought his entire family, including his father Ya'qub (a) (also known as Isra'il), from Palestine to settle in Egypt. This comprehensive and eloquent narrative, delivered instantly, astonished both the *Quraysh* and the Jewish scholars, serving as irrefutable proof of the Prophet's (s) divine connection and knowledge.

Beyond these responses, the Prophet (s) also demonstrated miracles that were witnessed by the *Quraysh* themselves. **Imam Ali** (a), speaking later, recounted an astonishing incident. A group of *Quraysh* leaders, including **Abu Jahl**, approached the Prophet (s) demanding a miracle. They split into groups, each requesting a specific miracle associated with a past prophet: one group asked for fire to turn into a garden (like for Ibrahim (a)), another for a mountain to be lifted over them (like for Musa (a)), a third for the world to be submerged in water with only the believers surviving (like Nuh (a)), and a fourth, led by **Abu Jahl**, asked for knowledge

of hidden things (like Isa (a)).

The Prophet (s) told them to wait for their companions. When they returned, those who had asked for the miracle of Ibrahim (a) came forward, visibly shaken. They recounted a terrifying vision: they had been standing in a desert when the ground split open, and flames erupted from the earth and rained down from the sky. They found themselves surrounded by an inferno, with walls of fire advancing towards them. Just as despair gripped them, a majestic figure appeared—a veiled woman, radiant and pure, standing between heaven and earth. Her cloak, whose ends extended widely, had threads dangling from it. A voice commanded, "If you seek salvation from this fire, grasp hold of these threads." Trembling, they reached out and clung to the threads. Instantly, they were transported away from the conflagration, each landing safely in his own home. They then rushed to the Prophet (s), asking who this miraculous woman was. The Prophet (s) replied, "***That was my daughter, Fatimah.***"

Imam Ali (a) concluded this account by revealing its deeper significance, connecting it to the Day of Judgment. He stated that this miraculous vision was a glimpse into **Sayyidah Fatimah's** (a) immense stature on the Day of Resurrection. On that Day, when all of humanity, from the first to the last, will be gathered, a call will be made for all to lower their gaze, even the Prophets and Imams, as **Sayyidah Fatimah** (a) passes through the plain of resurrection. She will appear in a state of unparalleled grief and suffering, bearing the marks of the injustices inflicted upon her (her broken side, marks from the whips), carrying the bloodied shirt of her infant son, **Ali al-Asghar** (a), in one hand and the severed arms of her brother-in-law and banner-bearer, **Abbas** (a), in the other. She will present her case before Allah, and through her intercession, she will secure the salvation of her followers, particularly those who mourned *Imam Husayn* (a). Her magnificent ***chador*** (cloak) will stretch across the vast plain of resurrection, and its numerous threads will extend far and wide.

Whoever, with love and devotion, holds onto a thread from her ***chador*** by invoking her name, will be granted entry into paradise, their safety assured by her profound compassion and intercession. This demonstrates the unique and exalted station of **Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra** (a) in both this world and the hereafter.

Chapter 38

The Prophet's Witness: Punishments and Mercies Between the Heavens

The prophetic journey of *Mi'raj*, an unparalleled ascent through the heavens, continued, unfolding before the Prophet Muhammad (s) the profound mysteries of existence. This third discourse on the *Mi'raj* now turns to the celestial realms between the first and second heavens, where the Messenger of Allah (s) bore witness to both the consequences of human actions and the boundless mercy of the Divine. It is important to note that the *Mi'raj* occurred multiple times, and while some details may vary across different narrations, the essence of the Prophet's (s) observations remains consistent. Furthermore, during this sacred journey, the Prophet (s) often posed questions to *Jibreel* (a), not out of ignorance, but to facilitate the transmission of profound truths to humanity through *Jibreel*'s (a) authoritative answers—a method known as *Taqreer-e-Ma'soom*.

Upon ascending beyond the first heaven, where he had met the chief of its angels, *Asmaeel*, and observed the states of some inhabitants, the Prophet (s) encountered *Malak al-Mawt*, the Angel of Death. The Angel of Death, recognizing the Prophet (s), offered salutations, which the Messenger of

Allah (s) returned. The Prophet (s) then inquired about his duties. *Malak al-Mawt* confirmed that his divine mandate was to seize the souls of all humanity, with the exception of two: the soul of the Prophet Muhammad (s) himself, and the soul of his brother, *Imam Ali* (a). These two sacred souls, *Malak al-Mawt* explained, would be taken directly by Allah, the Exalted.

Malak al-Mawt further revealed that he constantly observes the world, specifically looking into every house five times a day. He meticulously watches for those who establish their prayers (*Salat*) at the prescribed times. He expressed a unique camaraderie with believers who consistently perform their prayers at the onset of their time for forty days. When the time comes to seize the soul of such a believer, *Malak al-Mawt* performs his duty with utmost ease and gentleness, causing minimal discomfort. Conversely, when he approaches those who have neglected their prayers, their mere sight of him often causes them to faint in terror. He also described hearing the wails and lamentations of families upon death, often questioning their profound grief, for he knows the true state of the deceased.

As the Prophet (s) continued his journey with *Jibreel* (a), he passed through a realm that would leave an indelible mark on his blessed heart, a memory that would bring tears to his eyes even after his return to *Madinah*. This was later recounted by *Imam Ali* (a), who described a poignant scene where he and *Sayyidah Fatimah* (a) found the Prophet (s) in deep sorrow, tears flowing from his eyes. When *Sayyidah Fatimah* (a), heartbroken by her father's grief, inquired about the cause, the Prophet (s), the ***Mercy unto all worlds***, began to describe the terrifying visions he had witnessed during his *Mi'raj*, specifically the torment of certain women from his *Ummah* (community) in the *Barzakh* (interim realm).

Sayyidah Fatimah (a) pressed him for details, and the Prophet (s) nar-

rated:

"My daughter, as I proceeded with *Jibreel*, I observed a place where countless women of my *Ummah* were undergoing severe torments. 1."I saw some women suspended by their hair, their brains boiling." The Prophet (s) explained that these were women who had not covered their hair from non-mahram men. 2. "Others were suspended by their tongues, with boiling water flowing from their throats." These, he revealed, were women who had abused and cursed their husbands with their tongues. 3. "Some were suspended by their breasts, crying out in anguish." These were women who refused to fulfill their marital duties and denied intimacy to their husbands. 4. "I saw women whose feet were being burned in fiery ovens." These were women who would leave their homes without their husbands' permission. 5. "And some sat on chairs of fire, eating their own flesh." These were women who adorned themselves and displayed their beauty to non-mahram men. 6. "Then I saw women whose hands and feet were bound, with snakes and scorpions biting them continually." These were women who neglected proper *Taharah* (purification) for their prayers, failed to perform *ghusl* (ritual bath) properly, and did not value their *Salat*, often delaying it. 7. "I witnessed women who were deaf, dumb, and blind, locked in fiery boxes, their bodies afflicted with leprosy and their flesh rotting." These were women who attributed illegitimate children to their husbands, falsely including them in their lineage and inheritance. 8. "Some women's flesh was being cut off with iron scissors." These were women who intentionally presented themselves to non-mahram men, showcasing their beauty. 9. "And then, my daughter, I saw women with the heads of pigs and the bodies of donkeys, with fire emanating from their mouths and filth from their lower parts." These were women who frequently lied, engaged in tale-telling, and spread discord within society. 10. "Finally, I saw women with dog-like heads, constantly being struck on their heads with fiery hammers by angels." These

were women given to excessive wailing and mourning, and who harbored envy and jealousy in their hearts.

After recounting these harrowing scenes to his daughter, the Prophet (s) praised those women who satisfied Allah and their husbands, deeming them most fortunate.

The journey continued, and the Prophet (s) with *Jibreel* (a) observed other groups of people undergoing specific forms of suffering in the *Barzakh*. * He saw people engaged in "farming" where, as soon as they sowed a seed, the crop immediately ripened and was harvested. *Jibreel* (a) explained that these were the *Mujahideen*, those who strive in Allah's path, and whose rewards for their efforts are instantly manifest. * Next, the Prophet (s) observed people with lips like camels' lips, being forced to eat fiery embers. *Jibreel* (a) identified them as irresponsible speakers and rhetoricians who, through their careless words, created discord and chaos in society. * He saw people with fresh, cooked food on one side and putrid, foul-smelling rotten food on the other, yet they chose to consume the rotten food. *Jibreel* (a) explained that these were men and women from his *Ummah* whom Allah had provided lawful means of livelihood, yet they chose the path of *haram* (forbidden) earnings. * There were also people with copper and iron nails, tearing at the flesh of their own faces and chests and devouring it. *Jibreel* (a) identified these as those who engaged in *ghibah* (backbiting) and slandering believers, tearing down their honor. * Then, he saw people forced to swallow large stones, which painfully passed through their throats. *Jibreel* (a) revealed these were the usurers, those who consumed *Riba* (interest) in the world.

As they proceeded, the Prophet (s) observed two angels—one on the right and one on the left. The angel on the right would call out, "O Lord, bless the wealth of those who spend in Your path!" and the faces of those who had given charity would immediately glow with joy. The angel on

the left would call out, "O Lord, destroy the wealth of those who withhold from spending in Your path!" and the faces of the miserly would be filled with sorrow, their accumulated wealth being lost.

Further on, the Prophet (s) saw people whose heads were being crushed repeatedly by large rocks, their skulls shattering only to regenerate and be crushed again. *Jibreel* (a) explained that these were people who would consistently delay their *Fajr* (dawn) prayers. * He then witnessed individuals whose cheeks and lips were being slowly cut with iron scissors. These, *Jibreel* (a) clarified, were scholars who preached to others but did not practice what they preached, remaining heedless of their own actions. * The Prophet (s) saw people being seized by angels and forced to ingest burning fire that entered their mouths and exited their lower parts, scorching their entire bodies. *Jibreel* (a) immediately recognized this as a punishment mentioned in the ***Qur'an***: ***"Indeed, those who unjustly consume the property of orphans are only consuming fire into their bellies, and they will enter a blazing fire."*** (***Surah An-Nisa***, 4:10). This severe torment was for those who consumed the wealth of orphans unjustly. * He also saw people whose very sides were being eaten away. *Jibreel* (a) explained that these were individuals who delved into the faults of believers, exposing their hidden shortcomings to the public.

Moving further, the Prophet (s) observed people wearing tattered, patched clothes, crawling on the ground like animals and grazing on whatever they found. *Jibreel* (a) identified them as the wealthy individuals from his *Ummah* who had withheld their *Zakat*, *Khums*, and other charitable obligations. Their worldly grandeur had vanished, replaced by this demeaning torment. * Next, the Prophet (s) saw a strong man struggling to lift a large bundle of wood, constantly stumbling and falling, yet he would rise only to add more wood to his already unbearable load. *Jibreel* (a) explained that this represented individuals who, already burdened with responsibilities or sins, would take on even more, delaying their repentance

and fulfillment of duties, and compounding their burdens. * Finally, the Prophet (s) saw a man whose head was stuck in a small opening in a large rock or wall, unable to move forward or backward, suffering immensely. *Jibreel* (a) explained that this was a person who spoke carelessly without thought or consideration for consequences, causing irreparable discord and mischief in society. Once their words had created a *fitna* (strife), they were unable to undo the damage, trapped in its painful aftermath.

The Prophet (s) then witnessed a truly astonishing sight: an angel whose body was half made of ice and half made of fire. Yet, neither the fire harmed the ice, nor the ice extinguished the fire. This angel constantly prayed, "O Allah, just as You have united fire and ice without them harming each other, unite the hearts of the believers in love and harmony." This unique creation served as a powerful sign from Allah, emphasizing the divine desire for unity and mutual affection among His servants.

As they approached the entrance to the second heaven, the Prophet (s) observed a final group of angels known as *Malaiqatul Khash'een* (Angels of Awe). These angels were in a perpetual state of fear and awe of Allah, constantly weeping, whether in prostration, bowing, or standing. They were utterly oblivious to anything happening around them, so engrossed were they in their worship and reverence for the Divine. *Jibreel* (a) informed the Prophet (s) that these angels had remained in this state since their creation. When *Jibreel* (a) called out to them, announcing the arrival of Allah's beloved Messenger, for the first time they broke their posture, lifted their heads, and eagerly greeted the Prophet (s) with reverence and joy, tears still streaming from their eyes.

Having passed through this profound realm, the Prophet (s) and *Jibreel* (a) reached the entrance of the second heaven. As they sought entry, the guardian angel inquired, "Who is it?" *Jibreel* (a) replied, "I am *Jibreel*, and with me is Muhammad." The angel asked if Muhammad (s) had been

sent as a Prophet and if his message had been affirmed. *Jibreel* (a) affirmed that he had. With this confirmation, the gates of the second heaven were opened, and the Prophet Muhammad (s) stepped into its realm, ready to witness further divine mysteries.

Chapter 39

The *Quraysh*'s Desperation: New Challenges and the Siege of *Shib Abi Talib*

The escalating animosity of the *Quraysh* towards Prophet Mohammad (s) continued, particularly after their initial attempts to discredit him with complex questions, instigated by Jewish scholars, had spectacularly failed. Undeterred, and still in consultation with the Jews of Medina, the *Quraysh* returned with a new set of challenges, believing these three questions to be truly unanswerable, as their answers were supposedly known only to people of the Scripture.

The first question posed to the Prophet (s) was concerning the story of the ***Ahl al-Kahf*** (People of the Cave)—who were they, how long did they sleep, and what was their full narrative? The second sought knowledge about a man who traveled to the East and West, building a great wall, seeking the story of ***Dhul-Qarnayn***. The third demanded the tale of ***Musa*** (a) and the mysterious figure ***Khidr*** (a), with whom Musa (a) sought knowledge. The *Quraysh* believed that since these stories were found in the ancient Scriptures, Prophet Mohammad (s), being illiterate, could not possibly know them.

Upon hearing these questions, the Prophet (s) declared that he would provide the answers the following day. However, a delay in divine revelation ensued. Day after day passed, and ***Jibra'il*** (a) did not descend with the answers. The *Quraysh* openly mocked and rejoiced, believing they had finally exposed the Prophet's (s) fallibility. This period also imparted a profound lesson: the Prophet (s) learned to always say ***Insha'Allah*** (if Allah wills) when promising future actions. Eventually, after a significant delay, the entirety of ***Surah Al-Kahf*** was revealed, meticulously detailing all three narratives with such precision and eloquence that it astonished the *Quraysh* and the Jews alike. The speaker highlights the extraordinary significance of ***Surah Al-Kahf*** by recalling how *Imam Husayn* (a) recited it from his spearhead in Karbala, affirming its profound spiritual depth and timeless relevance.

With their intellectual challenges effectively countered, the *Quraysh* shifted their strategy, now demanding physical miracles (*mu'jizat*) to test the Prophet (s). Abu Jahl, leading a group of Makkans, approached the Prophet (s) with specific demands, claiming to seek the kind of miracles performed by earlier prophets.

One such incident involved Abu Jahl's notorious stinginess. The Prophet (s) revealed to him that he had hidden a cooked chicken from his close friend and ally, Abd al-Bakhtari, to avoid sharing it. As the Prophet (s) spoke, the cooked chicken, which Abu Jahl had concealed in his garment, miraculously began to speak, affirming the Prophet's (s) words and exposing Abu Jahl's hidden act of miserliness. This startling event left Abu Jahl speechless, his disbelief shaking.

Another moment of challenge came when a polytheist presented the Prophet (s) with a crumbling, ancient bone, asking mockingly, "Who can resurrect this after it has turned to dust?" The Prophet (s) replied, "**He who brought it into existence the first time will bring it back to life.**" This

profound truth, echoed in ***Surah Ya Sin*** (78-79), asserted the undeniable power of the Creator over life and death.

In yet another instance, the Prophet (s) exposed Abu Jahl's deception regarding entrusted wealth. In a time without banks, people often entrusted their valuables to prominent figures. Abu Jahl had received many such trusts, including 10,000 *dirhams* from various individuals. When these people came to retrieve their money, Abu Jahl denied having it, claiming the *dirhams* were lost or worthless. The Prophet (s) then pinpointed the exact location where Abu Jahl had hidden the money within his house. To the amazement of all present, the golden *dirhams* miraculously flew out from Abu Jahl's house, forming a stack before the Prophet (s). He then called each owner by name, accurately stating their exact share, and returned their money. These undeniable demonstrations of divine knowledge and power further solidified the Prophet's (s) claim for many onlookers, though Abu Jahl remained obstinate, fearing social humiliation.

Faced with repeated intellectual and miraculous defeats, the *Quraysh* leaders, realizing they could not defeat the Prophet (s) through argument or intimidation, resorted to a desperate and comprehensive measure: a total social and economic boycott of the Banu Hashim. They convened a meeting in the ***Ka'bah*** and drafted a stringent agreement. This covenant, written and hung on the ***Ka'bah's*** wall for all to see, stipulated that no one from any *Quraysh* tribe would marry into the Banu Hashim, buy from them, sell to them, or engage in any form of social or economic interaction. The aim was to starve them into submission and force *Abu Talib* to surrender Prophet Mohammad (s).

Upon learning of this severe decree, *Abu Talib*, demonstrating his unwavering support for his nephew, rallied the entire Banu Hashim. With the exception of Abu Lahab, who sided with the *Quraysh*, the entire clan,

along with some other relatives who joined their cause, left their homes in Mecca and moved into a narrow, desolate valley known as ***Shib Abi Talib*** (the Ravine of Abu Talib). This move was a strategic decision to protect Prophet Mohammad (s) and avoid further harassment within the city.

The boycott lasted for three arduous years, during which the Banu Hashim faced extreme hardship. Food supplies dwindled, and starvation became rampant. The people, especially the children, suffered immensely from hunger, thirst, and lack of proper clothing and hygiene. Their cries of hunger could be heard echoing from the valley, causing distress even to some of the more compassionate *Quraysh* members outside.

During this period of immense suffering, the Banu Hashim approached the Prophet (s) with a particular complaint: their bodies and clothes were covered in dirt and filth due to the harsh conditions and lack of water for cleansing. The Prophet (s) instructed them to recite ***Salawat*** (blessings) upon him and his ***Ahlulbayt***. As they did so, a miracle unfolded: their bodies and clothes instantly became clean and fresh, as if they had just bathed and changed into new garments. The Prophet (s) then explained that while physical cleanliness is important, true purity lies in cleansing sins. He emphasized that continuous recitation of *Salawat* purifies one's sins, making it a powerful spiritual tool. He further alluded to a future time, the era of *Imam al-Mahdi* (a), when even the material world would respond to the recitation of *Salawat*, with trees yielding fruits and the very earth giving forth its treasures as a direct result of these blessings.

The three years in *Shib Abi Talib* were a testament to the unwavering faith and resilience of the Banu Hashim. Despite the severe trials, the constant cries of the hungry children, particularly at night, began to stir the consciences of some *Quraysh* leaders and their sympathizers, who had their own children and families. This poignant suffering eventually softened their hearts, leading to a re-evaluation of their cruel pact and setting the

stage for the eventual breaking of the boycott, a detailed account of which will follow in the next chapter.

Chapter 40

The Breaking of the Siege and the Year of Grief

Seven years had elapsed since the momentous declaration of Prophethood, and despite the *Quraysh*'s relentless efforts, Islam's influence continued to grow. The emigration of Muslims to Abyssinia and the conversion of Hamza (a) had bolstered the nascent community, leaving the *Quraysh* increasingly desperate. Their earlier attempts to discredit the Prophet (s) through intellectual challenges and demands for miracles had failed, culminating in the decisive revelations of ***Surah Al-Kahf*** and the miraculous exposures of Abu Jahl's deceit. Recognizing their inability to undermine the Prophet (s) directly, the *Quraysh* decided upon a new, devastating strategy: a complete economic and social boycott against the Banu Hashim, the Prophet's clan.

This punitive measure, a desperate act of collective oppression, was formalized in a binding agreement. Forty chieftains of the *Quraysh* affixed their signatures to this document, sealing it with forty additional seals, and hung it inside the sacred ***Ka'bah***. The terms of this covenant were severe: no one was to speak to, trade with, or marry into the Banu Hashim.

All avenues of interaction—from simple greetings to the exchange of goods and marriage proposals—were strictly forbidden. This was an attempt to isolate and starve the clan into submission, forcing *Abu Talib* to relinquish his nephew, the Prophet (s).

In response to this brutal decree, *Abu Talib*, demonstrating his unwavering protection and leadership, gathered the Banu Hashim. While Abu Lahab, driven by malice, refused to join, the entire clan, along with the Banu Muttalib (a sub-clan closely related to Banu Hashim, whose bond of kinship led them to stand in solidarity), retreated to a secluded mountainous ravine known as *Shib Abi Talib* (the Ravine of Abu Talib). This location offered a defensible position, surrounded by mountains, providing a degree of security against direct assault. Here, for three long years—though some accounts suggest two or four, the three-year duration is most widely accepted—the Prophet (s) and his clan endured extreme deprivation.

Life in *Shib Abi Talib* was a relentless struggle against hunger and thirst. The *Quraysh*'s blockade was ruthlessly enforced, preventing any food or supplies from reaching the ravine. *Abu Talib* meticulously organized the defense, assigning young men to guard the mountain passes and watch for any approaching enemies. His most profound concern, however, remained the Prophet's safety. Each night, *Abu Talib* would secretly move the Prophet (s) from his sleeping spot to another part of the ravine, then direct his beloved son, *Ali* (a), to sleep in the Prophet's original place. This act of profound sacrifice by *Ali* (a) underscored his absolute devotion and willingness to face death to protect the Messenger of Allah. This strategic movement was crucial, as there were constant fears of night attacks or assassination attempts.

Beyond internal security, *Ali* (a) also led small groups of young men out of the ravine during daylight hours, risking their lives to find food or engage in limited trade. Their attempts were often met with resistance, as

Abu Jahl and his cohorts actively discouraged any merchant from dealing with the Banu Hashim, threatening economic retaliation against anyone who defied the boycott.

Despite the comprehensive blockade, glimmers of compassion pierced the darkness. A few compassionate individuals, often motivated by familial ties, attempted to provide assistance. Among them was **Hisham ibn Amr**, a relative of *Sayyida Khadijah* (a). He devised a clever method: he would load camels with provisions and lead them close to the ravine at night. Then, he would intentionally startle the camels, causing them to bolt towards the *Shib*. The Banu Hashim, alerted, would then collect the "abandoned" supplies. Although the *Quraysh* attempted to stop him, Hisham's determination often prevailed. Other relatives, such as **Abul Bakhtari**, **Zuhayr ibn Abi Umayyah** (whose mother was *Abd al-Muttalib's* daughter), and **Zamah ibn al-Aswad**, also secretly provided aid, their actions driven by conscience and kinship, even if they were not Muslims.

The only times the besieged clans could potentially interact with the outside world were during the sacred months of *Hajj* and *Umrah*, when tribal hostilities were suspended. Even then, the *Quraysh* would actively prevent trade, with Abu Lahab trailing the Prophet (s) and warning others not to deal with him, often falsely accusing him of misleading people. The suffering inside the *Shib* reached unbearable levels. Children's cries of hunger echoed through the ravine at night, and the people were reduced to eating leaves and tree bark to survive.

The sheer inhumanity of the boycott eventually began to stir discontent among some of the more honorable *Quraysh* leaders, particularly those with strong familial ties to the Banu Hashim. **Hisham ibn Amr**, who had been secretly assisting the besieged, took the lead in seeking an end to the injustice. He approached **Zuhayr ibn Abi Umayyah**, who, as the Prophet's cousin and *Abu Talib's* nephew (through his mother, *Atika*, daugh-

ter of *Abd al-Muttalib*), felt a deep sense of shame and responsibility. Zuhayr, moved by Hisham's appeal, expressed his shock and disgust at the continued suffering of his kin while others feasted.

Together, Hisham and Zuhayr rallied other influential figures: **Mut'im ibn Adi**, a chief of the Banu Nawfal, who recognized the violation of Arab customs; **Abul Bakhtari** (a maternal relative of *Sayyida Khadijah*); and **Zamah ibn al-Aswad** (a maternal relative of Banu Hashim and *Umm Salama's* first husband). These five men, forming an unlikely alliance, secretly convened and resolved to break the oppressive agreement.

The next morning, they confronted the *Quraysh* leaders assembled at the ***Ka'bah***. Zuhayr boldly declared the boycott an act of grave injustice and demanded that the agreement be torn up. Abu Jahl, infuriated, tried to dismiss it as a pre-arranged conspiracy. However, Mut'im, Abul Bakhtari, and Zamah stepped forward, supporting Zuhayr and revealing that some of them had either refused to sign the original document or had been coerced into doing so.

At this critical juncture, *Abu Talib* arrived, accompanied by the Prophet (s). He informed the assembly that Allah had revealed to the Prophet (s) that termites had consumed the boycott document, leaving intact only the phrase "***Bismika Allahumma***" (In Your Name, O Allah) or other references to Allah's name. *Abu Talib* then challenged them, asserting that if his nephew's words were untrue, he would hand him over; but if they were true, they must revoke the unjust agreement.

The document was retrieved from the ***Ka'bah***. To the astonishment of the *Quraysh*, it was indeed found to be destroyed by termites, exactly as the Prophet (s) had foretold. The miraculous sign left the assembly speechless. Mut'im ibn Adi seized the opportunity, stepped forward, and tore the tattered remnants of the document to shreds. The boycott was officially lifted, and the Banu Hashim, along with the Banu Muttalib, re-

turned to Mecca, ending three years of unimaginable hardship.

However, the relief was short-lived, as the Prophet (s) was soon to face a profound period of personal grief, known as the ***Am al-Huzn*** (Year of Sorrow). Barely two to six months after their return from *Shib Abi Talib*, the Prophet's beloved uncle and steadfast protector, *Abu Talib*, passed away. His health, already frail, had been irrevocably weakened by the extreme privations and immense responsibilities he bore during the boycott. *Abu Talib's* final moments were filled with wisdom, as he imparted three profound pieces of advice, urging the *Quraysh* to support the Prophet (s) and foretelling their eventual downfall if they failed to do so. The Prophet (s) grieved deeply for *Abu Talib*, who was buried in *Jannat al-Mu'alla*, walking alongside his coffin and personally lowering him into the grave.

The sorrow intensified just over a month later, on the 10th of Ramadan, with the demise of *Sayyida Khadijah* (a), the Prophet's devoted wife, first convert, and unwavering pillar of support. Her passing left a void that could never be filled. The Prophet (s) comforted her in her final moments, assuring her of her exalted status in Paradise and her place among the great women of history, such as *Asiya* and *Maryam*.

The loss of *Abu Talib* was particularly impactful because his formidable presence had acted as a shield against the worst of the *Quraysh*'s malice. The Prophet (s) himself later remarked that as long as *Abu Talib* lived, the *Quraysh* dared not attack him. With his protector gone, the *Quraysh* felt emboldened, intensifying their persecution. This period of profound personal loss and increased hostility marked a turning point, signaling to the Prophet (s) that the time had come for a new phase in his mission, one that would soon involve preparing to leave Mecca.

Chapter 41

The Miraculous Night Journey to *Bayt al-Maqdis*

The departure from the confining ravine of *Shib Abi Talib* brought a brief respite, but it was swiftly followed by the profound grief of ***Am al-Huzn*** (The Year of Sorrow). The Prophet's (s) steadfast protector, *Abu Talib*, and his devoted wife, *Sayyida Khadijah* (a), had both departed this world. Their passing created an immense void, leaving the Prophet (s) vulnerable to the escalating aggression of the *Quraysh*. In this period of immense personal loss and mounting external pressure, divine solace and preparation for the future were granted through one of the most miraculous events in Islamic history: the journey of *Isra* and *Mi'raj*.

While the exact timing of this wondrous journey has been subject to scholarly discussion, many traditions affirm it occurred on the night of the 27th of Rajab, in the 10th year of the Prophethood, approximately three years before the ***Hijrah***. Some accounts suggest *Sayyida Khadijah* (a) was still alive at the time, given a narration where the Prophet (s) was instructed to convey *Salam* to her from Allah during the journey. Other narrations speak of *Abu Talib's* concern for the Prophet's (s) whereabouts on that

night. These diverse accounts highlight the significance of this event, which took place during a critical juncture in the Prophet's (s) mission.

The terms *Isra* and *Mi'raj* refer to two distinct yet interconnected parts of this miraculous journey. *Isra* signifies the night journey from Mecca to *Bayt al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem), as mentioned in ***Surah Al-Isra*** (1): ***"Glorified be He who took His servant for a journey by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa."*** *Mi'raj* refers to the ascent from *Bayt al-Maqdis* to the heavens, symbolizing a ladder or means of spiritual elevation. For the majority of *Shi'a* scholars, and a significant number of *Sunni* ones, this journey was not merely a spiritual dream or vision, but a physical and bodily ascension. *Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq* (a) explicitly stated that denying the physical *Mi'raj* is akin to denying the *Ahlulbayt*. This physical aspect underscores the extraordinary nature of the event, serving as a divine sign and a test of faith for humanity.

This journey served multiple profound purposes. Firstly, it was a direct preparation for the impending ***Hijrah*** to Medina. The Prophet (s) was given a special prayer from ***Surah Al-Isra*** (80): ***"And say: 'My Lord, cause me to enter a sound entrance and to exit a sound exit, and grant me from Yourself a powerful helper.'"*** This prayer became a constant supplication, mentally preparing him and his followers for the emigration. Secondly, the *Mi'raj* was a divine proclamation of the ***Wilayah*** (Guardianship) and immense spiritual station of *Imam Ali* (a). Throughout the journey, the Prophet (s) encountered figures who underscored *Imam Ali's* (a) unparalleled status and his future role, solidifying his position as the Prophet's (s) successor and the rightful guide for the *Ummah*.

Furthermore, the *Mi'raj* was a source of immense comfort and reassurance for the beleaguered Muslim community. After the three years of excruciating hardship and starvation during the boycott in *Shib Abi Talib*, and the subsequent loss of *Abu Talib* and *Sayyida Khadijah* (a), the *Mi'raj* offered

a glimpse into the divine realm. It confirmed the reality of Heaven, Hell, and the rewards awaiting the steadfast believers, infusing them with renewed hope and tranquility. Finally, the *Mi'raj* served as a firsthand confirmation of the unseen realities. The Prophet (s) would return to convey not what he had merely heard, but what he had witnessed with his own blessed eyes – the realities of the Hereafter, the divine throne, and the vastness of creation – thereby strengthening the faith of those who believed in the unseen.

The journey began from the house of *Umm Hani*, the Prophet's (s) cousin and the eldest daughter of *Abu Talib*, located near the *Ka'bah*. At this time, the Prophet (s) was not alone; *Sayyidina Hamza*, *Ja'far al-Tayyar*, and *Imam Ali* (a) were reportedly with him, a testament to the heightened security measures taken by the Banu Hashim given the increased hostility from the *Quraysh*.

As the Prophet (s) rested, *Jibreel* (a) appeared, accompanied by another angel who had never before descended to earth. *Jibreel* (a) awakened the Prophet (s) and, to introduce the new angel to the human realm, presented a momentous choice from Allah: the keys to all the treasures of the world, granting him immense worldly dominion, or the humble, yet supreme, station of an ***Abd*** (servant) of Allah. Without hesitation, the Prophet (s) chose complete servitude, declaring: "I accept to be a humble and lowly servant of my Lord." This profound choice underscored his absolute devotion, preferring Allah's ***Abdiyat*** (servitude) over all worldly power.

Immediately after this momentous decision, *Jibreel* (a), accompanied by *Mika'il* (a) and *Israfil* (a), presented the magnificent steed, *Buraq*. *Buraq*, described as a creature smaller than a mule but larger than a donkey, radiated light and moved with the speed of lightning. Adorned with pearls and jewels, it possessed a human-like face and a bridle made of

light. Though initially hesitant, *Buraq* reverently submitted after *Jibreel's* (a) encouragement, acknowledging the unparalleled honor of carrying the Prophet (s).

As *Buraq* began its journey, the Prophet (s) observed the swiftly passing landscapes of Mecca. At the first pass, he encountered a figure who greeted him with *Salam* and implored him to remember the status of *Imam Ali* (a). Shortly after, at the second pass, another figure appeared, conveying a similar message about *Imam Ali's* (a) unique standing. The Prophet (s) also heard calls from both the right and the left, which he ignored, and saw a beautifully adorned woman calling out to him, whom he also passed by. He then heard a terrifying sound, like stones crumbling. These encounters, later revealed to be temptations and warnings, signified the trials of the worldly life and the proximity of the Hereafter.

The journey continued, marked by stops at sacred sites where the Prophet (s) dismounted to offer two *rak'ahs* of prayer. He paused at a land that would later be known as Tayba (Medina), the destination of the ***Hijrah***. He then prayed at the Mosque of Kufa, a place revered as a prayer site for many prophets. *Buraq* then carried him to Mount Sinai, where Prophet Musa (a) had communed with Allah, and to Bethlehem, the birthplace of Prophet Isa (a). Along the way, *Buraq's* sudden movement startled a passing caravan, causing one of its camels to break its leg – an event that would later serve as a miraculous proof of the journey.

Finally, the Prophet (s) arrived at *Bayt al-Maqdis*. The city was strangely troubled that night; its main gate was left open due to a lost key, a subtle sign of the impending blessed arrival. The Prophet (s) tied *Buraq* to the very same ring where previous prophets had tethered their mounts. Upon entering the mosque, he found it filled with a multitude of prophets and messengers – reportedly 4,140 of them – all gathered to receive him. An eminent figure, bearing a striking resemblance to the Prophet (s) him-

self, greeted him, echoing the profound message regarding *Imam Ali's* (a) exalted status. *Jibreel* (a) then called the *Adhan*, notably including the phrase ***"Hayya 'ala Khayril 'Amal"*** (Hasten to the best of deeds), followed by the *Iqamah*. Standing as the Imam, Prophet Muhammad (s) led all the assembled prophets in prayer, a testament to his universal prophethood and leadership over all divine messengers.

After the congregational prayer, *Jibreel* (a) presented three vessels from beneath the rock where *Buraq* had been tied: one of water, one of wine, and one of milk. The Prophet (s) chose the milk, rejecting the others. *Jibreel* (a) affirmed his choice, signifying that milk symbolized purity, divine guidance, and the innate human disposition towards truth (***fitra***). Having completed the earthly leg of his miraculous journey, the Prophet (s) was now ready to embark on the celestial ascent to the heavens, a journey of even greater wonder and divine revelation.

Chapter 42

The Ascent Begins: Lessons from the First Heaven

The miraculous journey of *Isra* and *Mi'raj*, a profound testament to Allah's boundless power and a pivotal experience for the Prophet Muhammad (s), continued its unfolding. Having led the congregational prayer of all prophets at *Bayt al-Maqdis*, the Prophet (s) was now prepared for the ascent into the heavens. It is noteworthy that the *Mi'raj* is not a singular event but, according to various traditions, occurred more than once – at least twice, once from Mecca and once from Medina, with some accounts suggesting as many as one hundred and twenty such ascensions. This multiplicity helps reconcile some apparent discrepancies in narrations regarding the journey's starting point or mode of transport. The purpose of this grand journey, however, remained consistent: to reveal the unseen, to solidify the divine *Wilayah* of *Imam Ali* (a), to comfort the beleaguered Muslim community, and to grant the Prophet (s) profound insights into the spiritual realities of creation.

As *Buraq* ascended from *Bayt al-Maqdis* towards the heavens, the journey unfolded with a series of significant encounters, even before reaching the

celestial spheres. As the Prophet (s) travelled, he was addressed by unseen voices. At the first pass from Mecca, a voice called out, "O First! O Last! O Gatherer! Be mindful of the sanctity of your brother Ali!" A similar call echoed from the second pass. These were reminders of *Imam Ali's* (a) exalted status. Further along, voices from the right and the left called out to the Prophet (s). These represented the temptations of Judaism and Christianity, inviting him to deviate. However, the Prophet (s) remained steadfast, unwavering in his divine path. Then, a beautifully adorned woman appeared, attempting to block his way. This was the embodiment of *dunya* (worldly life), with all its allure and transient beauty. The Prophet (s), focused on his divine mission, paid her no heed. This moment served as a profound lesson for his *Ummah*: to never let the fleeting attractions of this world divert them from their true purpose.

As *Buraq* continued its ascent, a terrifying sound of a falling stone reverberated, followed by a blast of scorching heat. Gabriel (a) explained that this was the sound of a stone reaching the bottom of Hellfire, a journey that takes seventy years. Immediately thereafter, the melodious sounds of birds singing and a refreshing, cool breeze enveloped them. This was the gentle touch of Paradise. These stark contrasts – the terror of Hell and the bliss of Paradise – served as vivid manifestations of divine justice and mercy, further strengthening the Prophet's (s) resolve and underscoring the realities of the Hereafter.

Finally, the *Buraq* reached the portal of the first heaven. The path, however, was blocked. This barrier had been in place since the Prophet's (s) blessed birth, preventing access to the higher heavens, a testament to his unique status. A majestic angel named Ismail, also known as ***Sahib al-Khatfa*** (the owner of the snatch), stood guard. He was the chief of a thousand angels, responsible for repelling any devils who tried to eavesdrop on the heavens by striking them with luminous meteors, as described in ***Surah as-Saffat*** (37:9-10): ***"Except one who snatches a fragment*** [***of***

speech*] *and is pursued by a flaming comet."

Gabriel (a) knocked at the gate. Ismail, recognizing Gabriel, inquired about his companion, astonished by the unusual presence. Gabriel announced, "This is the Master of Creation, the Master of Prophets!" Ismail, overcome with awe, asked if he had been "sent" – meaning, had he formally declared his prophethood? Upon Gabriel's affirmative reply, Ismail opened the gate of the first heaven.

As the Prophet (s) entered, he was met with an overwhelming welcome. Rows upon rows of angels stood in reverence, awaiting his arrival. In an act of profound humility, the Prophet (s) was the first to offer salutations to Ismail, the guardian of the first heaven. The entire host of angels then gathered, announcing his arrival, proclaiming, "Come and behold the Messenger of Allah! Come and behold your Master!" Every angel was filled with immense joy, their faces radiating happiness and smiles.

Amidst this joyous reception, the Prophet (s) noticed one angel seated, solemn and unsmiling. This angel, though standing respectfully upon the Prophet's (s) approach, showed no change in his stern countenance. The Prophet (s) inquired of Gabriel (a) about his identity. Gabriel replied, "O Messenger of Allah, this is *Malik*, the guardian of Hell. He was created without the ability to smile or show joy. If he had ever smiled before you, or if he were to smile after you, he would certainly have smiled for you. But Allah created him this way, for his duty demands such severity." This encounter underscored the necessity of strictness in maintaining divine order and emphasized the terrifying reality of Hell.

The Prophet (s) then commanded *Malik* to show him Hell. With a mere gesture, *Malik* caused a colossal flame to erupt from Hell. The flame surged with such intensity that it engulfed the entirety of the first heaven and began to ascend towards the second. Even the angels, who are impervious to Hellfire, cried out in fear. Witnessing its immensity, the Prophet

(s) commanded the flame to recede, and it instantly returned to its abyss. This terrifying glimpse was a powerful lesson in the gravity of divine punishment and a reminder for humanity to guard against actions that lead to such a dreadful fate.

Continuing his journey through the first heaven, the Prophet (s) encountered a perfectly formed, beautiful human being, appearing flawless in every aspect. This was Prophet Adam (a). Adam (a) sat watching the procession. The Prophet (s) observed him looking to his right and smiling, then looking to his left and weeping. Upon inquiry, Gabriel (a) explained that Adam (a) was witnessing the deeds of his descendants. To his right, he saw the righteous ones, whose good deeds brought him joy, prompting smiles. To his left, he saw the sinful ones, whose transgressions caused him profound sorrow, bringing tears to his eyes. The Prophet (s) greeted Adam (a), who stood to embrace him, acknowledging his exalted status.

Finally, the Prophet (s) encountered *Malik al-Mawt*, the Angel of Death. This angel appeared formidable, with countless hands, swiftly moving them over a luminous tablet. *Malik al-Mawt* explained that as names appeared on the tablet, he would rapidly take the souls of those whose appointed time had come. The Prophet (s) asked *Malik al-Mawt* if he had ever wept or felt astonishment while performing his duty.

Malik al-Mawt recounted two profound instances. He said he wept once when he was commanded to sink a ship. All on board perished, save for an infant boy who was cast adrift on a wooden plank. *Malik al-Mawt* was commanded not to touch his soul. He wept at the child's utter helplessness and loneliness in the vast ocean. He then recounted feeling immense astonishment when he was commanded to take the soul of *Shaddad*, a powerful king who had built a magnificent paradise on earth, declaring himself a god. As *Shaddad* entered his man-made paradise, *Malik al-Mawt*

was commanded to take his soul before his horse could take another two steps. The Angel of Death was astonished by the contrast between *Shaddad's* immense power and his utter helplessness in the face of divine decree.

It was then revealed to the Prophet (s) that the helpless infant on the plank, for whom *Malik al-Mawt* had wept, was none other than *Shaddad*. Allah had saved him, guided him to a benevolent king, and bestowed upon him immense worldly power, making him a ruler over the entire world—a grace that was ultimately met with ingratitude and a claim to divinity. This narrative, unveiled in the first heaven, underscored the profound human tendency towards ingratitude and reminded the Prophet (s) of the transient nature of worldly power before his ultimate ascent.

These encounters in the first heaven were not mere spectacles but deep symbolic lessons, revealing the ultimate realities of divine justice, human nature, and the transient allure of *dunya*. Each step of the *Mi'raj* served to fortify the Prophet's (s) spirit and prepare him for the monumental task ahead.

Chapter 43

The Celestial Ascent: Encounters in the Seven Heavens

The miraculous journey of *Mi'raj* continued as the Prophet Muhammad (s) ascended through the celestial spheres, drawing ever closer to the divine presence. This profound voyage was intimately described in ***Surah An-Najm*** (53:13-18): "***And he certainly saw him in another descent, at the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary*** (***Sidrat al-Muntaha***), ***near which is the Garden of Abode*** (***Jannat al-Ma'wa***). ***When there covered the Lote Tree that which covered it. The sight*** (of the Prophet) ***did not swerve, nor did it transgress. He certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.***" This ***Sidrat al-Muntaha***, the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary, marked the furthest point of creation, beyond which even the Archangel Gabriel (a) could not pass.

The journey through the seven heavens revealed distinct characteristics and significant encounters. The traditions indicate that these heavens were structured in stages of increasing spiritual intensity and separation from the earthly realm. The first, second, and third heavens were relatively close to each other, forming one segment. However, the transi-

tion from the third to the fourth heaven, and subsequently from the seventh heaven into the realm beyond, presented immense distances and formidable obstacles, representing the most challenging phases of the *Mi'raj*.

Throughout his ascent through each of the seven heavens, several recurring themes emerged: Firstly, the Prophet (s) encountered groups of angels known as *Malai'katul Khashi'een*, angels utterly absorbed in worship, continuously bowing, prostrating, or standing in prayer for eons since their creation. Their singular focus was on divine devotion, momentarily pausing only to greet and converse with the Prophet (s). Secondly, at the gates of each heaven, the Prophet (s) observed a luminous inscription of the sacred *Kalima*: "***La Ilaha Illallah, Muhammadur Rasoolullah, Ali ibn Abi Talib Amirul Momineen***" (There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, Ali son of Abu Talib is the Commander of the Believers). This declaration was consistently displayed, signifying the interconnectedness of divine unity, prophethood, and *wilayah*. Thirdly, in each heaven, the Prophet (s) was shown a magnificent palace, initially silver in the first heaven, then gold in the second, and red ruby in the third. These palaces were guarded by two angels, and upon inquiry, it was revealed that each was destined for a young man from the Banu Hashim. Fourthly, the angels in every heaven advised the Prophet (s) to convey to his *Ummah* the importance of *hijamah*, or cupping/bloodletting, as a means of purifying the body and promoting well-being. Finally, in every heaven, the angels expressed profound reverence for *Imam Ali* (a), asking about his well-being and reiterating his exalted status. Furthermore, it was revealed that the *Adhan* (call to prayer) began to be taught to the Prophet (s) in fragments from the first heaven, becoming complete upon reaching *Sidrat al-Muntaha*.

The Second Heaven: Prophets Yahya and Isa Continuing his ascent, the Prophet (s) reached the second heaven, which, like the first, was ini-

tially sealed until Gabriel (a) announced the Prophet's arrival. Inside, the Prophet (s) was greeted by two prophets who bore a striking resemblance to each other, like identical twins: Prophet Yahya (a) and Prophet Isa (a). They welcomed the Prophet (s) with great joy and reverence, affirming their anticipation of his arrival. Prophet Yahya (a) was remembered for his martyrdom at the hands of a tyrannical ruler of his time, an act for which Allah exacted a swift worldly retribution upon the perpetrators. Prophet Isa (a) was remembered for his miraculous ascension to the heavens. Here, the Prophet (s) was also taught certain fundamental obligatory duties essential for the Muslim *Ummah*.

The Third Heaven: Prophet Yusuf From the second, the Prophet (s) journeyed to the third heaven. Here, he met Prophet Yusuf (a), whose radiant face shone like the full moon, a testament to his unmatched beauty, surpassed only by the infallible ***Ahlulbayt***. Prophet Yusuf (a) also welcomed the Prophet (s) with great warmth. After this encounter, *Buraq*, the luminous steed, came to a halt. For the onward journey, a new celestial conveyance, a palanquin made of forty different divine lights—including red, gold, green, and white hues—appeared, adorned with veils of gold and silver. The Prophet (s) then transitioned from *Buraq* to this majestic vehicle of light.

The Fourth Heaven: Prophet Idris and the Vision of Ali's Followers The ascent between the third and fourth heavens was described as particularly challenging, marked by significant distance and numerous barriers. Upon entering the fourth heaven, the Prophet (s)'s light conveyance was again met with great eagerness by angels who rarely descended to the earthly realm. Here, the Prophet (s) met Prophet Idris (a), a figure of profound wisdom and lofty spiritual station, of whom the ***Qur'an*** states in ***Surah Maryam*** (19:57): "***And We raised him to a high station.***" Prophet Idris (a) welcomed the Prophet (s), sharing tales of his own experience, including his eagerness to embrace death after witnessing the blessings

of Paradise. Prophet Idris (a) then revealed to the Prophet (s) a magnificent structure resembling a city, destined for the gathering of the lovers and followers of *Imam Ali* (a).

The angels of the fourth heaven, rarely encountering earthly beings, showed intense yearning for knowledge of *Imam Ali* (a). They fervently inquired about his well-being, stating that their very creation was bound by a covenant to acknowledge Allah's oneness, the Prophet's prophethood, and *Ali's wilayah*. They described how they constantly send blessings upon *Imam Ali* (a). Furthermore, the Prophet (s) was shown a *resemblance* of *Imam Ali* (a) in this heaven. Gabriel (a) explained that this divine manifestation was a testament to the angels' longing to behold the face of *Imam Ali* (a), a privilege often granted to humans on earth.

The Fifth Heaven: Prophet Daniyal and the Image of Hussain The journey to the fifth heaven commenced with the light conveyance imbued with forty additional lights, further enhancing its luminosity. In the fifth heaven, the Prophet (s) met Prophet Daniyal (a), renowned for his exceptional wisdom, particularly his ability to interpret dreams and communicate with animals, as evidenced by his miraculous survival in the lion's den. Prophet Daniyal (a) received the Prophet (s) with warmth.

Here, the Prophet (s) observed another representation: a *picture* of *Imam Ali* (a). The angels of this heaven, like those before them, expressed their deep longing to witness *Imam Ali* (a) and his followers. A profound revelation occurred here: while there was initially one picture of *Imam Ali* (a), now there were two—one of *Imam Ali* (a) and another of *Imam Hussain* (a). The angels were seen mourning *Imam Hussain* (a) and invoking curses upon his oppressors, highlighting the enduring sorrow of Karbala even in the heavens. The angels of the fifth heaven proudly declared that they observed the faces of *Imam Ali's* followers five times a day during their prayers, seeking blessings from their devotion. When the Prophet

(s) inquired if they truly knew *Imam Ali* (a), their response underscored their deep celestial connection.

The Sixth Heaven: Prophet Musa and Bayt al-Ma'mur's Hajj As the Prophet (s) ascended to the sixth heaven, he met Prophet Musa (a), described as a tall figure with a dark complexion. Prophet Musa (a) welcomed him with immense humility, acknowledging Prophet Muhammad (s)'s superior status and weeping, wishing his own *Ummah* had been granted the same blessings.

The angels in this heaven, too, eagerly surrounded the Prophet (s), inquiring about *Imam Ali* (a). They explained that their covenant of creation included acknowledging Allah's oneness, the Prophet's prophethood, and *Ali's wilayah*. These angels further revealed that they annually perform *Hajj* (pilgrimage) at *Bayt al-Ma'mur*, the celestial *Ka'bah*, located in the seventh heaven. There, they consulted a vast register containing the names of *Imam Ali's* followers, seeking blessings from their devotion. They specifically requested the Prophet (s) to convey their greetings to *Imam Ali* (a) upon his return.

The Seventh Heaven: Bayt al-Ma'mur, Jannat al-Ma'wa, and Sidrat al-Muntaha The journey to the seventh heaven marked the culmination of the ascent, with the light conveyance now infused with an additional forty lights, radiating unparalleled brilliance. This heaven contained three profoundly significant locations: *Bayt al-Ma'mur*, *Jannat al-Ma'wa*, and *Sidrat al-Muntaha*.

Bayt al-Ma'mur: The celestial ***Ka'bah*** stood here, with 70,000 angels constantly performing *tawaf* (circumambulation) around it. So vast was the angelic multitude that once an angel completed its *tawaf*, it would never get another turn. The Prophet (s) observed that *Bayt al-Ma'mur* was located directly above the earthly ***Ka'bah***, allowing for an immediate spiritual connection. The Prophet (s) then entered *Bayt al-Ma'mur* and per-

formed a two-unit prayer within it, a unique act of reverence. He perceived some of his companions, such as Salman and Abu Dharr, accompanying him inside, their clean garments symbolizing their spiritual purity and readiness, while others with older clothes remained outside, representing those who would later attain such spiritual proximity.

Tuba and the Rivers of Paradise: Beyond *Bayt al-Ma'mur*, the journey led to *Tuba*, a colossal tree of Paradise whose shade extended for a journey of a hundred years. From beneath *Tuba*, two rivers flowed: *Kawthar* and *Salsabil*. The Prophet (s) partook from *Kawthar* and performed a ritual ablution in *Salsabil*. He also observed four other rivers of Paradise: rivers of pure water, milk, honey, and a purified wine.

Prophet Ibrahim and the Children of Ali's Followers: Underneath a tree in Paradise, the Prophet (s) encountered Prophet Ibrahim (a), who remarkably resembled him. Prophet Ibrahim (a) was seen nurturing and raising the children of *Imam Ali's* followers who had passed away in their early years. This vision was later recounted by the Prophet (s) and the *Imams* (a) to comfort grieving parents, assuring them that their departed children were under the care of Prophet Ibrahim (a) in Paradise. Prophet Ibrahim (a) described how the branches of *Tuba* would bend to offer fruits to these children, similar to a mother nourishing her child, providing them with whatever delicacy they desired.

The Fragrance of Fatima: A profound revelation occurred concerning *Sayyida Fatima* (a). During an earlier *Mi'raj* (which occurred in the fifth year of prophethood, prior to this specific journey in the tenth year), the Prophet (s) had partaken of a date from Paradise that was sweeter than honey and more fragrant than musk. From the essence of that heavenly fruit, *Sayyida Fatima* (a) was conceived in this world. This divine origin explained why the Prophet (s) frequently savored the unique, ethereal fragrance emanating from *Sayyida Fatima's* (a) blessed body. This celes-

tial aroma was a direct result and a continuous blessing of that specific miraculous journey and the heavenly fruit.

The angels in the seventh heaven also affirmed their constant veneration for *Imam Ali* (a) and his followers, stating that every Friday, they take the names of *Imam Ali's* devotees, seeking blessings from their devotion. The journey through the heavens continued to unfold mysteries and confirm the profound spiritual connections between the Prophet (s), his ***Ahlul-bayt***, and the celestial realms.

Chapter 44

The Pinnacle of Ascension: Beyond Sidrat al-Muntaha

Following the profound spiritual journey through the seven heavens and the visit to the celestial ***Ka'bah***, *Bayt al-Ma'mur*, the Prophet Muhammad (s) continued his ascent. He had already witnessed *Tuba*, a tree of Paradise, with rivers like *Kawthar* and *Salsabil* flowing beneath it, from which he drank and bathed, and met Prophet Ibrahim (a) nurturing the souls of deceased children of *Imam Ali's* (a) followers. A significant revelation during this segment of the *Mi'raj* affirmed that *Sayyida Fatima's* (a) unique fragrance originated from a heavenly date the Prophet (s) had eaten during an earlier *Mi'raj*, underscoring her unparalleled celestial origin and purity.

The Prophet (s) then witnessed remarkable sights within Paradise. He observed angels diligently constructing magnificent palaces, the progress of which was directly linked to the remembrance of Allah (***dhikr***) by believers on Earth. It was revealed that the more swiftly and devotedly a believer engaged in *dhikr*, such as uttering "***Subhanallah wal-hamdulillah wa la ilaha illallah wallahu akbar***," the faster their palace in Paradise

was built. Conversely, slow or intermittent *dhikr* resulted in slow construction, and if a believer ceased *dhikr*, the construction would halt. This highlighted the continuous connection between earthly devotion and celestial reward. The Prophet (s) also witnessed trees growing in Paradise only to be consumed by flames, a stark illustration that these trees represented the good deeds that would be nullified by acts like backbiting (*gheebat*) and slander in the worldly life.

The journey brought the Prophet (s) to *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary. This majestic tree, as described in ***Surah An-Najm*** (53:14), marked the ultimate limit of creation, a point beyond which no created being, not even the most exalted angels like Gabriel (a), could pass. It was a divine boundary, a clear demarcation for all celestial beings. Gabriel (a), who had accompanied the Prophet (s) throughout this extraordinary journey, paused here. He conveyed to the Prophet (s) that if he were to advance even a finger-breadth further, he would be consumed by divine light. *Sidrat al-Muntaha* stood as a visible sign, a testament to the fact that beyond this point lay a realm accessible only to the Seal of Prophets.

As Gabriel (a) remained behind, the Prophet (s) continued his solitary ascent. He traversed through four magnificent veils of light, darkness, fire, and water, each representing distinct stages of divine proximity. Before entering the ultimate presence, a divine voice instructed the Prophet (s) to perform *wudu* from the "Fountain of Sa'ad." The Prophet (s) performed ablution, washing his face, then his right hand, then his left, then wiping his head, and then his feet. This act of purification became the template for the ritual ablution for all Muslims, establishing its profound spiritual significance and connection to divine communion.

After completing *wudu*, the Prophet (s) approached seven veils of intense light. With the lifting of each veil, a divine voice instructed him

to proclaim "***Allahu Akbar***" (Allah is the Greatest), which he did seven times. As the last veil was removed, the Prophet (s) was commanded to recite "***Wajjahtu wajhiya lilladhi fataras samawati wal-ard, hanifan muslima***" (***Surah Al-An'am*** 6:79), a prayer of absolute submission. This sequence of actions and pronouncements was later embodied in the *takbirat al-ihram* (opening *takbirs*) and initial supplications of the daily *Salah*.

Then came the moment of ultimate proximity. A voice commanded the Prophet (s) to call upon Allah by His name. The Prophet (s) began with "***Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim***," followed by "***Alhamdulillahi Rabbil 'Alamin***" and "***Ar-Rahmanir Rahim***," echoing the verses of ***Surah Al-Fatiha***. He then recited ***Surah Al-Ikhlas*** (***Qul Huwallahu Ahad***), proclaiming Allah's absolute Oneness. During this profound communion, the Prophet (s) experienced such immense divine light that his body was completely immersed in it. Overwhelmed by awe, he involuntarily bowed, uttering "***Subhana Rabbiyal 'Azim wa Bihamdih***," thus establishing the *dhikr* of *ruku'*. He then prostrated, proclaiming "***Subhana Rabbiyal A'la wa Bihamdih***," establishing the *dhikr* of *sujud*.

The Prophet (s) was then shown countless scrolls of deeds under the Divine Throne (***Arsh***), row upon row, stretching endlessly. Each scroll bore the name of a follower of *Imam Ali* (a) who would come into existence until the Day of Judgment. Angels were assigned to each scroll, awaiting the birth of that believer to pray for them and present their scroll on the Day of Judgment as a certificate of salvation from the hardships of the Hereafter. The Prophet (s) also witnessed a vision of *Sayyida Fatima's* (a) dowry on the ***Arsh***, a testament to her elevated status.

Throughout the heavens and beyond *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, the Prophet (s) continuously observed the inscription "***La ilaha illallah, Muhammadun Rasulullah, Aliyyun Waliullah***" (There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, Ali is the Guardian of Allah). This inscription

was present on every heaven, on *Sidrat al-Muntaha* itself, and even on the Divine Throne, unequivocally confirming the integral position of *Imam Ali's* (a) ***Wilayah*** within the divine plan.

Upon his return, the Prophet (s) led all the prophets in a congregational prayer at *Bayt al-Maqdis*, reaffirming his universal prophethood. The journey, *Isra* and *Mi'raj*, culminated in the establishment of the five daily prayers, revealing their form and significance, and underscoring that *Salah* is the *Mi'raj* of the believer. The Prophet (s) explained that the two *rak'ahs* of Dhuhr and Asr were silent because they were performed for the listening angels, while the *Fajr*, *Maghrib*, and *Isha* prayers involved audible recitation for different reasons. The experience of the *Mi'raj* provided solace to the Prophet (s) and the suffering Muslim community, prepared him for the impending ***Hijrah***, and solidified the divine ***Wilayah*** of *Imam Ali* (a) as a central pillar of Islamic faith.

Chapter 45

The Solitary Ascent: Divine Dialogue and the Ummah's Blessings

The miraculous journey of *Isra* and *Mi'raj* reached its most profound and solitary zenith as the Prophet Mohammad (s) arrived at ***Sidrat al-Muntaha***, the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary. This majestic tree, as previously described, marked the absolute limit of creation, a threshold beyond which even the venerable *Sayyid al-Mala'ika*, Gabriel (a), could not venture. Gabriel (a) himself declared, "If I were to advance a hair's breadth further, I would surely burn." This boundary, a divinely appointed sign, delineates the extent of knowledge for all angels and prophets, symbolizing the exclusive realm reserved for the Prophet (s). It is here that the celestial angels tasked with recording earthly deeds place their scrolls, for beyond this point, their knowledge does not extend.

At this hallowed threshold, a unique separation occurred. Gabriel (a), the constant companion of the Prophet (s) throughout his ascent, remained behind, leaving the Beloved of Allah to proceed alone into the ultimate Presence. The Prophet (s) then traversed through seventy thousand veils of light and darkness, each representing a profound layer of divine mys-

tery and separation from the created realm. As he journeyed through these veils, he witnessed divine manifestations, and notably, at several points, including at *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, he encountered the spiritual form or image of *Imam Ali* (a). During the direct divine communion that followed, the voice of the Divine manifested in the voice of *Imam Ali* (a), a profound testament to the unparalleled spiritual connection between *Imam Ali* (a) and the Divine, and his unique status as the Prophet's (s) true partner and successor. The Prophet (s) described the light he encountered as so intense that had any other being witnessed it, their eyes would have been blinded, yet his own eyes remained steadfast and focused.

In this sublime state of utter solitude and direct communion, the Prophet (s) heard the divine voice reciting verses from the Holy Qur'an: **_"Āmanar Rasūlu bimā unzila ilayhi min Rabbihī"** (The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord - ***Surah Al-Baqarah***, 2:285). Immediately, the Prophet's (s) tongue responded, reciting the very next verse: ***"Wal-Mu'minūna kullun āmana billāhi wa Malā'ikatihī wa Kutubihī wa Rusulihī lā nufarriqu bayna ahadin min Rusulihī wa qālū sami'nā wa ata'nā ghufrānaka Rabbanā wa ilaykal Masīr"*** (And the believers, all of them, have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers. 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers.' And they say, 'We hear and we obey. Grant us Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the return' - ***Surah Al-Baqarah***, 2:285). Following this, the Prophet (s) offered a heartfelt *du'a* for his *Ummah* based on the subsequent verse: ***"Rabbanā lā tu'ākhidhnā in nasīnā aw akhta'nā Rabbanā wa lā tahmil 'alaynā isran kamā hamaltahū 'alal-ladhīna min qablinā Rabbanā wa lā tuhammilnā mā lā tāqata lanā bihī wa'fu 'annā waghfir lanā warhamnā Anta Mawlānā fansurnā 'alal-qawmil-kāfirīn"*** (Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred. Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid

upon those before us. Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear. And pardon us; and forgive us; and have mercy upon us. You are our Protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people - ***Surah Al-Baqarah***, 2:286).

In response to this profound *du'a* for his *Ummah*, Allah revealed numerous divine gifts and easements, distinguishing the *Ummah* of Prophet Mohammad (s) with unparalleled mercy compared to previous nations: * **Purity**: While prior communities required water for ritual purity, this *Ummah* was granted the facility of *tayammum* (dry ablution) when water was unavailable. * **Cleanliness of Clothes**: If garments became impure, previous nations had to cut off the soiled part; for this *Ummah*, a simple washing with water suffices to purify the garment. * **Prayer Locations**: Prayer was previously restricted to mosques; for this *Ummah*, any clean place on Earth became permissible for prayer. * **Number of Prayers**: The fifty daily prayers decreed during the *Mi'raj* were reduced to five, yet the reward for the five remained equivalent to that of fifty, a monumental act of divine generosity. * **Charity**: The required proportion for *zakat* was reduced to 1/40th from a prior requirement of 1/4th. * **Acceptance of Sacrifice**: Previously, sacrifices were accepted only if consumed by a divine fire descending from the heavens, a public display. For this *Ummah*, acceptance is determined by feeding the poor, and the act remains private, preserving dignity. * **Forgiveness for Forgetfulness**: Sins committed out of forgetfulness, such as inadvertently eating during a fast, are forgiven. * **Doubtful Matters**: Permission to use things about which there is doubt regarding their purity or permissibility. * **Apostasy**: If a believer apostatizes and then returns to Islam, their previous good deeds are not nullified, unlike the strict rulings for past nations. * **Concealment of Sins**: Allah conceals the sins of this *Ummah*, preventing public disgrace. Angels recording deeds are changed between day and night, adding to this divine concealment. * **No Transformation**: Unlike past nations whose

transgressions led to physical transformations into animals, this *Ummah* is spared such a fate. * **Specific Good Deeds Erase Sins**: Certain virtuous acts, such as *Hajj*, *Jihad*, or assisting in the proper burial of a deceased person, can immediately erase all previous sins. * **Reward for Intention**: Merely intending to perform a good deed earns a reward, and if the deed is completed, the reward is multiplied. * **No Sin for Intention**: Intending to commit a bad deed is not recorded as a sin, and abandoning such an intention is rewarded as a good deed. * **Immediate Acceptance of Repentance**: Sincere repentance is accepted immediately, without the long periods of waiting or severe penance required from previous nations.

The divine dialogue continued, with Allah asking the Prophet (s) if he recognized his unparalleled status. Allah reaffirmed His absolute Oneness, commanding the Prophet (s) to worship and rely *only* on Him. It was further revealed that the angels of the *Arsh* (Divine Throne) frequently discussed the most virtuous deeds, highlighting the importance of actions like proper *wudu*, walking to congregational prayers, awaiting the next prayer, greeting others with *salam*, feeding others, and performing *Salat al-Layl* (Night Prayer) while others sleep.

A most profound revelation followed in a lengthy dialogue known as the ***Hadith al-Mi'raj***. During this, Allah explicitly declared to the Prophet (s) His selection of ***Ali ibn Abi Talib*** (a) from all creation to be his successor, his inheritor of knowledge, and the one who would quench the thirst of all believers on the Day of Judgment. The divine decree was clear: anyone hostile to the Prophet (s) or his ***Ahlulbayt*** (a) would gain nothing in the afterlife. Conversely, those who loved the *Ahlulbayt* (a) would be protected.

The divine revelation also confirmed the lineage of the Prophet's (s) successors through *Imam Ali* (a), specifically mentioning eleven Imams from his progeny. The last of these, ***Imam Mahdi*** (a), was foretold to fill the

earth with justice after it had been consumed by oppression, restoring peace and truth. This grand vision of the future was accompanied by portents of the End Times preceding *Imam Mahdi's* (a) advent: knowledge would diminish, ignorance would prevail, many would recite the Holy Qur'an but few would act upon its teachings, widespread injustice and immorality would proliferate, true jurists would become rare while those of misguidance would increase, people would turn graves into places of excessive veneration (as mosques), mosques themselves would be overly adorned, corruption would become rampant, and rulers would be tyrannical, supported by equally corrupt aides. Events like the appearance of *Sufyani* and *Dajjal* were also mentioned.

The Prophet (s) then prostrated in gratitude and requested divine grace for his *Ummah*. Allah affirmed His abundant mercy, stating that His mercy always precedes His wrath. Towards the end of this unique communion, the Prophet (s) was addressed by Allah as ***Khatim*** (the Seal), signifying his role as the ultimate seal of divine mercy, through whom grace would be dispensed to creation.

Having received these momentous revelations and divine commands, the Prophet (s) began his rapid descent. The incredible compression of time was evident: the door latch he had disturbed upon his departure was still moving, and the water from a spilled pot was still flowing, as if only a moment had passed. Upon his return to Mecca, *Abu Talib* (a), always watchful and protective of his nephew, was present, having performed a vigil.

The next morning, as the Prophet (s) entered the *Masjid al-Haram*, he was confronted by *Abu Jahl*, who often mocked his revelations. *Abu Jahl* challenged him to recount his journey. The Prophet (s) bravely declared his night journey to *Bayt al-Maqdis* and his ascent through the heavens. The *Quraysh* leaders, summoned by *Abu Jahl*, dismissed this as impossible.

To prove the truth of his journey, the Prophet (s) provided an incredibly detailed description of *Bayt al-Maqdis*, including the number of its gates, pillars, and arches – details that only someone who had physically been there could know, astonishing the *Quraysh* merchants who had traveled to Jerusalem. He further provided two miraculous signs: a description of a caravan they would encounter on the return journey, including a lost camel, and another caravan with a water pot from which he had drunk and spilled some, a sign which was later confirmed by the caravan owners themselves. Despite these undeniable proofs, some *Quraysh* disbelieved, dismissing it as magic. However, for those seeking truth, these accounts solidified his prophethood.

The *Mi'raj* journey also included a significant *du'a* for the impending ***Hijrah*** (migration) to Medina, as revealed in ***Surah Al-Isra*** (17:80): ***"Rabbi adkhilnī mudkhala ṣidqin wa akhrijnī mukhraja ṣidqin waj'al lī min ladunka sulṭānan naṣīrā"*** (My Lord, cause me to enter a sound entrance and to exit a sound exit, and grant me from Yourself a supporting authority). This prayer, emphasizing a "supporting authority," implicitly alluded to the divine appointment of *Imam Ali* (a) as the Prophet's (s) powerful aide and successor. Furthermore, the Prophet (s) was given fourteen fundamental principles for establishing a righteous Islamic society in Medina, forming the bedrock of just governance and communal life. These divine revelations and confirmations served to prepare the Prophet (s) and his *Ummah* for the next monumental phase of their mission, establishing the foundations of the Islamic state and safeguarding the pure lineage of leadership.

Chapter 46

The Return from *Mi'raj*: Divine Inscriptions and Earthly Skepticism

Upon the culmination of the ***Mi'raj*** journey, having received the profound divine commandments and witnessed the ultimate realities, the Prophet Muhammad (s) began his swift descent back to Mecca. As he retraced his path through the celestial spheres, Gabriel (a) awaited him at *Sidrat al-Muntaha*. Their journey back to earth, though rapid, was not without further revelation and spiritual lessons.

At one point during their descent, Gabriel (a) posed a question to the Prophet (s), inquiring if he had observed the inscriptions upon the gates of Paradise and Hell during his prior visitation. Though the Prophet (s) had indeed passed through them and witnessed their realities, he admitted that he had not specifically focused on the writings. Upon this, a profound request was made: the Prophet (s) desired to return to the vicinity of *Jannah* and *Jahannam* to carefully observe these divine inscriptions, understanding their immense significance for his ***Ummah***. Thus, Gabriel (a) accompanied the Prophet (s) back to the celestial realms where these momentous gates stood.

Paradise, as revealed, possesses eight distinct gates, each bearing unique guidance, while Hell has seven. The Prophet (s) was informed that unlike the gates of Paradise, the gates of Hell require no special 'passport' or key, for they are open to those who choose that path.

The Prophet (s) first approached the eight gates of Paradise, and upon each, he saw the fundamental declaration inscribed: ***La ilaha illallah, Muhammadun Rasulullah, Aliyyun Waliullah***. Beneath this universal truth, each gate carried specific admonitions and pathways to success, both in this world and the hereafter.

The **first gate**, named *Bab al-Ma'rifa* (the Gate of Knowledge/Recognition), carried a profound message: every joy and success in this world has a cause. It revealed four keys to worldly success: 1. **Contentment (*Qana'at*):** Limiting one's desires to what is lawfully acquired and being content with one's share. 2. **Abandoning Envy (*Hasad*):** Purging one's heart of jealousy towards others' blessings. 3. **Abandoning Malice (*Keena*):** Eradicating feelings of revenge or long-standing animosity from the heart, unlike the pre-Islamic Arabs who harbored grudges for decades. 4. **Companionship of the Righteous (*Salih*):** Choosing the company of good and pious individuals.

Moving to the **second gate**, *Bab al-Dhikr* (the Gate of Remembrance), the Prophet (s) learned the four pathways to success in the afterlife: 1. **Caring for Orphans:** Showing compassion and guardianship towards those who have lost their parents. 2. **Aiding the Needy:** Extending assistance and support to those in financial or social distress. 3. **Striving to Fulfill a Believer's Needs:** Exerting effort to alleviate the burdens and fulfill the necessities of fellow believers. 4. **Caring for the Hungry and Destitute:** Providing sustenance and support to the impoverished.

The **third gate**, *Bab al-Shukr* (the Gate of Gratitude), emphasized four ways to maintain one's health and well-being, acknowledging it as a di-

vine blessing often overlooked: 1. **Speak Less:** Guarding the tongue from idle or harmful speech. 2. **Eat Less:** Moderating one's intake of food. 3. **Sleep Less:** Avoiding excessive sleep. 4. **Minimize Carnal Desires:** Exercising restraint over worldly desires and pleasures.

At the **fourth gate**, *Bab al-Rija'* (the Gate of Hope), the inscriptions outlined four signs of a true believer who places their hope in Allah and the Day of Judgment: 1. **Respect for Parents:** Honoring and caring for one's mother and father. 2. **Care for Neighbors' Rights:** Being mindful of and fulfilling the rights of one's neighbors. 3. **Honoring Guests:** Showing generosity and respect to visitors. 4. **Speaking Good or Remaining Silent:** Uttering only beneficial words, or refraining from speech if it is not good.

The **fifth gate**, *Bab al-Akhlaq* (the Gate of Morality), held a warning for those who seek to avoid humiliation in this world. It stated that whoever does not desire disgrace for themselves should never humiliate Allah's servants, nor should they perpetuate injustice, abuse, or seek revenge. These ethical principles were described as leading to worldly success.

The **sixth gate**, *Bab al-Khawf* (the Gate of Fear/Awe), addressed the common human fear of the grave and its challenges. It listed four actions that ensure a peaceful existence in the grave: 1. **Contributing to Mosque Construction:** Participating in the building of a house of Allah. 2. **Lighting up the Mosque:** Ensuring the mosque is illuminated, which today extends to contributing to its lighting systems. 3. **Providing Carpets for the Mosque:** Furnishing the mosque with coverings for prayer. 4. **Cleaning the Mosque:** Taking part in the upkeep and cleanliness of Allah's house, even if paid staff are present, as it is a deed of great reward.

The **seventh gate**, *Bab al-Sabr* (the Gate of Patience), elucidated four actions that bring spiritual light to the heart, without which entry into Paradise is impossible: 1. **Visiting the Sick:** Attending to the ill, ensuring

not to burden them but to offer solace. 2. **Attending Funerals:** Participating in the burial rites of a deceased believer. 3. **Being Truthful in Life:** Living a life characterized by honesty and integrity. 4. **Repaying Debts:** Fulfilling one's financial obligations promptly.

Finally, the **eighth gate**, *Bab al-Qasd* (the Gate of Intention/Purpose), provided four overarching principles for an easy passage through all the gates of Paradise: 1. **Generosity (*Sakha*):** Sharing the blessings bestowed by Allah with others. 2. **Good Manners (*Khush Akhlaqi*):** Displaying excellent conduct and pleasant interaction with people. 3. **Charity in the Way of Allah (*Sadqa*):** Giving alms and spending for Allah's sake. 4. **Avoiding Harm to Believers:** Ensuring that no harm, trouble, or inconvenience comes to any believer through one's actions.

After traversing the gates of Paradise, the Prophet (s) was then led near the gates of Hell. Unlike Paradise, the gates of Hell have no specific names and no 'passport' is required for entry; indeed, one can easily lead oneself to them. Each of the seven gates bore three distinct warnings:

On the **first gate** of Hell, three types of people were highlighted: 1. **The Happiest:** The individual whose hope is placed solely in Allah. 2. **The Bravest:** The individual who fears no one but Allah. 3. **The Most Deceived/Unfortunate:** The individual whose hope lies in others besides Allah and who fears others besides Allah.

The **second gate** displayed divine curses upon three groups: 1. **The Miserly:** Those who are extremely stingy, unwilling to spend for Allah's cause or assist fellow believers. 2. **The Oppressors:** Those who inflict injustice upon others. 3. **The Liars:** Those who habitually speak falsehoods, a sin gravely condemned by Allah.

The **third gate** declared that Allah would humiliate three types of individuals: 1. **Those who Humiliate Islam:** Those who undermine or disre-

spect the religion. 2. **Those who Insult the *Ahl al-Bayt*:** Those who disgrace or show contempt for the Prophet's (s) pure household. 3. **Those who Aid Oppressors:** Those who support or assist tyrannical individuals.

The **fifth gate** explicitly stated that Hell most deservedly claims three types of individuals: 1. **Those who Abandon Prayers:** Those who neglect their obligatory *Salah*. 2. **Those who Do Not Pay *Khums* and *Zakat*:** Those who fail to fulfill their financial religious obligations. 3. **Those who Aid Oppressors:** This repeated warning underscores the gravity of supporting injustice.

The **sixth gate** proclaimed three groups of people to be forbidden from entering Hell: 1. **Those who Strive for Lawful Sustenance:** Individuals who exert effort to earn a living through permissible means. 2. **Those who Give Charity in Allah's Path:** Those who donate generously for divine causes. 3. **Those who Fast Sincerely:** Individuals who observe fasting with true devotion.

Finally, the **seventh and last gate** of Hell offered three crucial admonitions: 1. **Self-Accountability:** Before Allah begins His reckoning, one should take account of their own deeds. 2. **Self-Discipline:** Before Allah inflicts punishment, one should discipline themselves, reflecting on their actions and repenting from sins. 3. **Pre-Emptive Supplication:** Before the Angel of Death arrives and the door of *du'a* closes, one should pray fervently for forgiveness and mercy.

Having meticulously observed these 32 pieces of advice from Paradise and 20 from Hell, comprising a total of 52 divine instructions, the Prophet (s) returned to Mecca, eager to convey these profound lessons to his ***Ummah***.

Upon his return, specifically on the 27th of Rajab, the Prophet (s) publicly announced his miraculous Night Journey and Ascension. This an-

nouncement sent shockwaves through Mecca. While the nascent Muslim community, firmly rooted in their faith, immediately accepted his words with belief and affirmation, the *Quraysh* pagans seized upon it as a new opportunity for mockery and disbelief. They accused him of madness, claiming that such a journey in a single night was impossible.

In response to their skepticism, the Prophet (s) stood before the gathered *Quraysh* and offered concrete proofs. He recounted precise details of caravans en route to Mecca that he had observed during his journey. He described a lost camel belonging to Abu Sufyan's caravan, detailing its location and advising Abu Sufyan's agents where to find it. He also mentioned encountering a caravan from Aqbat, from which he drank water from their vessels, and then intentionally emptied the remaining water, a detail verifiable upon their arrival. The *Quraysh*, astonished, immediately dispatched riders to verify these claims.

The ultimate challenge came when the *Quraysh* demanded a description of *Bayt al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem). Many among them were seasoned traders who had traveled to Syria multiple times and were intimately familiar with the sacred precinct. The Prophet (s), who had visited Jerusalem only once in his life (or perhaps never before the *Mi'raj*, depending on the narrations), miraculously described *Bayt al-Maqdis* in vivid detail—its minarets, doors, pillars, and chambers—as if it were placed directly before him. Those who knew Jerusalem intimately confirmed the veracity of every detail. Despite these undeniable proofs—the precise descriptions of the approaching caravans and the accurate depiction of *Bayt al-Maqdis*—the *Quraysh* remained obdurate. They attributed his knowledge to powerful magic, clinging to their denial rather than accepting the truth of his Prophethood.

This period of intense opposition further highlighted the indispensable role of *Abu Talib* (a), the Prophet's (s) uncle and guardian. From the

age of eight, when the Prophet (s) came into his care, until his passing at the age of 83 (the Prophet being 53), *Abu Talib* (a) was an unwavering shield against the relentless persecution of the *Quraysh*. He provided physical protection, as evidenced by his strategic rotation of *Ali* (a) and the Prophet (s) in their sleeping places during the boycott in *Shib Abi Talib*, ensuring the Prophet's (s) safety. He offered spiritual solace, financially supported the burgeoning Muslim community, and constantly spoke in defense of the Prophet (s).

Despite *Abu Talib's* (a) manifest support and profound affection for the Prophet (s), a concerted effort by certain historical narratives sought to deny his faith. However, numerous scholars, including prominent figures like Abdullah al-Khorayzi (who wrote *Abu Talib Mu'min al-Khorayzi*) and Mufti Adam Makka (who authored a 400-page book on the subject), have meticulously proven *Abu Talib's* (a) belief in Islam, often facing severe repercussions for doing so. Their works debunk fabricated narrations that attempt to paint him as a disbeliever.

The denial of *Abu Talib's* (a) faith caused immense pain to the Prophet (s), for it was a direct affront to one who had served as his steadfast protector and beloved kin. *Abu Talib's* (a) loyalty was not merely familial; it was an acknowledgment of the Prophet's (s) divine mission. He often spoke in praise of the Prophet (s), even interceding with Allah for rain using the Prophet (s) as a means, and his powerful poetry explicitly affirmed his belief in the Prophet's (s) message, equating him with earlier prophets like Ibrahim (a) and Musa (a).

The animosity towards *Abu Talib* (a) and his blessed progeny, the *Ahl al-Bayt*, eventually manifested in the tragic events of Karbala, where *Imam Hussein* (a) was confronted by those whose ancestors had harbored this deep-seated hatred. The entire family of *Abu Talib*—*Ali* (a), *Ja'far* (a), *Aqil* (a), and *Umm Hani* (a)—displayed unparalleled sacrifice and dedication

to Islam.

The Prophet's (s) grief at *Abu Talib's* (a) demise was profound. He wept inconsolably at his uncle's funeral, personally assisting in his burial in *Jannat al-Mu'alla*. This deep sorrow lingered throughout the Prophet's (s) life. A touching account from his final moments reveals the enduring impact of *Abu Talib's* (a) memory. As the Prophet (s) lay in a state of semi-consciousness, his head in *Sayyida Fatima's* (a) lap, she, distraught, began to recite verses from *Abu Talib's* (a) famous poem. Upon hearing his uncle's words, the Prophet (s) immediately opened his eyes, a look of comfort gracing his face, and remarked, "My daughter, do you know this is the poetry of my uncle *Abu Talib*?" Then, he uttered the profound words, "Daughter, you will be the first to meet me." This incident underscores the Prophet's (s) lifelong reverence and appreciation for *Abu Talib's* (a) unwavering support and faith.

The sacrifices of *Abu Talib* (a) and his noble household, particularly *Sayyida Fatima* (a) and *Imam Hussein* (a), are etched in Islamic history. The Prophet (s) mourned *Abu Talib* (a) for an entire year, naming it the "Year of Sorrow." His grief for *Imam Hussein* (a), however, would extend until the Day of Judgment, reflecting the immense sacrifice of Karbala, a sacrifice rooted in the enduring legacy of the Prophet's (s) protectors and the unwavering commitment of *Abu Talib's* (a) progeny to the cause of Islam.

Chapter 47

The Trials Intensify: A Journey to Ta'if

The profound grief of the "Year of Sorrow" (***Am al-Huzn***) had scarcely begun to subside when the *Quraysh*, emboldened by the passing of the Prophet's (s) formidable protector, *Abu Talib*, unleashed a new wave of direct and relentless persecution upon him. The Prophet (s) himself remarked with poignant insight that the death of his uncle, *Abu Talib*, had rendered accessible to his enemies what was previously unattainable. The shield that once deterred them was gone, and their cowardice transformed into audacious malice.

No longer content with merely tormenting the general Muslim populace, the *Quraysh* now targeted the Messenger of Allah (s) directly, with daily acts of humiliation and physical assault becoming commonplace. The Prophet's (s) very home, situated in a Meccan neighborhood, found itself sandwiched between the dwellings of *Abu Lahab* and *Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt*, the latter being *Uthman's* stepfather – both venomous adversaries. This proximity facilitated incessant harassment. Thorns were scattered at his doorway, and filth was routinely brought to his threshold, especially targeting his pre-dawn hours when he would emerge for his ***Tahajjud*** prayers. One particularly grievous incident saw *Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt* throw the foul placenta and entrails of a slaughtered camel upon the

blessed back of the Prophet (s) while he was prostrating in prayer before the *Ka'aba*. It was *Sayyida Fatimah* (a), still a young girl, who bravely rushed to her father's side, weeping as she removed the abomination from his sacred form. At other times, *Uqbah* would violently twist the Prophet's (s) scarf around his neck, pulling with such force that it nearly choked him. The Prophet (s) would also face the indignity of having filth poured upon his head as he walked through the streets, requiring *Sayyida Fatimah* (a) to clean him with tears streaming down her face. Life in Mecca became increasingly unbearable, making it clear that a new direction was urgently needed.

In the midst of these intensified trials, a practical necessity arose in the Prophet's (s) household. With *Sayyida Khadijah*'s (a) passing, and *Sayyida Fatimah* (a) being only five and a half years old, there was a void in the management of the Prophet's (s) home, as he was tirelessly occupied with his divine mission of *Da'wah*. To address this, and to establish a ***Sunnah*** for the believers, the Prophet (s) entered into a second marriage. Some traditions indicate that he himself expressed the need for a wife, while others suggest that *Sayyida Khawla bint Hakim*, a companion, initiated the proposal. The chosen companion was *Sayyida Sawda bint Zam'a*, an early convert from the *Quraysh* tribe. She had endured great hardship, having made the first ***Hijrah*** to Abyssinia with her husband, who had recently passed away in Mecca. Prior to her husband's death, *Sayyida Sawda* had a vivid dream: a cloud descended upon her head, burst open, and from within it, a moon emerged and settled directly into her lap. Her husband, skilled in dream interpretation, immediately understood its meaning – their impending separation and her subsequent marriage to the Prophet (s). This seemed an impossible prospect to *Sayyida Sawda* at the time. However, shortly after her husband's demise, and amidst her personal struggles, *Sayyida Khawla* mediated the proposal. *Sayyida Sawda* accepted with immense gratitude. Although her father was initially opposed to

her conversion, he consented to the marriage. Thus, in Shawwal, merely a month after *Sayyida Khadijah*'s (a) departure, the Prophet (s) married *Sayyida Sawda*. This marriage served as a crucial ***Sunnah***, demonstrating the importance of maintaining household order and tranquility, particularly when faced with familial responsibilities and the demands of ***Da'wah***. During the Meccan period, *Sayyida Sawda* was one of the two wives who resided in the Prophet's (s) home (the *nikah* with *Sayyida Aisha* also occurred in Mecca, though her consummation would take place in Medina). *Sayyida Sawda's* subsequent strict adherence to purdah and her preference for remaining indoors would later play a role in the revelation of specific *Hijab* injunctions.

Meanwhile, a brief and unexpected shift occurred in the dynamics of persecution. For a fleeting period, *Abu Lahab*, the Prophet's (s) most virulent uncle, exhibited a flicker of tribal loyalty (***ghayrah***). He perceived himself as the new patriarch of ***Banu Hashim*** after *Abu Talib*'s death and felt a duty to protect his nephew. He temporarily shielded the Prophet (s) from the *Quraysh's* attacks, even threatening to embrace Islam if they persisted in their hostility. This sudden change deeply troubled the *Quraysh* leaders, who feared losing their influential ally. They resorted to relentless mockery and taunts, accusing *Abu Lahab* of being bewitched by Muhammad (s) or having become his slave. These sneers, playing on his pride and existing animosity towards Islam, soon shattered his resolve. *Abu Lahab* quickly reverted to his old ways, his hostility towards the Prophet (s) returning with renewed intensity.

Recognizing that Mecca had become a crucible of unrelenting opposition and that the message had reached its saturation point there, the Prophet (s) began to look beyond its confines for a new fertile ground for ***Da'wah***. He spent considerable time traveling to surrounding tribes and areas, seeking a more receptive audience. The most significant of these journeys was to Ta'if, a thriving city in the Hejaz, renowned for its wealth,

fertile lands, and abundant water, often described as a verdant paradise amidst the Arabian desert. The *Quraysh* themselves had implicitly acknowledged Ta'if's importance, as revealed in the Qur'anic verse: ***"Lawla nuzzila hadhal-Qur'anu ala rajulin min al-Qaryatayn Azim"*** (Why was this Quran not sent down to a great man from either of the two towns?) – referring to Mecca and Ta'if. The people of Ta'if, primarily from the *Banu Thaqif* tribe, were deeply entrenched in idolatry, worshipping a prominent idol named *Lat*. Despite a past rivalry with Mecca, they were generally prosperous and resistant to change, even proposing audacious conditions for their later conversion to Islam, such as the preservation of their idol, exemption from prayer for three years, and permission for *riba* (interest) and *zina* (fornication). The Prophet (s) hoped that Ta'if, being a major center with family ties to the *Quraysh*, might offer a more welcoming environment than what he had endured in Mecca.

Upon arriving in Ta'if, the Prophet (s) approached the city's three leading brothers, who were prominent figures of the *Banu Thaqif*. Instead of hospitality, he was met with immediate contempt and ridicule. One brother mockingly questioned, "Has Allah not found anyone better than you to send as a prophet?" Another declared, "By God, if Allah sent you, I would demolish the ***Ka'aba***!" The third, with an air of feigned superiority, stated, "If you are truly a prophet of Allah, then you are too great for me to address; and if you are a liar, then you are not worthy of my speech." Despite this brazen rejection, the Prophet (s) responded with immense patience and dignity. However, the Ta'if leaders, infuriated by his message, incited the city's youth and slaves to drive him out with stones.

The Prophet (s) was relentlessly pursued through the streets of Ta'if, subjected to a barrage of stones that bruised his feet and shins, causing blood to flow profusely into his sandals. He was not allowed to sit or rest; they continuously pushed him forward until he was outside the city limits. Exhausted and bleeding, he eventually sought refuge in a private garden

belonging to *Utbah* and *Shaybah*, two *Quraysh* leaders. He sat beneath a grape vine, utterly drained, and raised his hands in a profound ***Du'a***, known as ***Du'a al-Mustadafin*** (the Prayer of the Oppressed). In this heart-wrenching supplication, he laid bare his weakness and helplessness before Allah, stating that if Allah was pleased with him, then none of these hardships mattered, but if Allah's displeasure had fallen upon him, then that indeed was the greatest calamity.

Witnessing the Prophet's (s) plight from afar, *Utbah* and *Shaybah*, despite their own opposition to Islam, felt a twinge of Arab hospitality. They dispatched their Christian slave, *Addas*, with a platter of grapes for the weary traveler. The Prophet (s) took a grape and began to eat, uttering "***Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim***" (In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful). *Addas* was astonished, for he had never heard such words from the people of Ta'if, who typically invoked the names of *Lat* and *Manat*. He inquired about the Prophet's (s) origin. The Prophet (s) in turn asked *Addas* where he hailed from. *Addas* replied, "Nineveh." Hearing this, the Prophet (s) immediately recognized it as the city of his brother, the Prophet *Yunus* ibn Matta (Jonah). *Addas* was taken aback, asking how this stranger knew of *Yunus*, who had lived centuries ago and was revered among his people in Nineveh. The Prophet (s) gently explained that *Yunus* was a Prophet of Allah, and he too was a Prophet of Allah. The truth illuminated *Addas*'s heart instantly. Overcome with emotion, he prostrated himself before the Prophet (s), kissing his hands and feet, and declared his acceptance of Islam. *Utbah* and *Shaybah*, observing this scene, were dismayed, warning *Addas* that the Prophet (s) had bewitched him. Yet, this incident stood as a testament to the fact that truth, even in the most hostile environments, finds receptive hearts.

Wounded but resolute, the Prophet (s) began his journey back towards Mecca. However, a significant challenge awaited him: a long-standing Meccan law stipulated that once a person had left the city, especially un-

der such circumstances, they could not re-enter without the ***aman*** (protection) of a prominent Meccan dignitary. The path back into his birthplace was now closed unless a Meccan offered him safe passage. The events of this return journey, including the encounter with the Jinn, would unfold next, preparing the stage for the pivotal shift in the Prophet's (s) mission.

Chapter 48

The Unwavering Call: Prophet Muhammad's Perseverance in Mecca's Last Days

Upon his return from the arduous journey to Ta'if, where he had faced profound rejection and physical harm, the Prophet Muhammad (s) embodied an unparalleled resilience. Even as he emerged from the hostile city, wounded and weary, his spirit remained steadfast, focused solely on the divine mission. It was at this juncture, as he paused at Nakhla, a place outside Mecca, that a profound sign of divine support manifested.

While the Prophet (s) was engrossed in his night prayers, reciting the sublime verses of the ***Qur'an***, a group of Jinn, en route from Yemen to Syria, chanced upon his location. As the melodious recitation of ***Surah Ar-Rahman*** filled the air, particularly the recurring verse, "***Fabi ayyi ala'i Rabbikuma tukazziban***" (*Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny?*), the Jinn were captivated. Their journey halted as they listened with rapt attention to the divine words emanating from the Prophet's (s) blessed tongue. So deeply moved were they by the eloquence and truth

of the ***Qur'an*** that they immediately embraced Islam, pledging to return to their communities and spread the message of the Prophet (s). This remarkable conversion of the Jinn served as a powerful testament to the universal appeal of Islam and the miraculous nature of the ***Qur'an***, even when human hearts remained hardened. The Prophet (s) would later subtly allude to this event, contrasting the Jinn's immediate and heartfelt affirmation to the Qur'anic verses with the skepticism often displayed by humans.

As the Prophet (s) prepared to re-enter Mecca, a city that now offered him no protection, he faced a critical challenge. Meccan custom dictated that anyone returning to the city after leaving it required the *aman*, or protection, of a prominent citizen. With the demise of his revered uncle, *Abu Talib* (a), who had been his staunch protector, the Prophet (s) could no longer rely on the familial shield of the Banu Hashim, especially as *Abu Lahab* now led the clan and had openly disavowed the Prophet (s). Displaying both prudence and reliance on divine decree, the Prophet (s) did not directly enter Mecca but sought refuge at Nakhla, a short distance away, while arrangements for *aman* were made.

He first sent word to *Akhnas ibn Shariq*, a distant relative of his mother, *Sayyida Amina* (a). However, *Akhnas* declined, citing his own status as a non-native Meccan living under the protection of another, which precluded him from offering *aman*. Next, the Prophet (s) approached *Suhayl ibn Amr*, a prominent *Quraysh* leader and a bitter opponent of Islam, who had been a key negotiator at the *Treaty of Hudaybiyyah*. Predictably, *Suhayl* flatly refused, his animosity towards the Prophet (s) unwavering. Finally, a message was sent to *Mut'im ibn Adi*, a noble figure related to the Prophet (s) through *Abd al-Muttalib*, who had previously shown kindness by aiding the Banu Hashim during the difficult boycott in *Shib Abi Talib*. To the Prophet's (s) request, *Mut'im* readily agreed.

Under the cloak of night, *Mut'im ibn Adi*, accompanied by ten of his sons and family members, all bearing naked swords as a display of their unwavering protection, escorted the Prophet (s) into the sacred precincts of the *Haram*. As dawn broke and the Prophet (s) concluded his prayers near the ***Ka'bah***, he was spotted by *Abu Jahl*, who, recognizing him, began to incite the *Quraysh*. However, *Mut'im* immediately stepped forward, asserting his protection over the Prophet (s) and warning anyone against harming him. *Abu Jahl*, wary of confronting a powerful *Quraysh* leader, reluctantly backed down. The Prophet (s) remained under *Mut'im*'s protection until evening, after which *Mut'im* formally withdrew his protection, stating it was not fitting for the Prophet (s) to remain indefinitely under human guardianship. This brief but significant episode served as a powerful lesson for believers: while the Prophet (s) fully leveraged lawful and practical means of protection, his ultimate reliance remained solely on Allah, demonstrating that while worldly means are to be utilized, they are never the ultimate source of strength.

With *Abu Talib* (a) no longer alive, the *Quraysh* intensified their persecution, now uninhibited by the fear of tribal reprisal. The suffering inflicted upon the early Muslims reached new heights, so much so that even resilient companions like *Khabbab ibn al-Aratt*, who had endured unimaginable tortures, began to voice their anguish to the Prophet (s). In response, the Prophet (s) reminded them of the even greater hardships faced by past prophets and their followers, whose bodies were sawn in half or scorched with iron combs, yet they remained steadfast. He reassured them that Allah's promise of victory would surely come, and a day would arrive when a single rider could travel from *Hadramawt* to *Tabuk* without fear, mentioning only the name of Allah. This fortitude, however, demanded continued patience and sacrifice.

Recognizing that Mecca offered no further prospects for widespread ***Da'wah***, the Prophet (s) turned his attention to the surrounding tribes, particu-

larly during the annual Hajj season when many would visit Mecca. He met with over a hundred different tribes, presenting to them the message of Islam, often coupling the promise of eternal salvation with worldly benefits that would accrue from embracing the true faith.

His efforts, however, were met with varied responses. With the **Banu Taghlib**, he conveyed that accepting Islam would not only grant them salvation but also worldly dominion, including conquering Persia, marrying their women, and enslaving their men. The tribe, however, dismissed this as impossible, given Persia's formidable power. *Abu Lahab* and *Abu Jahl* often followed the Prophet (s) during these interactions, loudly discrediting him and calling him a madman for making such seemingly outlandish claims, especially about overcoming the mighty Persian Empire.

The Prophet (s) also engaged with the **Banu Shayban**, meeting their three prominent leaders in a large gathering. The first leader was impressed but deferred to his brother, *Hani*. *Hani* acknowledged the truth of the Prophet's (s) message but expressed fear of provoking powerful empires like Yemen and Persia, citing their tribe's lack of military strength. He, in turn, deferred to their third leader, *Mathna*. *Mathna* explained their precarious position between Yemen and Persia, revealing they had recently sworn allegiance to the Persian king and could not break that oath. The Prophet (s) accepted their reasoning, demonstrating Islam's respect for solemn covenants and its insistence on undivided loyalty to Allah once one embraces the faith, rejecting any dual allegiances to worldly powers.

The **Banu 'Amir**, a tribe known for its sagacity, also met with the Prophet (s). A perceptive young man named *Buhayra ibn Firaz* was deeply impressed by the Prophet's (s) words and demeanor. He recognized the profound impact the Prophet (s) could have, believing that with him, they could conquer the world. However, he then posed a pragmatic question: if they were to aid the Prophet (s) in establishing this new order,

would they have a share in the succession of leadership after his passing? The Prophet (s) responded unequivocally that the matter of succession was a divine decree, not his to grant or promise. Hearing this, the tribe rejected his invitation, reasoning that they would not risk their lives and face the swords of enemies only for others to reap the benefits. Despite their rejection, an old man from the tribe who had not made the Hajj later lamented their decision, recognizing the Prophet (s)'s truth and the missed opportunity for eternal glory.

Amidst these largely unsuccessful tribal overtures, individual conversions continued to occur. A notable example was *Suwayd ibn as-Samit*, a resident near Medina, who possessed a book attributed to *Luqman*. He encountered the Prophet (s) in Mecca and was deeply moved by the recitation of the ***Qur'an***, especially *Surah Luqman*, which superseded his own knowledge. He embraced Islam, recognizing the divine superiority of the Prophet's (s) message. Though he was martyred before he could return to his tribe and spread the faith, his conversion was a testament to the ***Qur'an's*** profound influence on receptive hearts.

As the *Quraysh*'s physical persecution failed to halt the spread of Islam, they shifted tactics, intensifying intellectual and verbal attacks. Their aim was to distract the Prophet (s) and his followers from their core mission. They sought out Jewish scholars for difficult questions, which, when answered by divine revelation, only strengthened the Prophet's (s) claim. However, they also resorted to increasingly absurd and baseless objections. They questioned the nature of angels, asserting they were God's daughters, and ridiculed the Islamic dietary laws, particularly the prohibition of naturally deceased animals (***maytah***), arguing, "How can you eat what you kill, but not what Allah kills?" The ***Qur'an*** promptly revealed verses refuting these illogical claims and clarifying the divine wisdom behind its injunctions.

One prominent opponent, *Nadr ibn al-Harith*, famously challenged the Prophet (s) in the ***Haram***, boasting that he would silence him. As the Prophet (s) entered, *Nadr* boldly confronted him with accusations of being a liar and a poet. The Prophet (s) responded by reciting verses from the ***Qur'an***, including ***Surah at-Tawhid***, which eloquently described the Oneness of God. *Nadr* then pressed further, inquiring about the fate of their gods. The Prophet (s) recited the verse that stated both they and their idols would be cast into Hellfire. Silenced by this direct and unwavering response, *Nadr* was left speechless. However, another *Quraysh* leader, *Abdullah ibn az-Zibara*, then intervened, seeking clarification. He asked if this meant figures like *Uzayr* and *Isa* (Jesus), who were worshipped by Jews and Christians, would also be cast into Hell. The Prophet (s) clarified that only those who *willingly* accepted and promoted their own worship, besides Allah, would face such a fate. Those who were worshipped without their consent or knowledge, such as *Uzayr* and *Isa*, would not be condemned for the actions of their misguided followers. This profound distinction underscored Islam's emphasis on individual accountability and the purity of divine worship.

Realizing that the ***Qur'an*** was the Muslims' most powerful weapon, the *Quraysh* launched a desperate and futile attempt to imitate its eloquence. They believed that if they could produce verses of similar or superior quality, they would undermine the ***Qur'an's*** claim to divine origin. This challenge was particularly directed at ***Surah al-Kawthar***, a mere three verses. Before its revelation, the Arabs prided themselves on their intricate poetry, with the seven most celebrated odes (*al-Mu'allaqat*) hung on the ***Ka'bah***. Upon the revelation of *Surah al-Kawthar*, its profound meaning and unparalleled eloquence so captivated the Arabs that it was written in gold and hung alongside the *Mu'allaqat*. The *Quraysh* were forced to remove their own poems, utterly humiliated by the simple yet profound verses of the ***Qur'an***.

In their desperation, various poets and even self-proclaimed prophets, like *Musaylama al-Kazzab*, attempted to create their own "surahs" in imitation of the ***Qur'an***. Some of these attempts included absurd verses like "***Inna ataynak al-jamahir, fasalli li rabbika wa jahir, inna shani'aka rajulun kafir***" (Indeed, We have given you multitudes, so pray to your Lord openly, indeed your enemy is a disbelieving man), or ridiculous imitations of ***Surah al-Asr*** and ***Surah al-'Adiyat*** with nonsensical phrases about animals and daily life. Such endeavors, however, spectacularly backfired. The stark contrast between the divine beauty, coherence, and profound meaning of the ***Qur'an*** and the utter absurdity, grammatical errors, and disjointedness of these imitations became glaringly obvious. Far from discrediting the ***Qur'an***, these failed attempts only served to reinforce its miraculous nature and divine authorship, leading to even more conversions among those who witnessed the stark difference.

Faced with the utter failure of all their tactics—persecution, economic boycott, intellectual challenges, and attempts to mimic the ***Qur'an***—the *Quraysh* found themselves at a dead end. Their frustration reached a fever pitch, leading them to their ultimate, desperate scheme: the assassination of Prophet Muhammad (s). This fateful decision marked the precipice of a new era, foreshadowing the momentous migration, the ***Hijrah***, that would soon redefine the course of Islamic history.

Chapter 49

The *Quraysh*'s Final Plot and Yathrib's Hidden Past

The first eleven years after the declaration of prophethood had witnessed Prophet Muhammad's (s) unwavering *Da'wah* in Mecca, evolving from a seemingly insignificant movement to a growing force that the *Quraysh* could no longer ignore. Now, a pivotal moment was at hand, one that would dramatically alter the landscape of the Muslim community: the impending *Hijrah* to Medina. This migration would grant the Muslims an impregnable center, marking a transformation from a state of vulnerability to one of strength—a rare occurrence in human history where a suppressed group gains ascendancy without compromising its foundational principles.

Historically, it is common for a group, once oppressed and weak, to alter its methods and even its promises upon achieving power. Initial supporters may be forgotten, replaced by those drawn by the allure of authority. However, the history of Islam demonstrates a stark contrast. The Prophet's (s) conduct remained consistent, whether in Mecca or Medina, embodying the timeless nature of divine guidance. This period is cru-

cial for understanding that Islam's message and the Prophet's (s) mission were not merely a means to earthly power, as the *Quraysh* falsely accused, but a divine imperative. Islam's adversaries, especially hostile historians, often focus disproportionately on the Medinan period, distorting the Prophet's (s) image to suggest that his ultimate aim was worldly dominion. They attempt to defame his character, citing his marriages or depicting him as a warrior with a *Qur'an* in one hand and a sword in the other. Such portrayals fail to grasp the profound significance of the thirteen years of persecution in Mecca. Without understanding these foundational years, the actions and principles demonstrated in Medina become incomprehensible.

Before delving into the *Hijrah*, it is essential to re-examine the deep-seated animosity of the *Quraysh*. Their opposition was never primarily religious. It was not a genuine love for their idols or their ancestral faith, which they themselves knew to be flawed. Their profound hostility stemmed from several core issues. Firstly, it was their blind adherence to ancestral traditions (*taqlid*), a deep-seated reverence for their elders and tribal customs, regardless of truth or falsehood. They sided with their own, even if wrong, and opposed outsiders, even if they championed justice. The common people simply followed their chiefs without question.

The second, more significant reason for the chiefs' opposition was a potent blend of ***hasad*** (jealousy) and ***takabbur*** (arrogance). Daily, the *Quraysh* leaders heard reports of individuals converting to Islam after encountering the *Qur'an*. Despite their extensive propaganda, their accusations of sorcery, madness, or poetry against the Prophet (s), people who approached him consistently proclaimed the profound impact of his words, confessing, "His tongue has an effect, and his speech has a power that compels our hearts to attest to his truth." This led some prominent *Quraysh* leaders, including *Abu Sufyan*, *Abu Jahl*, and *Akhnas ibn Shariq*, to secretly approach the Prophet's (s) house at night to listen to his recitation of the

Qur'an during his *Salat al-Layl* (Night Prayer). They would remain, completely absorbed, until dawn, leaving in a daze, as if enchanted. On their hurried departures, they would often meet, startled and embarrassed, cautioning each other about the consequences if their clandestine listening was discovered. Yet, the magnetic pull of the *Qur'an* was so strong that they repeated this clandestine act for three consecutive nights.

On the third morning, *Akhnas ibn Shariq*, a non-Meccan who had settled in Mecca, confronted *Abu Jahl* (whose real name was *Abu al-Hakam*, meaning "father of wisdom," later dubbed *Abu Jahl* or "father of ignorance" by the Prophet). *Akhnas* asked for *Abu Jahl*'s assessment of the *Qur'an* he had secretly listened to. *Abu Jahl*'s response revealed the true depth of their opposition: "Listen, *Akhnas*, you are not from Mecca, so you do not know our history. These Banu Hashim have always drawn people to themselves. They expanded their hospitality, and we competed by expanding ours. They showed valor in battle, and we too fought bravely. They demonstrated generosity, and we too sacrificed our wealth. Whatever they did, we equaled or surpassed them in worldly matters. But now they claim prophethood, and say 'obeying us is obligatory.' How can we compete with that? We cannot bear for them to surpass us in this. If it were a worldly matter, we would strive to exceed them, but how can we compete with prophethood? We can never tolerate this family surpassing us and gaining superiority over us." This illustrates the fierce tribal rivalry and inability to accept divine favor bestowed upon Banu Hashim.

This arrogance extended to a refusal to accept the equality inherent in Islam. The *Quraysh* leaders often proposed that if the Prophet (s) would distance his less prominent followers—slaves and the poor—from the noble *Quraysh*, they might consider accepting Islam. This proposal was vehemently rejected by the Prophet (s), for it struck at the very core of Islamic equality. Remarkably, this notion even troubled some early Muslims. It is narrated that *Umar* himself admitted to regret over suggesting

to the Prophet (s) that separating the poor Muslims from the *Quraysh* might win over the chiefs. He later expressed profound remorse for this discussion, recognizing his grave misunderstanding of Islam's essence. Subsequently, the ***Qur'an*** revealed ten verses in *Surah al-An'am* (Chapter 6), strongly admonishing those who harbored such thoughts, emphasizing that all Muslims are equal.

Further illuminating this principle of equality is the incident often associated with *Surah Abasa*. While many misinterpret it as a reprimand to the Prophet (s), the narrative from the transcript clarifies that the verses were addressed to *someone else* who showed displeasure. The Prophet (s) was engaged in *Da'wah* with a prominent *Quraysh* leader, *Walid ibn al-Mughira*. At that moment, *Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum*, a blind companion who had embraced Islam early, approached the Prophet (s) seeking further religious knowledge. A companion (not the Prophet himself) unhappily tried to prevent the blind man from interrupting, thinking, "This important man is with the Prophet (s), and the Prophet (s) is talking to him; we cannot let him come close." The ***Qur'an*** criticized this attitude, stating: ***A'basa wa tawalla, an ja'ahu al-a'ma*** (***He frowned and turned away because the blind man came to him***). The verses continued, admonishing those who pursue non-believers while neglecting those who eagerly come seeking faith, especially one who fears God. The ***Qur'an*** thus affirmed that all Muslims, regardless of their social standing, are equal in the eyes of Allah.

The third major reason for the *Quraysh*'s opposition was their inability to accept the concept of the afterlife, particularly Hell and divine retribution. Mecca-revealed *Surahs* often vividly described the torments of Hell, while Medinan *Surahs* more frequently spoke of Paradise. This emphasis on divine punishment profoundly disturbed the *Quraysh*. Their ancestral belief held that as custodians and inhabitants of the Kaaba, they were divinely protected from severe punishment. They believed any di-

vine displeasure would manifest as minor worldly setbacks—droughts or business losses—which could be appeased through sacrifices and offerings. The idea of eternal torment was alien to their understanding and utterly rejected. Had the Prophet (s) downplayed the concept of Hell, many more might have accepted Islam, but such a compromise would have stripped Islam of its moral framework, where fear of God is as essential for guiding humanity as hope.

Following the passing of *Abu Talib*, the *Isra* and *Mi'raj*, and the difficult journey to Ta'if, the *Quraysh* perceived the Prophet (s) and his followers as significantly weakened. The apparent failure of the *Da'wah* in Ta'if and the initial rejections by tribes during the Hajj season, combined with the fact that some Muslims left the Prophet (s) after the *Mi'raj* because they struggled to comprehend its miraculous nature, led the *Quraysh* to believe they had gained the upper hand. They rejoiced, thinking they had achieved victory. However, they were also increasingly perturbed by the Prophet's (s) efforts to spread Islam beyond Mecca, fearing he might find allies elsewhere and establish a new center. This blend of perceived strength and growing anxiety led them to a fateful decision.

Gathered in their assembly hall, the ***Dar al-Nadwa***, where the Prophet's (s) forefathers had once held councils, the *Quraysh* leaders met to devise a final solution to the "problem" of Muhammad (s). Satan, disguised as an old man from Najd, was present, advising them. The consensus was grim: the assassination of the Prophet (s). This plot was the immediate catalyst for the *Hijrah*.

To fully grasp the unfolding events, it is crucial to understand the history of Medina, the city of *Hijrah*. Known initially as *Yathrib*, a name meaning "place of trouble" or "calamity" (hence the Prophet's (s) later prohibition of calling it by this name), it was a land of both beauty and peculiar challenges, notably the "fever of *Yathrib*," which often afflicted newcom-

ers. *Yathrib* was inhabited by two distinct populations: the Jewish tribes and the Arab tribes of *Aws* and *Khazraj*.

The Jews arrived in *Yathrib* for four main reasons. Firstly, a deeply pious group, whose ancestors had read prophecies in the Torah about a final Prophet appearing in Medina, migrated centuries before his birth, sacrificing their homes and livelihoods in anticipation. Secondly, many came as refugees from Roman persecution, seeking refuge in a region far from Christian influence. Thirdly, another wave arrived after brutal attacks by rulers like *Saft bin Lusta*, which decimated Jewish communities elsewhere. The fourth, and perhaps most intriguing, group comprised descendants of an army sent by Prophet *Musa* (a) to conquer *Yathrib*. This army, having found the inhabitants unwilling to accept their faith, chose not to kill them as commanded, instead sparing a beautiful young prince. Upon their return, *Musa* (a) had passed away. His successors, finding their disobedience intolerable, banished them, leading them to settle in *Yathrib*. Over time, these diverse groups consolidated into three main Jewish tribes: *Banu Nadir*, *Banu Qaynuqa*, and *Banu Qurayza*. The *Banu Qurayza* were notably descended from the pious Jews who had settled there awaiting the Prophet.

The Arab tribes of *Aws* and *Khazraj* originated from Yemen. Around 450 CE, a massive flood known as *Sail al-Aram* (Flood of Aram), resulting from the collapse of the Marib Dam (associated with Queen Bilqis mentioned in the *Qur'an*), devastated Yemen, causing widespread displacement. Among the migrants was a man named *Harith*, who, with his family, including his sons *Aws* and *Khazraj*, eventually settled in *Yathrib*. Initially, *Yathrib* was largely empty. The arriving Jewish tribes quickly dominated the city, its fertile lands, and its markets, making the *Aws* and *Khazraj* their subordinates.

A pivotal event shifted the power dynamics. Under Jewish rule, a tyran-

nical Jewish king named *Faydoor* imposed a heinous law: every newlywed woman had to spend her first night in his palace. This applied not only to Jewish women but also to those of the *Aws* and *Khazraj* tribes. One day, a chief of *Aws* was enraged when his sister was subjected to this vile custom. In an act of desperate bravery, he disguised himself among the entourage, snuck into the king's chambers, and assassinated him. Fearing reprisal, he fled to Syria, where his paternal relatives (who had converted to Christianity and established a kingdom) resided. He recounted the incident, invoking tribal honor and religious solidarity against the Jewish oppressor. The Syrian-Christian king dispatched a formidable army to *Yathrib*. The Jews, unable to withstand such a force, were outmaneuvered. The Syrian king invited all Jewish leaders to a feast and then massacred them. With the Jewish leadership shattered, the *Aws* and *Khazraj* tribes, under the patronage of the Syrian king, gained control of *Yathrib*'s lands, markets, and authority, expelling many Jews to the city's outskirts. However, some Jewish tribes, particularly *Banu Qurayza* (who had settled out of anticipation for the Prophet (s)) made alliances with the *Aws* and *Khazraj*, maintaining a presence within the city.

Despite their newfound dominance, the *Aws* and *Khazraj* remained significantly influenced by the Jewish community. The Jews, being highly literate and learned (having established schools called *Bayt al-Madaris* wherever they settled to teach Torah and literacy), held an intellectual superiority over the largely unlettered Arabs, who were primarily farmers and traders. This intellectual advantage allowed the Jews, though politically subjugated, to subtly exert influence. So profound was this influence that a common practice among the polytheist women of *Yathrib* was to vow that if their children survived (as infant mortality was high), they would raise them as Jews. Thus, while the *Aws* and *Khazraj* held political power, the Jews maintained a powerful ideological sway. Furthermore, the Jews continually reminded the Arabs of a coming Prophet, hinting

that he would be from *their* lineage, and that his arrival would restore their dominance. This constant prophecy, reiterated over decades, ingrained in the *Aws* and *Khazraj* a readiness for a Messenger. This historical background of *Yathrib*, marked by its diverse populations, their rivalries, and their shared anticipation of a Prophet, forms the crucial backdrop for the *Hijrah* and the events that would follow in Medina.

Chapter 50

The Dawn of Islam in Medina: The First Pledge of Aqabah

The history of Yathrib, with its diverse communities and prolonged internal strife, laid a unique groundwork for the reception of Islam. The Jewish tribes, who had settled in Yathrib centuries earlier, consistently spoke of a coming Prophet. While they mistakenly believed this messenger would emerge from among their own lineage, tracing back to the Bani Israel, their constant anticipation of a new prophet, along with their established schools and intellectual traditions, inadvertently prepared the ears of the Arab tribes of *Aws* and *Khazraj*. The Jewish communities frequently used terms such as *Nabi* (Prophet), *Sharia* (Divine Law), *Halal* (Permitted), and *Haram* (Forbidden) in their daily conversations and prophecies, thereby familiarizing the Arabs with fundamental religious terminology. This exposure meant that when the Prophet Muhammad (s) eventually arrived, the people of Yathrib were not entirely alien to the concepts he presented.

Yet, the primary factor that paved the way for Islam's embrace in Yathrib was the profound exhaustion induced by relentless internal conflict. The

Aws and *Khazraj* tribes had been locked in a devastating rivalry for over 120 years, a protracted series of skirmishes and battles that culminated in the brutal Battle of Bu'ath. This final, desperate clash, which commenced six years after the declaration of the Prophet's (s) prophethood and concluded just before the ***Hijrah***, left both tribes utterly shattered and desperate for a resolution. The sheer scale of destruction and loss weighed heavily on their collective psyche, making them yearn for a unifying figure and a lasting peace.

In the midst of this devastating war, key figures emerged, whose actions and aspirations illuminated the socio-political climate of Yathrib. From the *Aws* tribe, *Usaid ibn Hudair* displayed an extraordinary act of courage. As his people fled the battlefield, fearing defeat, Usaid, unwilling to retreat, plunged his spear into his own thigh, proclaiming his refusal to move from the spot. This defiant act of self-injury rallied his fleeing men, turning the tide of the battle and ultimately leading to the decisive defeat of the *Khazraj*. This victory solidified *Usaid's* stature as a revered leader within the *Aws*.

Conversely, from the *Khazraj*, *Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul* was a prominent figure, poised to be crowned king of Medina following his tribe's anticipated victory. He had initially voiced strong opposition to the continuation of the prolonged conflict, a stance that led to his temporary ostracism by his own people. However, when the *Khazraj* were unexpectedly defeated at Bu'ath, *Abdullah ibn Ubayy's* earlier warnings were recalled and seen as prophetic. Yet, the Prophet's (s) eventual arrival and the subsequent acceptance of Islam by the Medinans thwarted his ambition for kingship. This thwarted aspiration fueled a deep-seated resentment that would later solidify his role as the notorious "chief of the hypocrites" (*Rais al-Munafiqeen*) in Medina.

In the wake of this destructive war, individual encounters with the Prophet

(s) began to shape the future of Yathrib. One such encounter involved *As'ad ibn Zurara*, a learned man from the *Khazraj* tribe, who journeyed to Mecca. He was deeply impressed by the Prophet's (s) teachings and the profound recitation of the ***Qur'an***, accepting Islam. Though his efforts to spread the message in Yathrib were cut short by his martyrdom, he laid an early groundwork.

Another significant interaction occurred when a delegation from *Aws* and *Khazraj* arrived in Mecca, seeking assistance from the *Quraysh* in their internal disputes. Among them was a young man who, influenced by the *Quraysh* leader Ubaidah ibn Rabiah, initially put cotton in his ears to avoid hearing the Prophet's (s) "sorcery." As he performed the *tawaf* (circumambulation) of the *Kaaba*, repeatedly passing by the Prophet (s) who sat reciting the ***Qur'an*** near the *Hijr Ismail*, he felt an increasing internal struggle. His rational mind wrestled with the irrational advice to avoid the Prophet (s). Ultimately, he removed the cotton from his ears, approaching the Prophet (s) and directly inquiring about his message.

The Prophet (s) did not speak of worldly power, wealth, or tribal allegiances. Instead, he presented the core tenets of Islam, beginning with the fundamental declaration of faith: ***La Ilaha Illallah, Muhammadur Rasulullah*** (**There is no deity but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger**). He then expounded upon five crucial commands: 1. ***Tawhid***: To associate no partners with Allah. 2. ***Ihsan*** to parents: To treat one's parents with utmost kindness and respect. 3. Prohibition of infanticide: Not to kill one's children due to fear of poverty, for Allah is the ultimate Provider. 4. Prohibition of ***fahsha***: To abstain from all indecencies, whether hidden or apparent. 5. Prohibition of unjust killing: Not to take a life that Allah has forbidden, except by right.

He further elaborated on principles of justice and integrity: 1. Safeguarding the property of orphans: Not to approach an orphan's wealth except

in the best possible manner until they reach maturity. 2. Maintaining fair weights and measures: To give full measure and weight with justice. 3. Speaking with justice: To speak truthfully, even if it is against one's own kin. 4. Fulfilling covenants: To fulfill all covenants made in Allah's name.

Deeply moved by the purity and power of this message, the young man accepted Islam. Upon his return to Yathrib, he shared his experience and the Prophet's (s) teachings with others.

This set the stage for a pivotal moment. Four months after the Battle of Bu'ath, during the Hajj season, six young men from the *Khazraj* tribe, profoundly affected by their recent defeat and yearning for peace, met the Prophet (s) at Aqabah in Mina. Among them was the same young man who had previously engaged with the Prophet (s) in Mecca. They recognized in the Prophet's (s) message the unifying solution they had desperately sought. They formally embraced Islam and pledged their allegiance to him. This marked the **First Pledge of Aqabah** (***Bait-e-Aqaba Ula***), a momentous event that signaled the formal entry of Islam into Medina and established the earliest foundations for the Prophet's (s) eventual ***Hijrah*** to the city that would soon become *Madinatun Nabi* (the City of the Prophet).

Chapter 51

The Second Pledge of Aqabah and the Dawn of Islam in Medina

The journey of Prophet Muhammad (s) in Mecca, marked by relentless *Quraysh* persecution, had reached a critical juncture. Following the "Year of Sorrow" and the rejection in Ta'if, the Prophet (s) tirelessly sought receptive hearts, leading to the pivotal First Pledge of Aqabah, where six young men from Medina's Khazraj tribe embraced Islam, recognizing the Prophet (s) as the solution to their long-standing tribal discord. This initial acceptance laid a fragile but potent seed for Islam in Yathrib, a city weary from a century-long, brutal conflict between its two dominant Arab tribes, the *Aws* and the *Khazraj*.

As the season of Hajj once again drew near, pilgrims from across Arabia converged upon Mecca, and then the plains of Mina, near the sacred city. Among them were contingents from Medina, including individuals from both the victorious *Aws* and the defeated *Khazraj*. The atmosphere in Mina, particularly at night, was one of tranquility and introspection, as pilgrims had completed the arduous rites of Hajj. It was during this sacred time, on the night of the 12th of Dhul Hijjah, that a crucial gathering

took place. The young men of the *Khazraj*, still deeply troubled by their tribe's recent defeat in the Battle of Bu'ath and the ongoing animosity, discussed their desperate need for unity and guidance.

The Prophet Muhammad (s), ever vigilant in his mission, observed a group of twelve individuals from Medina conversing intently in the darkness. These were sensible, discerning men, some of whom had met him the previous year. Approaching them, the Prophet (s) sought permission to convey a message, an invitation they readily accepted. He presented Islam not as a political scheme, but as a path to divine unity and moral rectitude, echoing the principles he had previously shared. This discussion culminated in the **Second Pledge of Aqabah** (***Bait-e-Aqabah ath-Thaniya***).

Among the twelve men present, ten were from the *Khazraj*, and crucially, two were from the *Aws* tribe, signaling the growing reach of Islam beyond its initial Khazraj converts. Five of these twelve had been part of the original six who pledged allegiance the year before, demonstrating their continued commitment. A significant figure among them was Abu al-Haytham, a man who had already abandoned idolatry prior to Islam and whose character was so profound that even *Imam Ali* (a) later invoked his name with reverence.

The Medinans, now more numerous and earnest, expressed a vital need: they had accepted Islam, but their knowledge was limited. They pleaded with the Prophet (s) to send a teacher, someone who could instruct new converts and further the message of Islam in Medina. In response to their sincere plea, the Prophet (s) made a momentous decision: he appointed **Mus'ab ibn Umayr** to accompany them back to Medina.

Mus'ab ibn Umayr was a figure of extraordinary transformation. Prior to his conversion, he was one of Mecca's most affluent and fashionable youths, renowned for his luxurious attire and aristocratic bearing. Yet,

upon embracing Islam, he faced severe persecution from his wealthy family, who disowned and impoverished him. He endured extreme hardship, even participating in the boycott of *Shib Abi Talib*, bearing all for the sake of his faith. His profound self-sacrifice and unwavering dedication made him an ideal choice for this pioneering mission.

Mus'ab's mandate in Medina was clear: to teach the newly converted Muslims the tenets of their faith, to recite the ***Qur'an***, and to lead them in prayer. He was the first official envoy and *Da'i* (caller to Islam). Upon his arrival, Mus'ab, alongside local Medinan companions such as Usayd ibn Hudair and Jabir ibn Abdullah, worked tirelessly. They established a focal point for the nascent Muslim community, where believers could gather, learn, and worship. It was under Mus'ab's leadership that the first ***Jum'ah*** (Friday congregational prayer) in Islam was formally established in Medina, a testament to the freedom of worship enjoyed there, a stark contrast to the oppressed state of Muslims in Mecca.

The impact of Mus'ab'ab's presence was swift and profound. His eloquent recitation of the ***Qur'an*** and his compelling presentation of Islam began to draw more Medinans into the fold. A pivotal moment came when Mus'ab, along with Usayd ibn Hudair, sat near a well, engaged in *Da'wah*. Sa'd ibn Mu'adh, a prominent leader of the *Aws* tribe (and Usayd's maternal uncle), was initially annoyed by their presence, fearing they would stir further trouble. He sent Usayd to confront them. Usayd, a respected leader himself, approached Mus'ab with anger. Mus'ab, with remarkable composure, invited Usayd to listen to his message before judging. As Mus'ab recited verses of the ***Qur'an***, Usayd's heart was deeply touched. He recognized the truth in the divine words, embraced Islam on the spot, and immediately performed *ghusl* (ritual purification).

Realizing the immense influence Sa'd ibn Mu'adh held over the *Aws* tribe, Usayd immediately conveyed his conviction, hinting at Sa'd's potential

conversion. Sa'd, observing Usayd's transformed demeanor, approached Mus'ab. The scene was set for another powerful encounter. Mus'ab, with his characteristic wisdom, began to recite the ***Qur'an*** for Sa'd. The divine verses pierced Sa'd's heart, overwhelming him with their truth and beauty. He, too, was instantly convinced, performed *ghusl*, and declared his faith.

Sa'd ibn Mu'adh's conversion marked a watershed moment. As a beloved and highly respected chieftain, his acceptance of Islam held immense weight. He immediately gathered his entire tribe and publicly declared his conversion, proclaiming that he would no longer speak to anyone who did not embrace Islam. This bold declaration resulted in an astonishing mass conversion: the entire *Aws* tribe accepted Islam on that very day, with the exception of one young man, Qays ibn al-Khatim al-Awsi, who remained a non-Muslim but would later fight heroically alongside the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud. This unprecedented conversion of an entire tribe in a single day underscored the power of divine truth, the charismatic influence of Mus'ab, and the profound impact of principled leadership like Sa'd's.

With the mass conversion of the *Aws*, a significant hurdle was removed. The old tribal animosities that had previously hindered the spread of Islam now began to dissipate, replaced by a common faith. The Muslim community in Medina grew exponentially, filled with fervent believers who witnessed the stark difference between the Prophet's (s) message and the prolonged, destructive conflicts of their past. Witnessing the escalating persecution faced by the Prophet (s) and his followers in Mecca, and recognizing the burgeoning strength and unity of their own community, the Medinan Muslims, led by figures like Jabir ibn Abdullah, now felt compelled to extend a formal invitation to the Prophet (s). Their hearts yearned for his presence, convinced that Medina offered the safety and support necessary for the continued propagation of Islam. The stage

was now set for the most transformative event in early Islamic history: the ***Hijrah***.

Chapter 52

The Final Covenant at Aqabah: Forging the Path to Medina

The profound importance of the *Hijrah*, the migration of Prophet Mohammad (s) from Mecca to Medina, cannot be overstated. Though often seen as a simple escape, it was a meticulously planned, divinely guided strategic relocation that marked a pivotal turning point in Islamic history. For thirteen years, the Prophet (s) had endured immense persecution in Mecca, refusing to leave despite the escalating threats. This steadfastness was not due to a lack of options, but a strategic imperative: Mecca, as the heart of Arabia, was the ideal center for the initial propagation of Islam. Its annual Hajj pilgrimage brought people from across the Arabian Peninsula, providing an unparalleled platform for conveying the divine message. However, the time for a shift in strategy had arrived. Islam was no longer a whispered secret; its message had spread, and now, people were actively seeking the Prophet (s) and his teachings. It was time for the nascent Muslim community to establish an independent base.

The transition from a vulnerable minority to a self-governing community in Medina required careful preparation, much of which transpired in se-

crecy. While the success of *Mus'ab ibn Umayr* in Medina, particularly the conversion of *Sa'd ibn Mu'adh*, had paved the way for widespread acceptance of Islam, the threat from the *Quraysh* in Mecca intensified daily. Accounts from companions like *Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari* describe the escalating physical assaults on the Prophet (s) following the passing of *Abu Talib*. Young, zealous Medinan converts, like *Jabir* himself, longed to invite the Prophet (s) to their city, witnessing the difficulties people faced even in meeting him in Mecca. They observed how new visitors to Mecca were deterred by the *Quraysh* through slander, ridicule, and even physical violence, preventing many from hearing the truth.

The opportunity arose during the Hajj season, thirteen years after the Prophet's (s) declaration of prophethood. A large caravan of approximately five hundred Medinans journeyed to Mecca for the pilgrimage. Among them, seventy-three individuals were devoted Muslims, two of whom were women: *Umm Ayman* and *Umm Nuseiba*. Their true mission, known only to themselves, was to extend a formal invitation to the Prophet (s) to migrate to Medina. The caravan was led by *Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul*, a prominent pagan chief of Medina, who, though not a Muslim himself, was a figure of respect. The Muslim contingent within the caravan had to maintain absolute discretion, ensuring their true intentions remained hidden from their pagan companions.

The secret rendezvous was set for the last night of Hajj, known as *Yawm al-Nafr*, when pilgrims would disperse after completing their rites. The Prophet (s) had instructed them to meet him discreetly in the secluded valleys of Mina. Among the seventy-three, *Bara' ibn Ma'rur*, a respected elder chieftain from Medina, stood out for his fervent devotion. Despite being a relatively new convert, his zeal was so profound that he insisted on praying towards the *Ka'bah* even before the official change of *Qiblah*, believing it more fitting than facing *Bayt al-Maqdis* while the Prophet (s) resided near the *Ka'bah*. Though well-intentioned, the Prophet (s) gently

corrected him, emphasizing that obedience to divine command superseded personal preference, reaffirming that the *Qiblah* was still *Bayt al-Maqdis* at that time. This incident served as a crucial lesson in the nascent community: the importance of disciplined obedience to the Prophet's (s) instructions over individual spiritual impulses.

The meeting itself was clandestine. The Prophet's (s) uncle, *Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib*, was present to facilitate the discussion. *Abbas*, a prominent merchant whose trade routes frequently took him to Medina, was well-known to the Medinans and served as a valuable intermediary. His public association with the Prophet (s) at this critical juncture did not raise *Quraysh* suspicion, as his presence appeared routine for a family elder.

The *Bay'ah* ceremony began with *Abbas* addressing the Medinans. He impressed upon them the gravity of their invitation, reminding them that the Prophet (s) was currently under the protection of his clan, the Banu Hashim, in Mecca—a protection extended even by those who had not yet embraced Islam. He warned them that if they took the Prophet (s) to Medina, the full responsibility of his protection would fall squarely upon their shoulders, and they must be prepared to face the collective enmity of Arabia. *Bara' ibn Ma'rur* responded with unwavering conviction, pledging their complete devotion and protection.

Another companion, *Abu al-Haytham*, expressed a poignant concern: "O Messenger of Allah, we are severing ties with our Jewish allies and the *Quraysh*. Will you, upon gaining victory, abandon us and return to Mecca?" The Prophet (s) smiled reassuringly and declared a timeless covenant: "No, never. My blood is your blood, and your peace is my peace. Your war is my war. I am of you, and you are of me. I shall be with you until my last breath."

The Prophet (s) then outlined the five conditions for their pledge of al-

legiance, which superseded the six points of the previous year: 1. To protect the Prophet (s) from all enemies, even if it meant fighting against the entirety of humanity, both Arabs and non-Arabs. 2. To spend in the way of Allah in times of ease and hardship. 3. To enjoin good and forbid evil. 4. To fear no one's blame when upholding Allah's command. 5. To protect his ***Ahlulbayt*** (a) as they would protect their own children.

For this solemn covenant, the Prophet (s) promised them ***Jannah***. The seventy-three Medinan Muslims then took the pledge, placing their hands in the Prophet's (s) hand, a powerful symbol of their unbreakable commitment. The two women, *Umm Ayman* and *Umm Nuseiba*, also offered their allegiance in a manner appropriate for women.

As the meeting concluded and the dawn approached, the seventy-three Muslims began to disperse discreetly, returning to their respective tents. However, an alarm was raised—either by Satan himself or by a hidden *Quraysh* scout who had witnessed the clandestine gathering. The *Quraysh* leaders, already on high alert, immediately dispatched a delegation, including *Abu Jahl*, to the Prophet's (s) residence. Expecting to find the Medinans there, they were instead met by *Imam Ali* (a) and *Hamza*, who had replaced *Abbas* as the visible guards to preserve *Abbas'*s cover. Their imposing presence and firm words ("Why are you here? Do not advance, or your heads will not remain on your bodies!") deterred the *Quraysh*, who, after a brief inspection of the empty house, left, somewhat confused but still suspicious.

The *Quraysh* then approached the Medinan caravans, interrogating them about any secret meetings. The Muslim contingent, maintaining strict composure, feigned ignorance, while the pagan Medinans, including *Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul*, genuinely knew nothing of the secret pact and swore that no such meeting had occurred. *Abdullah ibn Ubayy*'s denial, given his influential position, served to momentarily assuage the *Quraysh*'s

suspicions, as he was seen as a reliable source.

However, the *Quraysh*'s doubts solidified when they observed the Medinan caravans packing up to leave Mecca much earlier than their customary departure time. Realizing that something significant had transpired, they launched a pursuit. Most of the Medinans, having been warned to depart swiftly, had already left. Only two prominent figures, *Sa'd ibn Ubadah* and *Munzir ibn Amr*, lingered behind. *Munzir* managed to escape, but *Sa'd ibn Ubadah*, a highly respected chief of the *Khazraj* tribe, was captured. The *Quraysh* redirected their collective fury upon him, subjecting him to severe torture. *Sa'd* endured the torment with remarkable fortitude, refusing to divulge any information about the secret pledge. This act of resilience further underscored the depth of commitment forged in the valleys of Mina.

The events of the Second Pledge of Aqabah, often referred to as the Great Pledge or the Final Pledge, demonstrate the strategic depth of the Prophet's (s) leadership. The *Hijrah* was not an impulsive flight but a meticulously orchestrated move, founded on deep loyalty, unwavering commitment, and a clear understanding of the challenges ahead. It represented the establishment of an independent political and social base for Islam, a crucial step from a persecuted minority to a thriving, self-sufficient community, setting the definitive stage for the Prophet's (s) migration.

Chapter 53

The Dawn of *Hijrah*: Medinan Leadership and Meccan Resistance

As the secretive pact of the **Final Pledge of Aqabah** concluded, the *Quraysh* sensed a profound shift. Their anxieties, already heightened by the Medinans' swift departure, solidified into suspicion. The immediate and tangible consequence of this suspicion fell upon *Sa'd ibn Ubadah*, a revered chief of the *Khazraj* tribe and one of the newly pledged leaders. Though the Medinan caravan had departed rapidly, *Sa'd* and *Munzir ibn Amr* were among a small group that lagged. The *Quraysh* seized *Sa'd*, their frustration boiling over, as the larger body of Muslims had already escaped their grasp.

Sa'd ibn Ubadah was subjected to brutal torture. The *Quraysh* youth, fueled by rage, dragged him through the streets of Mecca, beating him severely. They stripped the leather strap from his camel's saddle and used it to bind his hands behind his back, parading him like a common criminal through the harsh terrain between Mecca and Mina. Despite the excruciating pain and humiliation, *Sa'd* remained steadfast, revealing nothing of the sacred pact. It was during this ordeal that a flicker of humanity

emerged from an unexpected quarter. *Abd al-Bakhtari*, a relative of *Abu Jahl* and a chieftain of his own tribe, could no longer bear witness to the torture. He approached *Sa'd*, recognizing him as a Medinan leader, and asked if he had any allies in Mecca.

Sa'd recalled two men: *Jubayr ibn Mut'im*, a key figure from the Banu Hashim's boycott period, and *Harith ibn Harb*, *Abu Sufyan's* half-brother. These men had established trade alliances with him, their caravans often passing through Medina under *Sa'd*'s protection, just as *Sa'd*'s caravans found sanctuary in Mecca through their alliance. *Abd al-Bakhtari* sought them out, finding them in the Haram, and relayed *Sa'd*'s plight. Upon hearing *Sa'd*'s name, they immediately acknowledged their alliance, recognizing the reciprocal nature of their pact. With *Abd al-Bakhtari*'s assistance, they intervened, securing *Sa'd*'s release, and he swiftly made his way back to Medina, a testament to the complex web of alliances that sometimes transcended tribal animosity.

Upon his return, the Prophet (s) embarked on a crucial organizational phase. From the seventy-three Muslims who had pledged allegiance, he appointed twelve leaders, or *naqeebs*, nine from the *Khazraj* and three from the *Aws* tribe. These *naqeebs* were to be the pillars of the nascent Islamic society in Medina, each responsible for guiding and educating the Muslims within a designated section of the city. The Prophet (s) drew a parallel with the twelve chieftains appointed by Prophet Musa (***Moses***) and the twelve disciples of Prophet Isa (***Jesus***), signifying the immense responsibility and spiritual authority vested in them.

Among these twelve were figures of immense faith and dedication: * ***As'ad ibn Zurara***: Considered the chief of all *naqeebs*, he was among the very first Medinans to embrace Islam, even before the Prophet's public declaration of prophethood. He established the first congregational *Jum'ah* prayer in Medina and tirelessly propagated Islam. His death, soon

after the Prophet's arrival in Medina, marked the first loss among the *Muhajireen* after the *Hijrah*, leading to a brief period of doubt among some Medinans, which the Prophet (s) swiftly addressed. * ***Usaid ibn Hudair***: A chieftain of the *Aws* tribe, renowned for his bravery and immediate embrace of Islam after hearing the ***Qur'an*** recited by *Mus'ab ibn Umayr*. His conversion dramatically shifted the balance of power in Medina towards Islam. * ***Sa'd ibn Ubadah***: Whose resilience under torture had just been demonstrated, he remained a steadfast supporter of the Prophet (s) and his ***Ahlulbayt***. * ***Munzir ibn Amr***: A revered leader who, along with seventy companions, tragically attained martyrdom in the infamous incident of *Bi'r Ma'una* while on a mission to teach Islam, a testament to their unwavering commitment. * One of the *naqeebs* who passed away before the *Hijrah* demonstrated his profound love by willing a third of his wealth to the Prophet (s) upon his death, an act that later became a precedent for Islamic inheritance laws. * ***Abdullah ibn Rawaha***: A renowned poet whose passionate verses inspired the Muslims of Medina and even moved the Prophet (s). He was a flag-bearer in many battles and eventually fell as a martyr in the Battle of Mu'tah. * ***Abdullah ibn Amr***: Father of *Jabir ibn Abdullah*, he was a deeply devout Muslim who prioritized his family's welfare over his own participation in battles, following the Prophet's (s) counsel. He later attained martyrdom in the Battle of Uhud. * ***Sa'd ibn Rabi'***: Another *naqeeb* who, like *Abdullah ibn Amr*, was martyred in the Battle of Uhud, sustaining twelve wounds. His unwavering loyalty and concern for the Prophet (s) even in his dying moments were exemplary. * ***Sa'd ibn Khaythama***: A remarkable individual who, despite his father's initial resistance, insisted on participating in the Battle of Badr. They eventually drew lots to decide who would go, showcasing their zealous desire for martyrdom. * ***Abu Lubaba ibn Abd al-Munzir***: His story embodies profound repentance and divine forgiveness. During the Battle of Khandaq, he inadvertently leaked a secret of the Prophet (s) to the besieged Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza due to a personal relationship.

Overcome with remorse, he immediately bound himself to a pillar in the mosque and prayed for fifteen days until an ***Ayat*** of the ***Qur'an*** (***Surah At-Tawbah***, 9:102) was revealed, announcing Allah's acceptance of his repentance. The Prophet (s) himself untied him, setting an example for all future penitents.

With these twelve *naqeebs* diligently working, Medina began its rapid transformation. Within just two months, the city was being prepared to welcome the migrating Muslims from Mecca. The *naqeebs* not only spread the message of Islam but also organized safe havens for the incoming believers. The Muslims of Medina, though still living among pagans and Jews, were growing in confidence and strength.

The impact of this organized *Da'wah* was evident in stories such as that of *Manat*, the idol of the Banu Salama tribe. The tribe's chief, an old traditionalist, resisted Islam, but his son, *Mu'adh ibn Amr*, along with other young Muslims, had embraced it. Determined to remove the idol, *Mu'adh* and his friends would covertly enter the chief's courtyard at night, remove *Manat* from its honored place, and discard it in a pit filled with garbage and refuse. Each morning, the chief would find his idol gone, search for it, retrieve it with great effort, clean it, and restore it, only for the cycle to repeat. His anger mounted with each desecration, but the consistent humiliation of his deity eventually broke his attachment. One morning, finding *Manat* once again in the pit, with a sword tied around its neck, he realized its powerlessness and declared his acceptance of Islam. This subtle but effective campaign showcased the strategic approach of the Medinan Muslims in dismantling idolatry.

Meanwhile, in Mecca, the Prophet (s) had issued a directive: the time had come for the Muslims to migrate from Mecca. He instructed them to depart in small groups or individually, whenever the opportunity arose, but specifically to head towards Medina. *Habasha* (Abyssinia) was no

longer the designated destination, as it was too distant, had previously presented difficulties for the *Muhajireen*, and its ruler, though benevolent, had not guaranteed military protection, unlike the explicit pledge of the Medinans.

The *Quraysh*, observing the gradual exodus, heightened their vigilance. *Abu Jahl*, particularly sensitive to family honor, was humiliated when his own half-brother, *Ayyash ibn Rabi'ah*, and his cousin, *Hisham ibn al-As*, attempted to migrate. *Hisham* was captured and shackled by *Abu Jahl*. However, *Ayyash* managed to escape. *Abu Jahl*, along with *Harith*, his full brother, pursued *Ayyash* to Medina. There, they cunningly appealed to *Ayyash*'s filial piety, claiming their mother was heartbroken and would not eat or comb her hair until he returned. Despite *Umar's* stern warnings against trusting *Abu Jahl*'s deceit, *Ayyash* was swayed by the thought of his mother's suffering and decided to return to Mecca with them. *Umar* warned him about *Abu Jahl*'s trickery and advised *Ayyash* to ride a fast camel he provided and never dismount, ensuring a quick escape if betrayal occurred. However, *Ayyash* fell for *Abu Jahl*'s plea for assistance as they neared Mecca, dismounted, and was immediately seized, bound, and brought back to Mecca, paraded through the streets by *Abu Jahl* as a display of his control and a warning to other Muslims. He was imprisoned alongside *Hisham*.

Two years later, after the Battle of Badr, *Walid ibn Walid*, the brother of *Khalid ibn Walid*, was among the *Quraysh* captives released after ransom. He had witnessed the nascent Islamic society in Medina during his captivity and was deeply impressed. Upon his return to Mecca, *Walid* heard of *Ayyash* and *Hisham*'s plight from the Prophet (s) himself. Moved by compassion, *Walid* volunteered to rescue them. He traveled to Mecca, located a Muslim blacksmith who secretly aided him, and managed to find *Ayyash* and *Hisham* still imprisoned by *Abu Jahl*. The blacksmith, following *Walid*'s instructions from the Prophet (s), cleverly devised a way to

break their shackles silently using a specific technique with a hammer and sword blade. In the dead of night, *Walid* freed them, and all three made their way to Medina.

These stories of individual courage, sacrifice, and strategic action underscore the perilous yet determined beginning of the *Hijrah*. The organized efforts of the *naqeebs* in Medina were critical in preparing the city to become the new center of Islam, while the steadfastness of the *Muhajireen* in Mecca, facing intense persecution, demonstrated their profound commitment to their faith. The *Hijrah* was not a simple flight but a carefully planned, divinely guided migration, fraught with danger, yet executed with remarkable dedication.

Chapter 54

The Dawn of *Hijrah*: The Exodus of the Faithful

The air in Mecca grew heavy with a sense of unease for the *Quraysh*. The Prophet (s) had been preparing his followers for the impending migration, a journey fraught with peril and profound sacrifice. The Holy *Qur'an* itself alluded to the *Quraysh*'s desperation and Allah's overarching plan, as revealed in ***Surah Al-Anfal*** (8:30): "**And [remember, O Muhammad], when those who disbelieved plotted against you to restrain you or kill you or expel you. But they plan, and Allah plans. And Allah is the best of planners.**" This verse vividly captured the tense atmosphere as the *Quraysh* leaders convened to devise their schemes against the Prophet (s), unaware of the divine wisdom guiding the nascent Muslim community.

As the days passed, a noticeable emptiness began to pervade Mecca. The city, once bustling with those the *Quraysh* daily subjected to cruelty, now seemed to shed its inhabitants one by one. The *Quraysh* were bewildered and distressed to find their adversaries steadily disappearing. This exodus was a direct consequence of the Prophet's (s) meticulous planning,

initiated after the transformative journey of *Isra* and *Mi'raj* and solidified by the Pledges of Aqabah. For three consecutive years, the Muslims of Medina had traveled to Mecca during the Hajj season, pledging allegiance to the Prophet (s) and offering their city as a sanctuary. After the final pledge, the Prophet (s) issued a direct command to the Meccan Muslims: the time had come to depart from Mecca.

The concept of *Hijrah*—abandoning one's homeland, the resting place of ancestors, the city of one's birth, childhood, and youth, where friends, relatives, and tribe resided—was immensely challenging. In the tribal society of Arabia fourteen centuries ago, such a departure was akin to death. A person separated from their tribe was like a lost animal, vulnerable to all dangers. Yet, the Prophet (s) had diligently prepared his followers mentally for this immense sacrifice over several years, especially after the *Mi'raj*. He frequently recited the powerful *du'a* from ***Surah Al-Isra'*** (17:80): "***Rabbi adkhilni mudkhala sidqin wa akhrijni mukhraja sidqin waj'al li min ladunka sultanan naseera***" (**My Lord, cause me to enter with a [firm] entrance and to exit with a [firm] exit and grant me from Yourself a supporting authority**). This *du'a* was a constant reminder, preparing their hearts to leave their homeland for the sake of truth and to enter an unfamiliar land with Allah's support. Furthermore, the Prophet (s) shared recurring dreams in which Allah showed him a land filled with date palms, signaling Medina as their future home.

The migration began in a strategic, phased manner. The Prophet (s) instructed Muslims to depart gradually, in small groups of one or two, or sometimes five or seven, to avoid arousing immediate suspicion from the *Quraysh*. This subtle exodus continued for approximately two and a half months, from Dhu al-Hijjah until the first of Rabi' al-Awwal. By this time, Mecca was virtually empty of Muslims, with only a handful of notable figures remaining: the Prophet (s), *Imam Ali* (a), *Abu Bakr*, and *Suhayb al-Rumi*. A few extremely weak, old, or sick individuals, and women whose

families forcibly restrained them, also remained.

Among the very first to embark on this perilous journey were *Abu Salama* and his wife, *Umm Salama*. They are revered as the first male and female *Muhaajirun* (migrants) to Medina. Their *Hijrah* was a testament to the immense trials faced by the early Muslims. They had previously migrated to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) but returned to Mecca upon receiving false news that the *Quraysh* had converted to Islam. Upon their return, *Abu Talib* (the Prophet's (s) uncle and protector) graciously extended his protection to his nephew, *Abu Salama*, as his paternal cousin, illustrating the tribal code of *aman*.

However, when *Abu Salama* decided to embark on the *Hijrah* to Medina, *Umm Salama's* family, the Banu Mughira (closely associated with *Abu Jahl*), intervened. They forcibly seized *Umm Salama* and her young son, Salama, declaring they would not allow their daughter to leave with *Abu Salama*, whom they viewed as responsible for her previous hardships. *Umm Salama* was cruelly separated from her husband and child, with her son snatched from her arms and taken by *Abu Salama's* own clan. *Abu Salama* was forced to migrate alone.

For nearly a year, *Umm Salama* remained in Mecca, enduring profound grief and isolation. She would go to the outskirts of Mecca daily, weeping from dawn till dusk, longing for her husband and son. Eventually, a compassionate cousin from her own tribe felt pity for her plight and reproached her family, arguing that her misery would lead to her death. Moved by his words, her family relented and allowed her to leave. When her family permitted her departure, they urged *Abu Salama's* clan to return her son, Salama, reminding them that while she was their daughter, the child belonged to *Abu Salama's* lineage. *Umm Salama* was reunited with her child and set off for Medina, traveling alone with her infant. At a place called Tan'im, on the outskirts of Mecca, she was met by a poly-

theist named **Uthman ibn Talha**, who, despite his pagan beliefs, offered her protection. With remarkable chivalry, he walked alongside her camel, never casting an improper glance, escorting her with dignity all the way to Quba, a village just outside Medina, where *Abu Salama* had settled. He then returned to Mecca without expecting any reward. *Umm Salama* eventually reunited with *Abu Salama* in Quba, and they found such peace there that they preferred to stay even after the Prophet's (s) arrival in Medina, remaining in Quba until *Umm Salama's* marriage to the Prophet (s) much later.

The early waves of *Hijrah* also included groups of the most oppressed and vulnerable Muslims, particularly the freed slaves who had endured severe torture in Mecca. Among them were **Bilal al-Habashi** and **Ammar ibn Yasir**. As *Ammar ibn Yasir* was migrating, he was intercepted by the *Quraysh*. Under brutal torment, he was compelled to utter words of disbelief and praise their idols. However, his heart remained firm in faith. Upon hearing of this incident, Allah revealed ***Surah An-Nahl*** (16:106): "**Whoever disbelieved in Allah after his belief, except for one who is forced while his heart is at peace with faith.**" This divine revelation clarified the concept of *Taqiyyah*, permitting outward dissimulation under extreme duress to preserve one's life and faith, while maintaining inner conviction.

Another prominent family to embark on the *Hijrah* was the **Banu Jahsh**, a highly respected clan with close ties to the Prophet (s) through his aunt, *Umaymah bint Abd al-Muttalib*, who was married to Jahsh. This entire clan, known for their early conversion to Islam, left all their considerable property, lands, and homes behind in Mecca. The *Quraysh* leaders, including *Abu Jahl* and *Uqbah*, were dismayed to see their empty homes. *Uqbah* lamented the loss of such a respected clan, while *Abu Jahl* bitterly attributed their departure to the Prophet's (s) influence. The abandoned properties were subsequently seized by the *Quraysh*, notably by *Abu Su-*

fyan, who claimed the property of *Abdullah ibn Jahsh*'s brother, arguing that his daughter (Abu Sufyan's daughter) was married into the family. Later, after the Conquest of Mecca, when members of the Banu Jahsh sought to reclaim their properties, the Prophet (s) instructed them that Allah would grant them something far better in ***Jannah***, thereby solidifying the principle that worldly sacrifices made for Allah's cause are not to be regretted or reclaimed.

Among the Banu Jahsh, **Abdullah ibn Jahsh** stands out as a remarkable figure. He was the Prophet's (s) paternal cousin and brother to two significant sisters: Hamnah, who was married to *Mus'ab ibn Umayr* (the first envoy to Medina), and Zaynab, who later married the Prophet (s) himself. *Abdullah ibn Jahsh* is buried beside the Prophet's (s) uncle, *Hamza*, in Uhud. A day before the Battle of Uhud, *Abdullah ibn Jahsh* made a profound *du'a*. While his companion prayed for victory and strength to slay enemies, *Abdullah ibn Jahsh* prayed to Allah: "**My Lord, tomorrow when we meet the enemy, let me encounter an enemy more powerful than me, who will martyr me, dismember my body, cut off my nose and ears, so that when I stand before You on the Day of Judgment, and You ask me, 'My servant, why are you in this state?' I may say, 'My Lord, I bore this for Your sake.'**" His prayer was astonishingly fulfilled, a testament to his sincere devotion. The Prophet (s) ordered that his body be buried next to *Hamza* in Uhud, signifying his high status among the martyrs. This episode underscores the stark contrast between the human desire for safety and the unparalleled sacrifices made by the early Muslims for the sake of faith.

The *Quraysh*'s failure to fully halt the *Hijrah* stemmed from a combination of factors. Many were pleased to see the Muslims leave, as it cleared the way for them to seize the abandoned properties. Furthermore, the proud *Quraysh* leaders considered it beneath them to patrol streets and prevent individual migrations, leaving the task to their less influential kin who

themselves often harbored desires for the vacant properties.

The final major *Muhaajir* to leave Mecca was **Suhayb al-Rumi**. Originally a slave of Roman descent, he had accumulated immense wealth in Mecca through his skills, particularly as a blacksmith. As he attempted to migrate, a group of *Quraysh* youth intercepted him, demanding his wealth, reminding him that he had arrived in Mecca empty-handed. *Suhayb*, known for his archery skills, first warned them of his prowess, but then, choosing faith over fortune, offered them all his worldly possessions in exchange for safe passage. The *Quraysh* youth, swayed by the lure of his wealth, agreed.

Suhayb arrived in Quba, near Medina, where the Prophet (s) had already arrived and was staying. Upon seeing *Suhayb*, the Prophet (s) exclaimed twice, "***Rabiha Suhayb! Rabiha Suhayb!***" (**Suhayb has profited! Suhayb has profited!**). *Suhayb* was surprised, asking how the Prophet (s) knew of his sacrifice. The Prophet (s) informed him that Jibreel had revealed the news, affirming that *Suhayb* had made the most profitable trade by sacrificing his wealth to safeguard his faith. This incident epitomized the essence of *Hijrah*: prioritizing the purity of belief and the freedom to practice Islam over all worldly attachments.

By the time the Prophet (s) and *Imam Ali* (a) prepared for their own momentous journey, Mecca was largely devoid of Muslims, with the exception of those physically unable to travel. The *Hijrah* of these early Muslims was not merely a physical displacement but a spiritual odyssey, demonstrating that freedom of faith and the opportunity to live by Islamic principles were paramount, even if it meant abandoning homeland, wealth, and family. The narrative now approached the final stage of this epic migration, with the Prophet (s) and *Imam Ali* (a) preparing to leave Mecca, marking the end of a significant era.

Chapter 55

The Plot of Dar an-Nadwa and the Divine Command for *Hijrah*

The momentous events leading up to the ***Hijrah*** culminated in a profound moment of divine revelation, encapsulated in the words of Allah from ***Surah Al-Anfal*** (8:30): **"***And* [*remember, O Muhammad*]*, when those who disbelieved plotted against you to restrain you or kill you or expel you* [*from Makkah*]*. But they plan, and Allah plans. And Allah is the best of planners.*" This verse serves as the central theme of this pivotal period, illuminating the depth of the *Quraysh*'s animosity and the infallible nature of Allah's plan.

The ***Hijrah*** is not merely a historical event; it embodies timeless principles for believers. Firstly, it established that while love for one's homeland, people, and family is innate and cherished, it must never become a hindrance to the practice of ***Deen***. If staying in one's land, no matter how beloved, impedes one's ability to uphold the truth, then that land must be sacrificed. The Prophet (s), for whom Mecca was the most beloved place on Earth—the home of the ***Kaaba***, the sacred heart of Islam—still found himself compelled to leave. As he departed Mecca, it is narrated that his

eyes welled with tears as he looked back at the ***Kaaba***, murmuring, "O ***Kaaba***, among all places in the world, you are the dearest to me. My Lord also loves you the most. But those who dwell here are forcing me to leave you." This poignant moment underscores the immense sacrifice involved, a sacrifice made entirely for the preservation and propagation of faith.

Secondly, the ***Hijrah*** demonstrated that even the most sacred places can be temporarily abandoned if adhering to the ***Deen*** becomes impossible there. At that time, Medina was but an ordinary town, not yet known as the luminous city that would become the Prophet's (s) sanctuary. Yet, it was chosen over Mecca, because in Medina, the practice of Islam could flourish without persecution. This principle remains potent, teaching us that freedom to practice one's faith takes precedence over attachment to any location, no matter how holy.

Initially, for the Muslims of Mecca, ***Hijrah*** had been optional, a choice for those seeking relief from persecution. However, following the Pledges of Aqabah, particularly the Final Pledge where the Medinans committed to protecting the Prophet (s) and his companions, the migration became a divine obligation. This shift is underscored in ***Surah An-Nisa*** (4:97-98). Allah condemned those who, despite being able, remained in Mecca and did not migrate, stating that their dwelling would be Hell. However, the revelation also offered solace and exemption for the truly helpless among men, women, and children (***mustaz'afeen***) – those who genuinely lacked the means, knowledge, or physical capacity to migrate, such as those held captive or too infirm to travel.

Among these last migrants, before the Prophet's (s) own journey, was an old and ailing man named **Jundub** (or Sundub, variations exist in narrations). Upon hearing the divine command of ***Surah An-Nisa***, despite his severe illness and bedridden state, Jundub passionately insisted that

his sons carry him out of Mecca. He reasoned that the divine exemption was for those who truly had no way to leave or know the path, and he was neither. His sons, seeing his unwavering resolve, reluctantly carried him forth. Jundub passed away en route to Medina. Immediately, a verse (from ***Surah An-Nisa*** 4:100) was revealed, affirming that "whoever emigrates for the cause of Allah will find on the earth a spacious [refuge] and abundance. And whoever leaves his home as an emigrant to Allah and His Messenger and then death overtakes him—his reward has already become incumbent upon Allah. And Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful." Thus, while *Suhayb al-Rumi*, as narrated earlier, was the last to *reach* Medina, Jundub was the last to *depart* Mecca on this divine command.

The *Quraysh* in Mecca watched with growing alarm as their city emptied of Muslims, who were relocating to Medina. Reports reached them that the Muslims were not only safe but thriving under the Prophet's (s) guidance. What truly ignited the *Quraysh*'s fury, beyond mere religious differences, was the strategic location of Medina. It lay directly on the lucrative trade route connecting Mecca to Syria. The *Quraysh* realized that if the Prophet (s) established a strong base in Medina, he could easily disrupt their annual trade caravans, which generated immense wealth. This economic threat, coupled with the realization that their attempts to suppress Islam had failed and that the Prophet (s) was gaining significant power, spurred them to a collective and decisive action.

It is crucial to understand that this final, orchestrated plot was different from previous individual attempts on the Prophet's (s) life or his noble ancestors. The divine protection extended to this blessed lineage from its very roots. It is narrated that even **Janaab Hashim** and **Janaab Abdul Muttalib** faced attempts on their lives by those who sought to prevent the birth of the Prophet (s), only to be divinely protected through various means, including changes in identity and unexpected interventions. **Janaab Abdullah**, the Prophet's (s) father, for instance, was once targeted

by a group of Jews, instigated by Iblis, during a hunting trip near Medina. He was alone, and five men attacked him, but he was divinely aided, killing one of them while heavenly figures protected him from the others. It was after this miraculous escape that **Janaab Abdul Muttalib** hastened to arrange Abdullah's marriage to **Sayyida Amina** (a).

Even after the Prophet's (s) birth, numerous individual attempts on his life are recorded: 1. During his infancy, when **Janaab Halima Sa'diya** took him to a fair in Okaz, an *araaf* (physiognomist) from the **Huzail** tribe recognized the young Prophet (s) as a future threat to the *Quraysh* and urged his immediate killing. Halima, realizing the danger, quickly fled with the child. 2. Later, during a trade journey to Syria with his uncle **Abu Talib** (when he was 12), they encountered **Buhaira the Monk** in Basra (modern-day Horan). Buhaira recognized the signs of prophethood on the young Muhammad (s) and warned Abu Talib of Jewish plots, advising him to return immediately. Buhaira also exposed a group of seemingly religious "students" who were, in fact, assassins sent by their Christian leader to kill the Prophet (s). Buhaira famously quoted, "***In Allah Khaaliq Amrullah***" (Indeed, Allah is accomplishing His command), asserting that Allah's plan would prevail regardless of human machinations. 3. **Nadhr ibn Harith**, a prominent *Quraysh* chief known for his opposition to the *Qur'an*, once attempted to attack the Prophet (s) with his sword near *Jannat al-Mu'alla*. However, as he approached, a terrifying black python appeared and forced him to retreat in utter fear, saving the Prophet (s). 4. **Abu Jahl** once vowed to crush the Prophet (s) with a large stone while he was in prostration. As he approached, the stone miraculously slipped from his hand and injured his own foot. 5. **Walid ibn Mughira** also attempted to attack the Prophet (s) during prayer but claimed to see a fiery trench and a terrifying shadow blocking his path each time he tried to advance. 6. Perhaps the most direct physical assault came from **Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt**, who wrapped his shawl around

the Prophet's (s) blessed neck during prayer and strangled him. Swift intervention by **Abu Talib** and other members of Banu Hashim saved the Prophet (s). 7. Even **Umar ibn al-Khattab**, before his conversion, set out with a sword to assassinate the Prophet (s) but was diverted by a divine sign, leading to his acceptance of Islam. 8. Later, **Aamir and Urba**, two chiefs of Banu Umayya and close allies of Abu Jahl, conspired to assassinate the Prophet (s). Aamir would distract him with conversation while Urba attacked from behind. However, each time Urba tried to strike, his sword inexplicably turned towards Aamir. Eventually, a lightning bolt struck Urba, killing him instantly, while Aamir also met a humiliating end later. 9. During the three-year boycott in ***Shi'b Abi Talib***, the *Quraysh* made collective attempts to attack the Prophet (s) in his sleep. However, **Abu Talib** meticulously rotated **Imam Ali (a)**, **Ja'far at-Tayyar**, and sometimes **Aqeel** to sleep in the Prophet's (s) bed, ensuring his safety.

These previous attempts were largely individual or uncoordinated. However, with the successful ***Hijrah*** of Muslims to Medina, the *Quraysh* realized the gravity of the Prophet's (s) growing influence and the economic threat it posed. The situation demanded a unified, comprehensive plan.

Thus, a crucial and unprecedented "special meeting" was convened in ***Dar an-Nadwa***, the council house of the *Quraysh*, located near the ***Kaaba***. This assembly hall had been built by **Qusayy ibn Kilab**, the great-great-grandfather of the Prophet (s), and was the traditional venue for resolving critical tribal matters concerning all of Mecca. The meeting was restricted to chiefs from every *Quraysh* tribe, with a strict age requirement of at least 40 years, signifying the need for wisdom and experience, not mere youthful zeal. The sole exception was Utbah, Hind's father, who was 37 but allowed due to his family's prominence in enmity against the Prophet (s). To lend legitimacy and forestall any claims of bias, **Abu Lahab** was specifically invited to represent Banu Hashim, creating an illu-

sion of collective tribal consensus.

As the chiefs gathered, a venerable old man from Najd, disguised as a wise elder (who was, in reality, Iblis himself), joined the meeting, offering his "invaluable" counsel. Abu Jahl, chairing the meeting, outlined the grave situation, emphasizing how Prophet Muhammad (s) had shattered Mecca's peace, insulted their gods and ancestors, and turned their youth against them. He declared that a decisive solution was needed to preserve their honour and standing.

Various proposals were put forth: * **Proposal 1 (from Abu Jahl initially):** Send a skilled assassin to kill the Prophet (s) outright. The "old man from Najd" (Iblis) rejected this, warning that Banu Hashim would undoubtedly avenge their son, leading to a bloody tribal war that would engulf Mecca. * **Proposal 2 (from Umayyah ibn Khalaf, Abu Sufyan, and others):** Imprison him, tie him to a wild camel, and abandon him in a remote desert, hoping he would perish or be carried away to a far-off land, removing the threat from Mecca. Iblis again rejected this, cautioning that the Prophet's (s) eloquent speech and charisma would win over any tribe he encountered, allowing him to raise a powerful army that would eventually return to conquer Mecca. * **Proposal 3 (from Jubayr ibn Mut'im):** Build a small, isolated prison (like a grave) for him, starve him to death, and seal him inside. This way, no direct blood would be shed by their hands, theoretically preventing Banu Hashim's revenge. Iblis dismissed this as well, arguing that Banu Hashim would rally their allies and attack the prison, especially during the *Umrah* season when all Arab tribes were present in Mecca. He warned that this would only make the Prophet (s) stronger.

Finally, the most sinister proposal was put forward. According to some narrations, it came from the disguised Iblis himself, while others attribute it to Abu Jahl, supported by Iblis. This was the unanimous, fatal plan: *

A strong young man from *every single Quraysh tribe* would be selected. * Together, they would attack the Prophet (s) simultaneously with their swords as he slept. * The objective was to ensure that his blood guilt would be distributed among all tribes, making it impossible for Banu Hashim to seek revenge against any one specific clan. * They would then offer a large sum of blood money to Banu Hashim to appease them and prevent any further retaliation.

This diabolical plan, supported by Abu Lahab's presence to give it the stamp of Banu Hashim's (or at least one of its prominent members') "approval," was accepted. However, as soon as this ultimate conspiracy was finalized in ***Dar an-Nadwa***, Allah sent **Jibreel (a)** to the Prophet (s). The angel delivered the divine message of ***Surah Al-Anfal*** (8:30) and conveyed Allah's direct command for the Prophet (s) to embark on his own ***Hijrah*** from Mecca. The stage was now set for the most profound journey in Islamic history, one where divine protection and strategic planning would once again foil the machinations of his enemies. The precise details of the Prophet's (s) personal ***Hijrah***, including the role of **Imam Ali (a)**, would unfold in the days to come.

Chapter 56

Laylat al-Mabit: The Sacred Vigil and the Divine Escape

The relentless persecution by the *Quraysh* had reached its apex. Following the conspiratorial gathering at *Dar an-Nadwa*, where the Meccan chiefs, influenced by Iblis in disguise, had unanimously resolved to assassinate the Prophet Muhammad (s), divine intervention swiftly descended. Allah revealed ***Surah Al-Anfal*** (8:30) to His Messenger, informing him of the elaborate plot: "**And [remember, O Muhammad], when those who disbelieved plotted against you to restrain you or kill you or expel you. But they plan, and Allah plans. And Allah is the best of planners.**" The time for the great migration, the ***Hijrah***, had arrived.

With this divine commandment, the Prophet (s) knew his departure was imminent. As the night of the planned assassination descended, a contingent of twelve or fifteen armed youths, chosen from every tribe of *Quraysh* to dilute blood guilt, surrounded the Prophet's (s) humble abode, their swords bared, ready to strike at dawn. It was a dark night, with little moonlight, adding to the stealth of their sinister design.

In this pivotal moment, the Prophet (s) summoned *Imam Ali* ibn Abi

Talib (a) to his chamber. He unveiled the *Quraysh*'s nefarious scheme and conveyed Allah's command for him to depart Mecca immediately. The Prophet (s) then instructed *Imam Ali* (a) to perform an act of unparalleled courage: to sleep in his bed, covered with the Prophet's (s) distinctive green Hadhrami cloak, thereby impersonating him and drawing the assassins' attention away.

Imam Ali (a), upon hearing the grave task, asked a single, profound question: "O Messenger of Allah, will my sleeping in your bed save your life?" When the Prophet (s) confirmed that indeed it would, *Imam Ali* (a) prostrated himself in an act of thanksgiving to Allah. This was the first *sajda* of gratitude in the history of Islam, a spontaneous act of devotion born from pure selflessness and unwavering loyalty. It is crucial to note that the Prophet (s) did not guarantee *Imam Ali*'s (a) safety, nor did he instruct him to distribute the trusts of the Meccans immediately. Instead, he underscored the immense magnitude of *Imam Ali*'s (a) sacrifice. He proclaimed that the trial *Imam Ali* (a) was about to face, by lying in his bed, was greater than that of Prophet Ibrahim (a) when he prepared to sacrifice Ismail (a), and that *Imam Ali*'s (a) act of devotion surpassed even Ismail's (a) willingness to be sacrificed. He emphasized that the closer one is to Allah, the greater the test and the sacrifice demanded.

With the divine plan set in motion, the Prophet (s) emerged from his house. Reciting the first nine verses of ***Surah Yaseen***, he passed directly through the midst of the armed *Quraysh* conspirators, who, by Allah's miraculous intervention, were rendered utterly oblivious to his presence. He picked up a handful of dust and cast it upon their heads, uttering, "***Shaahat il-wujuh!***" ("May faces be disgraced!"). Though blinded by divine decree, Iblis, who had actively participated in the *Dar an-Nadwa* plot, immediately recognized the Prophet's (s) escape. He shrieked, warning the assassins that their intended victim had slipped away. However, the *Quraysh* dismissed Iblis's cries, convinced that the figure covered in the

green cloak was still the Prophet (s) himself, and continued their vigil. Many of those upon whom the dust fell that night were later killed in the Battle of Badr.

The Prophet (s), in a strategic maneuver to mislead his pursuers, did not head north towards Medina but instead took the southward path, towards the region of Yemen, the opposite direction from his intended destination. After traveling a few miles from Mecca, he arrived at the ***Ghar-e-Thawr*** (Cave of Thawr) on Mount Thawr. It is related that *Abu Bakr* coincidentally encountered the Prophet (s) outside Mecca and accompanied him to the cave. This cave, known for its extremely narrow entrance, miraculously offered the perfect concealment. As the Prophet (s) and his companion entered, Allah manifested three signs of divine protection: a date palm tree suddenly grew at the cave's mouth, a spider spun a complete web across the entrance, and a wild pigeon laid eggs and built a nest. These natural phenomena, appearing instantaneously, conveyed a powerful message.

The *Quraysh*, upon discovering the Prophet's (s) escape at dawn, immediately launched a frantic search. They dispatched skilled trackers, including Abu Kird and Mumiyyah, renowned for their ability to follow footprints. When these trackers reached the vicinity of *Ghar-e-Thawr*, they observed the fresh date tree, the intact spider web, and the undisturbed pigeon's nest. Abu Kird, despite his expertise, declared that no one could have entered the cave recently, stating that the spider's web seemed older than the birth of the person they sought, and the pigeon's nest undisturbed by human presence. Convinced by these miraculous signs, the pursuers retreated, unable to fathom the divine assistance shielding the Prophet (s). This incident perfectly exemplified Allah's promise: "***Wa kaana haqqan 'alayna nasrul-mu'minin***" (***Surah Ar-Rum***, 30:47) – "And it was incumbent upon Us to help the believers."

Meanwhile, at dawn in Mecca, the *Quraysh* assassins, led by Walid ibn Mughira and Abu Jahl, stormed the Prophet's (s) house. Walid, attempting to be the first to assault, tugged at the Prophet's (s) cloak. To his astonishment, *Imam Ali* (a) burst forth from the bed, his demeanor that of a roaring lion. *Imam Ali* (a) confronted Abu Jahl with a powerful address, proclaiming his God-given intellect, strength, bravery, and forbearance. He asserted that he possessed the power to annihilate them all but was restraining himself due to a higher command. He challenged Abu Jahl's accusations of being under the Prophet's (s) "magic," reminding him that his wisdom was enough to make all fools wise, and his strength enough to empower all the weak. Abu Jahl, taken aback by *Imam Ali*'s (a) ferocity and eloquence, quickly retreated, cautioning his companions not to engage with him, attributing *Imam Ali*'s (a) defiance to the Prophet's (s) supposed "magic."

Frustrated, the *Quraysh* chiefs then stormed the house of Abu Quhafah, *Abu Bakr*'s blind father, demanding information. *Abu Bakr*'s daughter, *Asma* (who was older than *Aisha*), faced their interrogation. When asked about her father's whereabouts, *Asma* responded ambiguously, protecting the secret of the Prophet's (s) escape. When Abu Quhafah worried that *Abu Bakr* had left them penniless, *Asma* cleverly placed stones in a pocket and told her blind grandfather that her father had left plenty of wealth, using a double entendre (wealth could mean both material riches and good deeds/virtues). This act, employing *tawriya* (ambiguous speech), served to protect her family and the sacred mission, illustrating a profound aspect of Islamic ethics where truth can be conveyed in a manner that protects the innocent and the faith.

For three days, the Prophet (s) and *Abu Bakr* remained hidden in *Ghar-e-Thawr*. During this period, *Imam Ali* (a) and *Sayyida Fatima* (a), along with some others from Banu Hashim, bravely visited the cave under the cloak of night, bringing sustenance and crucial updates on the develop-

ments in Mecca. It is important to reiterate that the Prophet (s) did not entrust *Imam Ali* (a) with the distribution of Meccan trusts on this specific night of *Hijrah*. The strategic three-day wait allowed the initial frenzy of the *Quraysh* search to subside, paving the way for the next phase of the momentous journey towards Medina.

Chapter 57

The Journey Continues: Miracles, Encounters, and Divine Reassurances on the Path to Medina

The miraculous departure of the Prophet Muhammad (s) from Mecca, concealed by divine protection, led him to the refuge of ***Ghar-e-Thawr***. The three days spent within the cave formed a crucial prelude to the ***Hijrah***, marked by intense pursuit, unwavering faith, and divine orchestration. It is important to note that the detailed accounts of these events vary among Islamic historians. While numerous narratives exist, this account places its reliance on the traditions preserved by prominent Shi'a scholars such as Sheikh Tusi in his *Amali*, Sheikh Tabarsi in his *I'lam al-Wara*, Sheikh Sadooq in his *Manqib*, and Allama Majlisi in his *Bihar al-Anwar*, particularly Volume 19. This nuanced approach helps to clarify certain aspects that might differ from commonly heard or read historical renditions, especially concerning the roles of various personalities.

The first night in *Ghar-e-Thawr* passed under the veil of divine protection. The following morning, a determined *Quraysh* search party, led by

Hamaq ibn Khalaf and guided by an expert tracker, arrived at the very entrance of the cave. Despite the tracker's insistence that his knowledge pointed to the cave as their hiding place, Hamaq, one of Mecca's five prominent leaders, dismissed his claims. Witnessing the freshly spun spider web across the entrance, the undisturbed pigeon's nest with its eggs, and a thriving wild date palm, Hamaq scoffed at the tracker's suggestion, asserting that no one could have entered without disturbing these natural signs. Convinced by the fabricated evidence, he ordered his party to abandon the search at the cave, and they returned to Mecca in frustration.

Meanwhile, the *Quraysh* had taken drastic measures to prevent the Prophet's escape. They sealed off all routes leading from Mecca to Medina and declared a massive reward: one hundred camels for anyone who could capture or bring back the Prophet (s), dead or alive.

The accounts of who visited the Prophet (s) in the cave during these three days differ significantly. While a prevalent narrative suggests that Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr brought daily updates and food, and Amir ibn Fuhayra grazed sheep near the cave to erase footprints, our traditions emphasize the pivotal role of *Imam Ali* (a).

On the second night, it was *Imam Ali* (a) along with Hind ibn Abi Hala (Sayyida Khadijah's nephew and stepson of the Prophet (s)), who ventured through the darkness to *Ghar-e-Thawr*. They brought sustenance and provided a detailed report of the situation in Mecca. The Prophet (s), anticipating the *Quraysh*'s dwindling resolve, instructed *Imam Ali* (a) to return on the third night with further updates.

On the third night, *Imam Ali* (a) made his second perilous journey to the cave. He informed the Prophet (s) that the *Quraysh*'s hope of finding him was waning, and they had begun to resign themselves to the possibility that he had reached Medina. Seeing this, the Prophet (s) knew it was time to proceed with the journey. He entrusted *Imam Ali* (a) with four

critical responsibilities for the impending departure:

1. **Arrange for Three Camels:** *Imam Ali* (a) was to procure three riding camels – one for the Prophet (s), one for his companion, and one for the guide. (A common narrative mentions Abu Bakr offering two camels, which the Prophet (s) insisted on paying for, highlighting the importance of not being indebted for the *Hijrah*).
2. **Secure a Guide:** He was to find a trustworthy guide who knew all the routes to Medina.
3. **Return Entrustments (*Amanat*):** Upon the Prophet's departure, *Imam Ali* (a) was to publicly announce in the ***Haram*** of Mecca, before the ***Ka'aba***, that anyone who had entrusted valuables with the Prophet (s) should come forward with proof to reclaim their possessions. This task, while seemingly given on the third night in the cave, was a *reiteration* of the Prophet's initial instruction to *Imam Ali* (a) on ***Laylat al-Mabit***, emphasizing the sanctity of trusts even from enemies.
4. **Lead the Family Migration:** *Imam Ali* (a) was to await a letter from the Prophet (s) once he reached Medina. Upon receiving it, he was to bring the "Fatimahs" (plural, referring to ***Sayyida Fatima*** (a), *Sayyida Fatima bint Asad* (Imam Ali's mother), and *Sayyida Fatima bint Zubayr ibn Abd al-Muttalib* (the Prophet's (s) eldest paternal aunt)) and any other members of ***Banu Hashim*** or those who wished to migrate.

With these instructions, *Imam Ali* (a) returned to Mecca with Hind.

The fourth night dawned, marking the appointed time for departure from *Ghar-e-Thawr*. *Imam Ali* (a) had arranged for the camels and secured Abdullah ibn Urayqit, a pagan from the *Banu Dul* tribe, as the guide. Abdullah, upon seeing the Prophet (s), recognized him and recalled the miracles at the cave — the miraculously grown date palm, the undisturbed spider web, and the pigeon's nest. He revealed his conversion to Islam,

having been secretly impressed by these signs, and offered his services as a guide *pro bono*. The Prophet (s) accepted his faith but insisted on paying him, stating that his service was his payment.

Before dawn, under the cloak of diminishing darkness, the Prophet Muhammad (s), Abu Bakr, and Abdullah ibn Urayqit mounted their camels and began their sacred journey towards Medina. They chose an unconventional and circuitous route, often along the Red Sea coast, to avoid the main roads where *Quraysh* patrols were active.

Their journey was soon intercepted. The *Quraysh*'s reward of one hundred camels had reached far and wide, including the region of Wadi Qudayd, a location approximately one and a half hours from Mecca on what is now known as "Shara al-Hijra" (the *Hijrah* Road). Here lived Suraka ibn Malik, the chieftain of the *Banu Mudlij* tribe. When a tribesman reported seeing three individuals traveling suspiciously near the coast, Suraka immediately suspected they were the Prophet (s) and his companions. Driven by the immense reward, he cunningly dismissed the report to his tribesmen, claiming they were his own envoys, thereby preventing others from pursuing.

Suraka, a practitioner of divination, consulted his *azlam* (divination arrows) three times to seek guidance on whether to pursue. Each time, the arrows gave a negative omen, signaling "Do not proceed." Yet, his greed for the camels overpowered his adherence to the ritual. He mounted his fastest horse and set off in pursuit. As he neared the Prophet (s), his horse stumbled and sank into the soft sand up to its knees. Realizing the supernatural intervention, Suraka appealed to the Prophet (s) for help. The Prophet (s) raised his hands in supplication, praying to Allah to protect him from Suraka's evil. His horse was miraculously freed. Suraka, still consumed by avarice, attempted to resume his pursuit twice more, and each time his horse sank into the sand, deeper and more alarmingly than

before.

After the third failed attempt, Suraka was overwhelmed with remorse and conviction. He recognized the undeniable divine protection surrounding the Prophet (s). Humbled, he approached the Prophet (s), confessing his malicious intent and seeking forgiveness. He offered his wealth, weapons, and even his tribe's protection, promising to deter any future pursuers. The Prophet (s) graciously declined all worldly offers, stating that Allah alone was his Protector. Suraka then offered his tribal banner, explaining that displaying it would guarantee help from his powerful tribe. Again, the Prophet (s) refused, emphasizing his complete reliance on Allah's support. Suraka, still seeking some way to serve, promised to turn back any who came in pursuit. The Prophet (s) accepted this, and Suraka kept his word, diverting numerous search parties away from the Prophet's path. (It is important to note that some non-Shi'a traditions mention the Prophet (s) promising Suraka the bracelets of Kisra, the Persian Emperor; however, this account is not found in the authentic Shi'a historical sources).

As the small caravan continued, passing through Ghadir al-Khumm, a place that marked the symbolic end of their Meccan ties, a profound moment of solace occurred. Feeling a natural wave of longing for his beloved city, the Prophet (s) was blessed with a divine revelation. ***Surah Al-Qasas***, verse 28:85, was revealed: ***"Indeed, He who has ordained the Qur'an upon you will surely bring you back to a place of return."*** This verse brought immense comfort and reassurance, promising his triumphant return to Mecca after a period of exile.

Later, the Prophet (s) and his companions encountered Burayda al-Aslami, a chieftain with seventy horsemen, who had also set out in pursuit of the hundred-camel reward. The Prophet (s), with his divine wisdom and eloquence, engaged Burayda in a captivating dialogue. He played on Bu-

rayda's name, saying, "Your name is Burayda, and our matter is resolved (from *burayd*)." When asked about his tribe, Burayda replied, "Banu Aslam," to which the Prophet (s) responded, "We are safe (from *salama*)." When Burayda specified his branch as "Banu Sahm," the Prophet (s) declared, "Your arrow has missed (from *sahm*, meaning arrow)." This profound and poetic wordplay deeply moved Burayda, a renowned orator himself, who recognized the undeniable truth in the Prophet's (s) words. Overwhelmed, Burayda and his seventy horsemen immediately embraced Islam and offered to escort the Prophet (s) to Medina with their banner raised.

The Prophet (s), in his strategic foresight, gently declined their full escort at that moment, advising them to remain in their region for now. He understood that such a large procession would compromise the secrecy of the *Hijrah* and expose them to further danger. He assured them that their support would be needed in Medina. Burayda and his men humbly complied, their faith affirmed.

The Prophet (s), Abu Bakr, and Abdullah ibn Urayqit continued their journey, facing various other minor encounters and receiving divine protection at every turn. Their arduous and spiritually charged journey was nearing its destination, the city that would soon be known as Medina al-Munawwara.

Chapter 58

The Miraculous Journey's Climax and the Wait in Quba

The Prophet Muhammad (s), accompanied by Abu Bakr and their guide Abdullah ibn Urayqit, continued their sacred journey from *Ghar-e-Thawr* towards Medina. As they traversed the rugged terrains of *Wadi Khush*, the Prophet (s) would often recite a profound verse from the Holy Qur'an, a supplication filled with hope and divine anticipation: ***"Rabb-e-Anzilni munzalan mubarakan wa anta khair-ul-munzileen"*** (***Surah Al-Mu'minoon***, 23:29) – "O my Lord! Cause me to land at a blessed landing-place, for You are the best of those who bring to land." This prayer encapsulated the Prophet's (s) longing for Medina, a city destined to become the blessed haven for Islam and its nascent community. The earlier encounters with Suraka ibn Malik and Burayda al-Aslami, which demonstrated divine protection and led to conversions, had further affirmed the sacred nature of this journey.

As the midday sun beat down, the small caravan approached a humble tent in the desolate *Wadi Khush*. This was the dwelling of an elderly, hospitable woman named Umm Ma'bad from the Khuza'ah tribe, known for

her generosity towards travelers. Her husband, Abu Ma'bad, was away tending to his flock. The Prophet (s) and his companions sought refreshment. Umm Ma'bad, though eager to host, regretfully informed them that her meager flock yielded little milk due to a prevailing drought and famine, and she possessed no provisions.

The Prophet (s) observed a frail, emaciated ewe tethered in a corner of the tent, so weak it could not even graze. He gently inquired if he could milk it. Umm Ma'bad, surprised by his request for such a seemingly barren animal, readily granted permission, seeing no harm in it. With a serene demeanor, the Prophet (s) approached the ewe, touched its udder, and invoked the name of Allah. Instantly, the udder swelled with milk, flowing abundantly. He milked a full bowl, offering it first to Umm Ma'bad, then to his companions, and finally drank himself. Umm Ma'bad was awestruck; her ewe, previously incapable of yielding a drop, now flowed with milk. This was the first of the three miracles witnessed by her.

Soon after, Umm Ma'bad brought forth her young son, a child who had been paralyzed and mute since birth, lying inert like a piece of flesh. The Prophet (s) took a date, half-eaten it, and gently placed the remaining half into the child's mouth. The moment the child consumed the date, a miraculous transformation occurred: he instantly regained his mobility and speech, standing up, walking, and even beginning to play, much to his mother's joyous disbelief.

As the Prophet (s) prepared to depart, he buried the stone from the date he had eaten in the ground outside Umm Ma'bad's tent. The very next morning, an astonishing sight greeted Umm Ma'bad: a fully grown, verdant date palm had sprung from the earth where the stone was buried. This tree, by Allah's grace, bore ripe, fresh dates instantly. It became a source of unparalleled blessing; its fruit was inexhaustible, never diminishing. Its consumption cured the sick and renewed the strength of the

frail. Even if its leaves were fed to animals, they would become robust and productive. This miraculous tree continued to yield fruit throughout the Prophet's (s) lifetime. It ceased bearing fruit after his passing and entirely dried up upon the martyrdom of *Imam Ali* (a). Later, after the tragedy of *Karbala*, it famously began to bleed blood for three days before decaying completely. The ewe, too, blessed by the Prophet's (s) touch, continued to give abundant milk for eighteen years, becoming a beacon of prosperity for the region until its demise during a plague in 18 AH.

Upon Abu Ma'bad's return, he was astonished by the unexpected abundance of milk. Umm Ma'bad, in eloquent terms, described the remarkable guest: "I saw a man, whose shining purity was evident; his countenance was radiant, his disposition cheerful. He was well-proportioned, neither too tall nor too short, neither corpulent nor emaciated. His eyes were intensely black, his eyelashes long, his voice resonant, his beard full. His neck was long and slender. When he spoke, his words were clear and distinct. When silent, he possessed a serene dignity. He was neither talkative nor taciturn. When seen from afar, he was the most beautiful among men, and when seen up close, the most graceful. He was surrounded by companions who listened intently to his every word and hastened to obey his commands. He was neither a leader to be reproached nor one to be despised."

Abu Ma'bad instantly recognized the description: "By Allah, this is the chief of *Quraysh*! This is the one whose arrival is eagerly anticipated in Medina! I must go and meet him!" Inspired by his wife's account and the evident miracles, both Umm Ma'bad and Abu Ma'bad later journeyed to Medina and embraced Islam.

The Prophet (s), now very close to Medina, met a passing trading caravan, including Talha and Zubayr, who gifted him white garments. The anticipation in Medina was palpable. For days, the *Muhajirun* who had

already migrated and the *Ansar* of Medina would gather daily outside the city from dawn until noon, sitting under the scorching sun, awaiting the Prophet's (s) arrival, only to return home disheartened.

On the 12th of Rabi al-Awwal (September 13, 622 CE), as the Medinans returned to their homes in disappointment, a Jew, known for his understanding of prophetic signs, spotted three figures approaching Quba. Recognizing the signs, he cried out in a voice that resonated across the oasis: "O Banu Qayla! Your awaited guest has arrived!" The people of Quba, both men and women, young and old, rushed out, armed and ready to welcome their revered leader, their hearts overflowing with joy.

The Prophet (s) entered Quba, a village just a few miles from Medina. He chose to stay there, explicitly stating his intention to await the arrival of his brother, *Imam Ali* (a). He stayed either at the house of Kulthum ibn Hadm, a respected blind elder of Quba, or Sa'd ibn Khaithama. During his stay, the Prophet (s) established a routine of meeting people in one house during the day and retiring to another for rest and meals.

Meanwhile, back in Mecca, following the Prophet's (s) secret departure, *Imam Ali* (a) heroically carried out his instructions. He publicly announced the Prophet's (s) *Hijrah* and called upon the Meccans to reclaim their *amanat* (trusts) that had been entrusted to the Prophet (s). Though hostile, the *Quraysh* were relieved to recover their valuables.

However, a new plot was hatched by Abdal ibn Wa'il, Abu Sufyan's son, aimed at discrediting *Imam Ali* (a) and, by extension, the Prophet (s). He hired a man named Khamir ibn Wa'il, promising him a handsome reward of 100 *mithqal* of gold and Hind's precious necklace, if he would falsely claim to have deposited gold and an *amanat* with the Prophet (s) and then demand it from *Imam Ali* (a). Key *Quraysh* leaders, including Abu Jahl, Ikrima (Abu Jahl's son), Hind (Abu Sufyan's wife), Abu Sufyan himself, and Handhala (Abu Sufyan's son), were arranged as false witnesses.

As *Imam Ali* (a) was concluding the return of the *amanat* in the *Haram*, Khamir ibn Wa'il stepped forward with his fabricated claim. *Imam Ali* (a), with his characteristic wisdom and calmness, asked for witnesses. The five conspirators came forward. *Imam Ali* (a) then meticulously questioned each witness separately, asking about the exact time the *amanat* was deposited and what the Prophet (s) did with it. The discrepancies quickly became apparent. One claimed it was morning, another forenoon, a third noon, a fourth afternoon, and a fifth evening. Their accounts of the Prophet's (s) actions also varied wildly. Abu Jahl, when his turn came, shrewdly refused to testify, claiming ignorance of the matter.

The conflicting testimonies exposed the blatant fabrication, leaving the *Quraysh* crowd in stunned silence. Khamir ibn Wa'il, cornered, confessed that he had been bribed to make the false claim.

Then, *Imam Ali* (a) held up a sword and asked the *Quraysh* youth if they recognized it. Handhala, one of the false witnesses, immediately identified it as his own, claiming it had been stolen days ago. *Imam Ali* (a) then revealed that Handhala had instructed his slave, Mahla, to attack *Imam Ali* (a) at dawn near a certain house. *Imam Ali* (a) had swiftly neutralized the threat, killing Mahla in self-defense, and had buried his body there. He led the astonished crowd to the spot, where Mahla's body was exhumed, confirming his account.

These events utterly discredited the *Quraysh* leaders in the eyes of their own people, particularly the youth, who were swayed by *Imam Ali's* (a) unwavering truthfulness and courage. The environment in Mecca, though still hostile, had become safe enough for *Imam Ali* (a) to prepare for his *Hijrah*. The Prophet (s) in Quba, having sent a letter via Ubayd ibn Afif, now patiently awaited *Imam Ali* (a) to bring the "Fatimahs"—*Sayyida Fatima* (a), Fatima bint Asad, and Fatima bint Zubayr—along with the remaining members of Banu Hashim, to Quba.

Chapter 59

From Quba to Medina: The First *Jum'ah* and Ancient Prophecies

Having arrived at Quba, a village on the outskirts of Medina, the Blessed Prophet (s) chose to remain there, awaiting the arrival of *Imam Ali* (a) and the remaining members of his noble family. This period of waiting was not merely a pause; it was a testament to the profound bond between the Prophet (s) and *Imam Ali* (a), and a demonstration of *Imam Ali's* unwavering commitment to the Prophet's mission.

Meanwhile, *Imam Ali* (a) diligently carried out the Prophet's instructions in Mecca. After faithfully returning all entrusted *amanat* to their rightful owners, he prepared for the arduous journey to Medina with the "Fatimahs" – *Sayyida Fatima az-Zahra* (a), *Fatima bint Asad* (Imam Ali's mother), and other women of *Banu Hashim*. Along with them were any men of *Banu Hashim* who wished to accompany them. The Prophet (s) had sent a messenger, *Abu Waqif*, with a letter instructing *Imam Ali* (a) to proceed with this *Hijrah*.

As this small, sacred caravan embarked from Mecca, traveling discreetly, they were pursued by ten *Quraysh* horsemen led by *Jannah*, a notoriously

brave and skilled swordsman. Upon sighting the caravan, *Jannah* called out, challenging *Imam Ali* (a) and forbidding their passage. *Abu Waqif* and *Umm Ayman* (a freed slave of the Prophet's father, *Abdullah*, who had raised the Prophet and was accompanying the caravan with her sons) were naturally alarmed. However, *Imam Ali* (a) remained resolute, instructing them to calm the camels and the women, ensuring their safety. He then stepped forward, sword in hand, reciting verses of divine reliance, declaring that one who trusts in Allah has nothing to fear. He challenged *Jannah*, asking him if he intended to block their path and shed their blood. *Jannah*, brimming with arrogance, reaffirmed his intent to turn them back or kill them. With divine courage, *Imam Ali* (a) declared that only those eager to sacrifice their lives for Allah should face him. As *Jannah* moved to strike, *Imam Ali's* (a) sword swiftly descended, severing *Jannah's* arm, which fell to the ground. Seeing this miraculous display of strength and divine protection, the other *Quraysh* horsemen were terrified and fled.

After this encounter, *Imam Ali* (a) famously declared that he would not leave that spot until morning, challenging the *Quraysh* to return with more reinforcements if they dared. This courageous act served as a clear message that *Imam Ali* (a) was neither afraid nor intimidated. The entire night, instead of resting, *Imam Ali* (a) engaged in fervent prayer and devotion, demonstrating that even in the face of imminent danger, the pursuit of Allah's pleasure was paramount.

During this blessed journey, divine recognition of *Imam Ali* (a) and *Sayyida Fatima* (a) descended in the form of Qur'anic verses from *Surah Al-Imran* (verses 190-195). These verses praised those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying down, and who reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth, expressing awe at Allah's flawless creation and seeking protection from the Hellfire. These verses implicitly highlighted the profound spiritual engagement of *Imam Ali* (a) and *Sayyida Fatima* (a)

throughout their arduous journey. Their continuous devotion, whether traveling by day or spending the night in prayer, became a model of sincere worship and dedication to Allah. The verse ***"I verily will not suffer to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female..."*** (***Surah Al-Imran, 3:195***) is understood by some narrations to specifically acknowledge the male (Imam Ali) and female (Sayyida Fatima) who exemplified such profound devotion during the *Hijrah*.

Upon reaching Quba, *Imam Ali* (a) and his noble companions were met with great joy by the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) rushed out to embrace *Imam Ali* (a), who had sustained injuries to his feet from the long journey. The Prophet (s) tenderly applied his blessed saliva to *Imam Ali's* (a) feet, instantly healing them. Although *Imam Ali* (a) was healed, the Prophet (s) instructed them to rest for three days to recover fully. Masjid Quba, the first mosque established in Islam, had already been founded by the Prophet (s) upon his arrival in Quba. The Prophet (s) himself laid its foundation stone, and it is famously mentioned in the ***Qur'an*** as a mosque ***"whose foundation was laid on*** **taqwa** (***piety***) ***from the very first day"*** (***Surah At-Tawbah, 9:108***).

After resting in Quba, the time came for the Prophet (s) to enter Medina. The people of Quba, eager to host him permanently, pleaded with him to stay, but the Prophet (s), guided by divine will, decided to proceed. He mounted his camel, *Qaswa*, allowing her to choose the path. As he journeyed, tribe after tribe, clan after clan, met him with immense enthusiasm, inviting him to stay in their homes. However, the Prophet (s) would gently tell them, ***"Let her go her way; she is commanded."*** His camel was guided by divine inspiration, signifying that Allah would determine his dwelling place.

As the Prophet (s) neared Medina, his path led him through the territory of *Abdullah ibn Ubayy*, a prominent figure who had aspired to be the king

of Medina before the Prophet's arrival. Seeing the overwhelming enthusiasm for the Prophet (s), *Abdullah ibn Ubayy* displayed his underlying animosity, uttering discouraging and disrespectful remarks. However, the Medinans, especially the *Ansar*, were undeterred and continued to welcome the Prophet (s) with open hearts.

The journey culminated in the Prophet (s) reaching the locality of Banu Salim, just outside Medina, at midday on a Friday. It was here that the first communal Friday prayer in Islam was established. The Prophet (s) led the prayer, delivering his inaugural *khutbah* (sermon) to the eager congregation of about one hundred people. In this historic address, he stressed the paramount importance of *taqwa* (God-consciousness), urging his followers to fear Allah in both public and private. He emphasized that the best companion for the afterlife is *taqwa*, and that setting one's affairs right with Allah ensures success in this world and the hereafter. He reminded them that Allah does not break His promises and that the Quran serves as a clear guide. He called upon them to strive against Allah's enemies and to embody the true essence of Islam, the name Allah had chosen for them. This *khutbah* laid the foundational principles for the nascent Islamic society in Medina.

The Prophet's camel continued to walk, eventually pausing at a spot where a thousand years prior, a powerful Yemeni king named Tubba' had foretold the coming of a Prophet and even constructed a humble resting place for him. Tubba', a formidable ruler who had traveled the world, encountered hostility upon reaching Mecca. He had intended to destroy the Kaaba, but a mysterious illness afflicted him. A wise man revealed that his ailment was divine punishment for his ill intent towards the Kaaba. Tubba' repented sincerely, covered the Kaaba with a silken cloth (though later advised in a dream to use Yemeni cloth), and purified it. He then continued his journey, passing through Yathrib (Medina), a verdant and beautiful land. Impressed by its beauty, he contemplated attacking it but

was dissuaded by a similar miraculous intervention. It was then that he received a prophecy about a future Prophet who would migrate to this city. In his awe and reverence, Tubba' constructed a small, simple house in Medina, proclaiming it to be a resting place for the awaited Prophet. This prophecy, rooted deeply in the pre-Islamic history of Medina, foretold the very spot where the Prophet's camel would eventually come to a halt, marking his intended dwelling place in the city of Medina.

Chapter 60

The Arrival in Medina: A Prophecy Fulfilled and a New Society Forged

The journey to Medina had reached its most anticipated phase. After his stay in Quba, awaiting the arrival of *Imam Ali* (a) and his companions, the Prophet Mohammad (s) moved towards the heart of Medina. The city pulsed with anticipation, every soul eager to welcome the Messenger of God. Each family hoped to host the Prophet, believing their homes would be blessed beyond measure. Yet, the Prophet, relying on divine guidance, had entrusted this significant decision to his camel, *Qaswa*, allowing her to roam freely until she chose a resting place, symbolizing that his stay would be determined by God's will, not by worldly status or wealth.

This arrival in Medina was a culmination of an ancient prophecy, a story interwoven with the city's history. A thousand years before the Prophet's birth, Tubba', a powerful king from Yemen, had embarked on a campaign with the intent to destroy the **Ka'aba** in Mecca. However, he was afflicted with a severe illness that forced him to abandon his mission. Guided by events, he journeyed towards Yathrib, the ancient name for Medina. To his surprise, he found a thriving city where he expected to see only desert.

He laid siege to it, but the local Jewish inhabitants displayed an astonishing and unprecedented generosity, supplying his army with dates and provisions daily, even though they were under siege by an enemy.

Intrigued by this unusual hospitality from adversaries, Tubba' consulted the Jewish scholars of Yathrib. They revealed to him a profound secret from their scriptures: they resided in this city because their prophecies foretold the arrival of the final Prophet, a messenger whose defining characteristic would be immense generosity, even towards his foes. They also revealed that no one could truly govern Yathrib before this awaited Prophet. Deeply moved and convinced by their words, Tubba' embraced their faith. He abandoned his siege and, filled with reverence, expressed his desire to see the city where the Prophet would reside. He built a house in Yathrib, designated as a resting place for the future Prophet, and penned a letter affirming his faith in the awaited Messenger. This sacred letter was then entrusted to Shamool, one of his trusted generals, with the solemn instruction to pass it down through his descendants until the Prophet's advent. For a millennium, this letter traversed generations, a testament to an enduring prophecy.

As the Prophet (s) rested in Quba, awaiting *Imam Ali's* (a) arrival from Mecca, the letter finally reached the family of *Abu Ayyub al-Ansari*, who were descendants of Shamool. Troubled by the weight of this sacred trust, *Abu Ayyub* sent a messenger named *Abu Ali* with the letter to the Prophet in Quba. The Prophet (s) received the sealed golden casket containing the letter, opened it, and read its contents, expressing profound gratitude for Tubba's ancient belief and his foresight. This moment underscored the divine orchestration of his journey and the long-awaited fulfillment of destiny.

Once *Imam Ali* (a) joined him in Quba, the Prophet (s) proceeded towards Medina. As *Qaswa*, the camel, advanced, tribes and families vied for the

honor of hosting the Prophet. Chiefs and wealthy individuals implored him to stay in their lavish homes, but the Prophet (s) responded, "Leave my camel alone, for she has been divinely commanded. She knows where to stop." *Qaswa* continued until she finally knelt at the humble abode of *Abu Ayyub al-Ansari*, signaling the Prophet's chosen residence, a testament to humility and divine will.

The moment of the Prophet's entry into Medina was one of unparalleled jubilation. The entire city erupted in joyous celebration, akin to an Eid festival. Men, women, and children lined the streets, climbed rooftops, and gathered beneath date palms, their hearts overflowing with love and anticipation. Small girls, with tambourines in hand, sang in unison the famed verses:

"Tala' al-Badru 'Alayna" "Min Thaniyyat al-Wada' " "Wajaba al-Shukru 'Alayna" "Ma da'a lillahi Da'in"

"Oh the White Moon rose over us From the valley of Wada' And we owe it to show gratefulness Where the call is to Allah"

The air vibrated with cries of "**Allahu Akbar!**" and "**Ya Mohammad!**" conveying the profound joy and relief of a community that had waited for generations.

Amidst this fervent welcome, the Prophet (s) delivered his inaugural address to the people of Medina. Among the attendees was a prominent Jewish scholar named *Hafiz ibn Salam*, later known as *Abdullah ibn Salam* after his conversion. He was a man of great learning, a scholar of the Torah and Psalms, and widely respected by his community. Upon seeing the Prophet (s) and hearing his words, *Abdullah ibn Salam* was instantly captivated. He described the Prophet's face as one that could not belong to a liar and felt an undeniable truth in his presence. The Prophet's brief, yet profound, initial *khutbah* instantly moved him to accept Islam.

The Prophet's first address laid the foundational principles for the nascent Islamic society in Medina. He said: "O people! Spread peace (*salam*), feed the hungry, maintain ties of kinship, and pray at night while people are asleep, and you will enter Paradise in peace."

This succinct address conveyed deep meanings: 1. **"Spread peace (*salam*)":** This was not merely an instruction for verbal greeting but a directive to foster a society of mutual safety, security, and well-being. It meant ensuring that no one felt threatened or harmed by another, establishing a social fabric woven with respect, honesty, and protection. 2. **"Feed the hungry":** Beyond simple charity, this commanded the establishment of a robust social welfare system. It called for a community where no one would ever have to beg or suffer from want, emphasizing collective responsibility to eradicate poverty and ensure sustenance for all. This principle underpins the comprehensive Islamic financial system designed to guarantee social justice. 3. **"Maintain ties of kinship":** This stressed the paramount importance of strengthening family bonds and extending compassion and support to relatives. Islam emphasizes that this obligation extends beyond immediate family, gradually encompassing the broader community and, ultimately, all of humanity as part of a single human family. 4. **"Pray at night while people are asleep":** This urged spiritual vigilance and a profound connection with God, especially during the hours of heedlessness when others are immersed in worldly sleep. It signified constant remembrance of God, accountability for one's actions, and preparation for the ultimate reckoning in the **Hereafter**, reminding believers that true comfort and peace are found in devotion to the Divine.

The promise appended to these actions—"You will enter Paradise in peace"—was a guarantee not just of entry into Paradise, but an unhindered, peaceful passage, free from the torments of the grave and the tribulations of **Qiyamah**.

The Prophet's immediate articulation of these demanding, yet foundational, principles stood in stark contrast to the political maneuvers of worldly leaders. He did not offer empty promises or "imaginary heavens" to win over the Medinans, but instead, presented the profound truths of a just and righteous way of life. His steadfastness in upholding divine truth, even when it demanded personal sacrifice and societal transformation, was a hallmark of his prophethood. With this radiant entry and these profound declarations, Medina transformed into the burgeoning heart of Islam, ready to forge a new society based on divine guidance.

Chapter 61

Medina's Embrace: The Prophet's Arrival and First Home

The momentous journey from Quba continued, with the Prophet (s) leading his companions towards the illuminated city of Yathrib, soon to be known as Medina. Though today Quba is a mere neighborhood within Medina, in those ancient times, the path, spanning approximately three miles to the site of *Masjid an-Nabawi*, was a two-day trek filled with natural barriers and palm groves. The Prophet (s) had set out from Quba on a Friday morning, and before long, the time for the *Jum'ah* prayer arrived, marking the establishment of the first congregational *Jum'ah* prayer in Islam beyond Quba.

The reception awaiting the Prophet (s) in Medina was nothing short of extraordinary. Never before had the city witnessed such an outpouring of love and devotion, nor would it ever again. Men, women, children, and slaves, from all walks of life, emerged from their homes, their hearts overflowing with genuine affection for the Messenger of Allah. There was no ruler commanding their presence, no military force compelling their attendance, no government yet established in Medina. It was pure,

unadulterated love that drew them forth. The cries of "Allah is the Greatest!" resonated through the air, reaching even the ears of the Jewish communities residing in the surrounding areas.

Among them was *Abdullah ibn Salam*, a renowned Jewish scholar, whose curiosity was piqued by the fervent cries. He emerged from his dwelling, and upon beholding the noble countenance of the Prophet (s), he instantly recognized the signs of prophethood, exclaiming that this was indeed the face of a prophet, akin to Prophet Musa.

As the Prophet's camel, *Qaswa*, proceeded through Medina, the joyous throngs created an awe-inspiring spectacle. People climbed onto date palms, stood on hilltops, and filled the upper stories of their homes, eager to catch a glimpse of the Holy Prophet (s). Each tribe and clan, with their distinct neighborhoods, pleaded with the Prophet (s) to honor them by staying in their area. Yet, with sublime wisdom, the Prophet (s) would gently decline, stating, **"Khaloo Sabeelaha Fa Innaha Ma'murah"** (Leave her way, for she has been commanded). He reiterated that the camel was divinely guided and would stop where Allah had destined.

Eventually, *Qaswa* knelt down on a plot of land belonging to orphans from the *Banu Najjar* clan. This clan held a significant historical connection to the Prophet (s); his great-grandmother, Salmah, the wife of Hashim, belonged to this very clan. Furthermore, his grandfather, *Abdul Muttalib*, had spent his early childhood in this very neighborhood. Even his father, *Abdullah*, had passed away and was buried in Medina, in the care of the *Banu Najjar* due to their kinship. When the Prophet's mother, *Amina*, had brought her six-year-old son to visit his father's grave, she too had stayed with the *Banu Najjar*.

Upon *Qaswa*'s first kneeling, the Prophet (s) gently prompted her to stand, so that none might mistakenly attribute her stop to weariness. She rose, circled the area, and then knelt again at the very same spot, this time

firmly pressing her neck to the ground, signifying the divine will. It was then that the Prophet (s) dismounted. To assuage any feeling of neglect among the eager *Ansar*, he inquired, "Is there any close relative of mine here?" In Arab custom, it was traditional for a traveler to reside with relatives. Immediately, *Khalid ibn Zayd*, famously known as *Abu Ayyub al-Ansari*, stepped forward. He was a maternal relative of the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) then declared his intention to stay with *Abu Ayyub*.

Children from the *Banu Najjar* joyously sang, "We are the girls of *Banu Najjar*, and how fortunate are we that Muhammad is our neighbor!" The Prophet (s) looked at them and, with profound tenderness, asked if they loved him. When they affirmed their love, he responded, **"Wallahi Inni Uhibbukum"** (By Allah, I love you too).

While the Prophet (s) conversed, *Abu Ayyub's* wife discreetly took the Prophet's (s) belongings into their home, ensuring the honor of hosting would not be contended. Though *Abu Ayyub's* name had been divinely chosen through the camel's resting place, and later affirmed by a lottery among the *Ansar* for the honor, there was a fleeting moment of human inclination. As'ad ibn Zurarah, a prominent *Naqeeb* and an early fervent supporter of Islam in Medina who had hosted Mus'ab ibn Umayr, harbored a silent wish that the Prophet (s) would stay at his house. In a moment of longing, he took the Prophet's camel away. However, the Prophet (s) calmly inquired about it, and it was returned, underscoring the divine decree.

Abu Ayyub al-Ansari's house was a modest two-story dwelling. As the Prophet (s) approached, *Abu Ayyub's* elderly, blind mother, who had been bedridden for years, eagerly sought to greet her new guest. With assistance, she was brought to the door. As the Prophet (s) entered, he gestured, and miraculously, her eyesight was restored. She later recounted that she never again had cause for complaint about her sight until her

dying day.

The Prophet (s) chose to reside on the ground floor, explaining that it would be more convenient for the many visitors—old men, women, and children—who would come to meet him. *Abu Ayyub* and his wife, out of immense respect, initially felt uneasy being above the Prophet (s). Throughout the night, they stayed close to the walls of the upper room, refraining from walking in the center to avoid being directly over the Prophet (s). On one particularly cold night, a water pot accidentally broke, and water began to drip towards the lower floor. Fearing it would disturb the Prophet (s), *Abu Ayyub* and his wife quickly covered the spot with their only *lihāf* (quilt) to absorb the water, enduring the bitter cold themselves.

Such was the deep reverence and love of the *Ansar*. Food poured in from up to sixteen different houses daily, all offered to the Prophet (s). *Abu Ayyub* and his family made it their practice to eat from the remnants of the Prophet's (s) meal, reverently placing their fingers where his had touched. One day, a dish containing garlic was served. The Prophet (s) politely refrained from eating it. When *Abu Ayyub* inquired, the Prophet (s) explained that due to his impending prayers and frequent divine communications, he avoided foods with strong odors. This established a *sunnah* for Muslims to avoid pungent foods before attending congregational prayers.

Amidst these days of hospitality, the Prophet (s) initiated the migration of his remaining family members from Mecca. He dispatched Zayd ibn Harithah, his freed slave, and Abu Rafi' to Mecca. They successfully brought Sayyida Sawdah (his wife after *Sayyida Khadijah*), Umm Kulthum (his daughter), Umm Ayman (his foster mother) and her infant son Usamah. Abu Bakr also arranged for his daughters, Aisha and Asma, to migrate. However, Sayyida Zaynab, another of the Prophet's (s) daughters,

was prevented from migrating by her husband at the time. With these arrivals, the Prophet's entire household was finally reunited in Medina.

The *Quraysh* in Mecca, initially dismissive of the *Hijrah*, believing that the humid climate of Medina, known for its debilitating fevers, would soon drive the *Muhajireen* back, were now deeply perturbed. Many *Muhajireen* indeed fell ill with the "Medina fever," including *Bilal*, *Abu Bakr*, and *Abdur Rahman ibn Awf*. The Prophet (s), seeing the distress of his companions, raised his hands in prayer, asking Allah to make Medina beloved to them, like Mecca, and to bless its climate. Miraculously, from that day on, Medina's climate improved, and the fever epidemics ceased.

Despite the initial *Quraysh* complacency, the successful *Hijrah* and the growing strength of Islam in Medina infuriated them. Their leaders dispatched a letter to *Abdullah ibn Ubayy*, who was on the verge of being crowned king of Medina before the Prophet's (s) arrival disrupted his plans. The letter demanded that *Abdullah ibn Ubayy* either expel the Muslims or fight them, threatening to attack Medina, kill its men, and enslave its women. *Abdullah ibn Ubayy* attempted to incite the *Ansar* against the *Muhajireen*, but the Prophet (s) swiftly intervened and thwarted his conspiracy, the details of which would unfold later.

The *Quraysh*'s animosity became evident when Sa'd ibn Mu'adh, a prominent leader of the *Aws* tribe and an early Muslim convert through Mus'ab ibn Umayr, traveled to Mecca for *Umrah*. Following custom, he stayed with his Meccan friend, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, the former cruel master of *Bilal*. Sa'd asked Umayyah to find a quiet time to perform his *Tawaf* around the *Kaaba*. They chose the midday, a time when the *Haram* was typically empty. However, Abu Jahl spotted them. Confronting Sa'd, Abu Jahl, furious, accused him of harboring the *Quraysh*'s enemies. He threatened to prevent Sa'd from performing *Umrah* if it weren't for Umayyah, and declared that no Medinan would be allowed to enter Mecca if they

continued to support the Prophet (s). Sa'd, with unwavering resolve, retorted that if the *Quraysh* dared to block the *Haram*, their trade routes to Syria, which passed through Medina, would also be cut off. Umayyah, startled, tried to silence Sa'd, reminding him of Abu Jahl's stature. But Sa'd, recalling a prophecy from the Prophet (s), boldly declared that both Umayyah and Abu Jahl would meet their demise in Medina. This prophecy deeply unsettled Umayyah, as the *Quraysh* knew Muhammad (s) to be truthful. This incident effectively sealed Mecca against Medinan Muslims, halting their ability to perform *Umrah* or *Hajj* until the conquest of Mecca.

In Medina, during this foundational period, several significant events occurred. While the Muslims rejoiced in their new home, they also faced losses. Four prominent individuals passed away: Bara' ibn Ma'rur, who had died a month before the Prophet's (s) arrival, but for whom the Prophet (s) later performed a special prayer at his grave, honoring his steadfastness in prayer towards the *Kaaba*; Kulthum ibn Hidm, the Prophet's (s) host in Quba; and *Abu Umamah As'ad ibn Zurarah*, the first *Naqeeb* appointed by the Prophet (s) in Medina. In Mecca, two staunch enemies of Islam, Walid ibn al-Mughirah and Anas ibn Wa'il, also passed away, a cause for relief among the early Muslims.

Yet, amid these trials, great blessings arrived. *Abdullah ibn Salam*, the eminent Jewish scholar from *Banu Qaynuqa*, approached the Prophet (s) in *Abu Ayyub's* home. He posed three profound questions: the signs of the Day of Judgment, the first food of the inhabitants of Paradise, and the reason why a child might resemble one parent more than the other. The Prophet (s) replied that Jibreel (a) would soon bring the answers. Upon hearing the name Jibreel (a), *Abdullah ibn Salam* expressed his animosity, revealing that Jews considered Jibreel (a) an enemy, linking him to the destruction of their city by *Bakht Nasr*, the transfer of prophethood from *Banu Israel* to *Banu Ismael*, and the forcing of their ancestors to prostrate

under Mount Tur. It was at this juncture that Allah revealed the verses: **"Say, 'Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and His messengers and Jibreel and Mika'il, then indeed, Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers.'"** (**Quran 2:97-98**).

Subsequently, Jibreel (a) delivered the answers to *Abdullah ibn Salam's* questions: the Day of Judgment's sign would be a fire rising from the East and West; the first food for the people of Paradise would be the liver of a fish; and the resemblance of a child depended on which parent's seminal fluid prevailed during conception. Upon hearing these answers, which aligned precisely with his ancestral knowledge from the Torah (passed down through his lineage from Prophet Yusuf), *Abdullah ibn Salam* immediately declared his *Shahada*: **"Ashhadu an La Ilaha Illallah, wa Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah!"**

To expose the deep-seated prejudice of the Jewish scholars, *Abdullah ibn Salam* suggested a plan. He hid behind a curtain in *Abu Ayyub's* house, while the Prophet (s) summoned the leading Jewish rabbis. The Prophet (s) asked them for their opinion of *Abdullah ibn Salam*. Without hesitation, they lauded him as "our scholar, the son of our scholar; our leader, the son of our leader; the most learned among us, the son of the most learned." As soon as they finished, *Abdullah ibn Salam* emerged from behind the curtain, declaring his conversion to Islam and affirming the Prophet's (s) truthfulness. The Jewish scholars, in a sudden display of malice, immediately recoiled, denouncing him as "the most ignorant of us, the son of the most ignorant; the most evil of us, the son of the most evil!" This stark hypocrisy profoundly impacted the Medinan Muslims who had previously held the Jewish scholars in high esteem.

The *Ansar* displayed immense love and eagerness to serve the Prophet (s). On one occasion, *Umm Sulaym*, a distant relative of the Prophet (s), presented her young son, Anas ibn Malik, offering him to the Prophet (s)

as his servant. Anas subsequently served the Prophet (s) devotedly for many years.

While the devotion and faith of the Medinan community were unparalleled, the Prophet (s) recognized the crucial need for a central hub for their spiritual, educational, and communal growth. A strong, unified community could not thrive without a central point of reference. Thus, amidst all the initial settling in, the Prophet (s) deemed the construction of *Masjid an-Nabawi* (the Prophet's Mosque) as the most vital immediate task. This mosque would not merely be a place of prayer but a comprehensive center for learning, governance, and community life, serving as the nucleus around which the nascent Islamic society would flourish.

Chapter 62

Consolidating the Community: The Construction of *Masjid an-Nabawi* and the Bond of Brotherhood

The arrival of the Prophet (s) in Medina marked a crucial juncture for the nascent Muslim community. Though they had escaped the relentless persecution of Mecca, the challenges ahead were formidable. A powerful enemy, the *Quraysh*, still plotted against them in Mecca, while within Medina, the entrenched Jewish tribes, initially appearing neutral, harbored their own resentments. The *Muhajireen* had arrived as a dispossessed and often destitute caravan, lacking resources and stripped of their worldly possessions. Confronted with this array of external and internal pressures, the Prophet (s) faced the immense task of consolidating a diverse population into a unified, self-sustaining society.

The first year following the *Hijrah* was unique, consisting of only ten months, as the migration itself occurred in the month of *Rabi' al-Awwal*. Throughout this period, the Prophet's (s) presence in Medina brought about a profound transformation. Day by day, individuals who had previously

opposed or remained indifferent to Islam began to embrace the faith. The radiant influence of the Prophet (s) touched hearts, leading to daily conversions among the *Ansar* and those who had been hesitant or openly antagonistic. Even figures like *Abdullah ibn Ubayy*, despite their underlying hypocrisy, were compelled to outwardly declare their acceptance of Islam, recognizing the overwhelming shift in Medina's social and political landscape.

A remarkable miracle further underscored the divine support for the Prophet's (s) mission. Near a place called Baida, approximately three to three-and-a-half miles from *Masjid Shajarah*—a site known today as a *miqat* for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims—a shepherd encountered a wolf. This location was known for three significant historical events, including one related to the *Qiyamah* where a portion of the earth would swallow an army. While tending his flock, the shepherd heard a wolf speak to him, rebuking him for encroaching upon its sustenance and asserting that soon a Prophet (s) would appear in Medina who would guide humanity, even instructing them to be kind to animals. Astonished, the shepherd hurried to Medina to relate this extraordinary event. When he narrated it to the Prophet (s) and his companions, many were awestruck. The Prophet (s) confirmed the wolf's words, explaining that such events were signs of the End of Times, when even inanimate objects would speak to humanity. This incident served as a powerful testament to the Prophet's (s) truthfulness and divine connection.

Recognizing the need for a central hub for the nascent Muslim society, the Prophet (s) decided to construct a mosque. The site chosen was the very spot where his camel, *Qaswa*, had knelt upon entering Medina. This plot of land belonged to two orphan boys, Sahl and Suhayl, from the *Banu Najjar* clan. The Prophet (s) insisted on purchasing the land rather than accepting it as a donation, despite the orphans' and the *Ansar*'s eager desire to gift it. *Sayyiduna Abu Ayyub al-Ansari* ultimately paid the purchase

price.

The construction of *Masjid an-Nabawi* began with immense enthusiasm and communal effort. *Muhajireen* and *Ansar* worked side by side, carrying bricks and materials, driven by a spirit of unity and devotion. The Prophet (s) himself actively participated, carrying bricks and dirt, setting a profound example for the community. When companions offered to carry his load, he declined, stating that he too was part of the effort, inspiring a surge of dedication. Walls were built from mud bricks, and palm trunks served as pillars, with an open roof initially. Later, a canopy of palm fronds was added over a section to provide shade for prayers, particularly during the hot midday *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers. One palm trunk was left standing for the Prophet (s) to lean on during his sermons.

As the community grew, a *minbar* (pulpit) was constructed for the Prophet (s) to deliver his *khutbahs*. When the Prophet (s) first ascended the new *minbar*, the palm trunk he used to lean on reportedly emitted a cry, similar to the wail of a camel or a child separated from its mother. This palm trunk became known as *Hannanah* (the "weeping" one). The Prophet (s) descended from the *minbar*, embraced the trunk, and consoled it, promising it a place in Paradise if it wished, or continued existence in this world until the End of Days. The trunk then quieted, choosing the reward of the afterlife. This incident highlighted the deep spiritual connection of all creation to the Prophet (s).

Adjacent to *Masjid an-Nabawi*, four small chambers (apartments) were constructed: one for the Prophet (s), one for *Imam Ali* (a), one for *Sayyida Sawdah* (a), and one was initially left vacant, later to be occupied by *Sayyida Aisha* upon her migration.

Simultaneously with the mosque's construction, the Prophet (s) initiated a momentous act of social integration known as *Mu'akhat*, or the "Brotherhood of Faith." This groundbreaking initiative formally twinned the

Muhajireen (immigrants from Mecca) with the *Ansar* (helpers from Medina). Each *Muhajir* was paired with an *Ansar* brother, who generously shared their homes, wealth, and possessions, embodying an unparalleled spirit of selflessness. The *Ansar*'s devotion was so profound that they willingly divided their resources and provided every possible form of assistance to their newly arrived brethren. The Prophet (s) also established a unique bond of brotherhood between himself and *Imam Ali* (a), declaring him his brother in this world and the hereafter. This *Mu'akhat* fostered a deep sense of unity and mutual support, transforming the two groups into a cohesive society.

A special provision was made for the homeless *Muhajireen* who had no families or resources in Medina. A raised platform (*suffah*) was built just outside the mosque, offering shelter to these individuals, who became known as *Ahl as-Suffah* (People of the Bench). The Prophet (s) took personal responsibility for their welfare, prohibiting them from begging and encouraging communal donations for their sustenance. Any charity received by the Prophet (s) was immediately distributed among them, ensuring their needs were met without them having to ask.

Following the completion of *Masjid an-Nabawi*, the Prophet (s) delivered his first formal *khutbah* (sermon) from his new *minbar*. This profound address focused on the transient nature of this world and the inevitability of death and accountability. The Prophet (s) emphasized that every individual would stand before Allah on the Day of Judgment without intercessor or interpreter, facing a direct reckoning. He urged his followers to prepare for this meeting by striving to do good, even if it was as small as giving a piece of a date in charity, and to protect themselves from the Hellfire. The sermon served as a powerful reminder of spiritual priorities and the ultimate purpose of life.

In this early period, following the establishment of the community and

the mosque, a significant change in the prescribed units (*rak'ahs*) of prayer was revealed. The *Zuhr*, *Asr*, and *Isha'* prayers, which had previously been two *rak'ahs* each, were increased to four *rak'ahs* when prayed in one's home city. The *Maghrib* prayer was increased from two to three *rak'ahs*, while the *Fajr* prayer remained at two *rak'ahs*. This adjustment marked a further consolidation of Islamic practices within the newly formed state.

Chapter 63

The Consolidation of Medina: Early Challenges and Interfaith Relations

With the construction of *Masjid an-Nabawi* complete, a visible center for the nascent Islamic society had been established in Medina. This city, once known as *Yathrib* but now *Madinat an-Nabi* (the City of the Prophet), was destined to become the beacon from which Islam's message would reach the entire Arabian Peninsula and eventually the world. More profoundly, Medina was to serve as a living testament that a government based on Islamic principles could not only be founded and administered but could also achieve prosperity and permanence. Islam, the Prophet (s) demonstrated, was not a theoretical faith confined to places of worship, nor a religion that could be compartmentalized, separate from governance, commerce, or defense. It was a comprehensive way of life, demonstrating that adherence to divine commands, even when seemingly disadvantageous in worldly terms, ultimately leads to success.

The nascent Islamic state in Medina, though thriving in spirit, faced formidable external and internal challenges from its very inception. Three primary threats loomed large: 1. **The *Quraysh*:** The disbelievers of Mecca, still

simmering with resentment and jealousy, viewed the Muslims' escape as a temporary reprieve, never ceasing their hostile machinations. 2. **The *Munafiqoon* (Hypocrites):** Within Medina itself were individuals who outwardly professed Islam but secretly harbored animosity towards the Prophet (s). Many of these were figures like *Abdullah ibn Ubayy*, who had expected to gain power in Medina before the Prophet's (s) arrival disrupted their ambitions. 3. **The Jews:** While some Jewish tribes in Medina initially allied with the Muslims, others, particularly the three major tribes residing outside the city, viewed the Prophet's (s) rise with suspicion and, in some cases, outright opposition, seeing it as a challenge to their long-held spiritual and temporal authority.

Despite these significant obstacles, the Prophet (s) never compromised on Islamic principles or divine commands. His actions were not swayed by popular opinion or the desire to appease any group, a fact affirmed by the early verses of **Surah Najm**: **"Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed."** This divine declaration served as a foundational principle, guiding the Prophet's (s) governance and decisions, even when they caused consternation among certain groups.

An early and significant incident that underscored this divine guidance was the directive concerning the doors opening into *Masjid an-Nabawi*. After the mosque's construction, numerous companions, following the Prophet's (s) example, built their homes adjacent to it, creating direct entrances into the mosque for convenience. However, a divine command was revealed instructing that all doors opening directly into the mosque be sealed, with the sole exceptions being the doors of the Prophet's (s) own chamber and that of *Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib* (a). This instruction caused dismay and murmurs among some, leading even sincere companions like *Hamza* (a) to question it initially. The *Munafiqoon* seized this opportunity, spreading rumors that the Prophet (s) was showing favoritism

to his family.

Yet, the Prophet (s) patiently explained that this was not a matter of personal preference or familial bias but a direct divine injunction. *Imam Ali's* (a) special status was affirmed, indicating that whatever Allah granted the Prophet (s), He also granted *Imam Ali* (a). Upon hearing this clarification, *Hamza* (a) immediately prostrated, accepting the divine wisdom behind the command. This incident vividly demonstrated that the Prophet's (s) actions were entirely predicated on divine revelation, not personal whim or worldly considerations, thus reiterating the truth of **Surah Najm**. This early instance of *Imam Ali's* (a) unique spiritual proximity to the Prophet (s) further deepened the resentment of the *Munafiqoon*, whose deep-seated malice would sow seeds of future animosity against *Ahlulbayt*.

Amidst the ongoing consolidation of the Medinan community, a prominent figure, *Usayd ibn Hudayr*, a respected *naqib* (leader) of the *Banu Najjar* tribe, passed away. The *Banu Najjar*, being the Prophet's (s) maternal relatives and the tribe where he first settled in Medina, approached him to appoint a new *naqib*. In a profound gesture of affinity and honor, the Prophet (s) declared, "I will be your *naqib*." This unprecedented appointment solidified the bond between the Prophet (s) and his maternal kin, further integrating him into the fabric of Medinan society and reinforcing the centralized leadership of the Islamic state.

The Prophet (s) also turned his attention to establishing harmonious relations with the Jewish communities in and around Medina. He entered into a groundbreaking agreement known as the *Mithaq al-Madina* (Constitution of Medina) with the smaller Jewish tribes residing within the city. This treaty guaranteed religious freedom for the Jews, affirmed their right to practice their faith, and obligated them to defend Medina alongside the Muslims against any external aggressors.

However, the three larger and more powerful Jewish tribes residing outside Medina – *Banu Qurayzah*, *Banu Nadir*, and *Banu Qaynuqa* – held reservations. They sought an audience with the Prophet (s) to assess his prophethood. During this meeting, the Prophet (s) reminded them of the prophecy of *Abu al-Hayyaban*, a great Jewish scholar who had left Syria to settle in Medina decades earlier, anticipating the arrival of the Last Prophet. *Abu al-Hayyaban* had accurately described the coming Prophet, his appearance, his humility, and his future widespread governance, urging his community to accept him.

The representatives reacted differently. The envoy from *Banu Qurayzah* remained silent. *Huyayy ibn Akhtab*, a prominent scholar from *Banu Nadir*, acknowledged the Prophet's (s) truthfulness privately to his family but openly chose rejection, fueled by tribal jealousy that prophethood had passed from the *Banu Isra'il* to the *Banu Isma'il* (the Prophet's lineage). His own daughter, *Safiyyah*, who would later become a wife of the Prophet (s), would recount her father's bitter admission of the Prophet's (s) authenticity.

The most notable response came from *Mukhayriq*, a wealthy and influential leader of *Banu Qaynuqa*. He openly recognized the Prophet's (s) authenticity, citing the prophecies known to their scholars. Despite his tribe's initial reluctance to accept his counsel, *Mukhayriq* remained steadfast. In the Battle of Uhud, despite it being the Sabbath (a day of rest for Jews), he actively participated in supporting the Muslims, declaring that if he were martyred, his entire wealth should go to the Prophet (s). He indeed attained martyrdom, and the Prophet (s) later acknowledged him as "the best of the Jews" (*Khayr al-Yahud*), accepting his inheritance and distributing it for the Muslim cause. This event highlighted the Prophet's (s) ability to inspire even those outside the immediate Muslim fold through the sheer force of his truthfulness and character.

In another significant development related to the fasting ordinances, an incident involving *Abu Qays ibn Sirmah* led to a crucial revelation. Before the full injunctions of *Ramadan* fasting were revealed, Muslims were permitted to eat and drink until they fell asleep after *Iftar*. If one awoke, they could not eat or drink again until the next *Iftar*. *Abu Qays*, a hard-working man, once fell asleep after breaking his fast without having eaten enough. When he awoke later, he could not eat. The next morning, he was weak and fainted during the day. This incident prompted the revelation of **Surah al-Baqarah, verse 187**: **"And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]."** This verse broadened the permissible eating period during *Ramadan* to include the entire night until dawn, providing ease and comfort to the fasting Muslims.

These foundational events—the divine validation of the Prophet's (s) words and actions, the consolidation of internal leadership, the forging of alliances with some Jewish tribes, and the clarification of religious practices—marked the Prophet's (s) first year in Medina as a period of intense activity and profound transformation. The Islamic state was rapidly taking shape, preparing for the challenges that lay ahead and setting the stage for its global mission.

Chapter 64

The Call to Faith: The Institution of the Adhan

Following the establishment of *Masjid an-Nabawi* and the foundational acts that cemented the nascent Islamic state in Medina, the community was poised for further spiritual and social consolidation. It was at this crucial juncture that the formal call to prayer, the *Adhan*, was instituted, marking a profound step in the public manifestation of Islam.

The *Adhan* was not merely a summons to prayer; it was a comprehensive declaration, a profound proclamation to the world. Its essence lay in its dual purpose: to invite humanity to peace and success in this world (*dunya*) and in the hereafter (*akhirah*). Indeed, the very meaning of Islam, as taught by the Prophet (s), is to achieve peace and tranquility in both realms through submission to Allah. The *Adhan* served as a constant reminder of this profound truth, echoing through the streets of Medina, distinguishing the Muslim community and inviting all to embrace its message.

While the *Adhan* was a public declaration, its deepest impact was on the hearts of the believers. It was a call to *Iman*, to strengthen one's faith, and

to find inner peace. The Prophet (s) emphasized that understanding the true essence of the *Adhan* went beyond its vocal recitation; it required an internal reception, a realization that it was an invitation to a deeper, more profound spiritual journey. It guided individuals to embrace a path that brought them closer to their Creator, reminding them of their ultimate purpose and accountability.

The institution of the *Adhan* also served to fortify the bonds of brotherhood (*Mu'akhat*) that the Prophet (s) had painstakingly forged between the *Muhajireen* and the *Ansar*. As the resounding call gathered people from diverse backgrounds for communal prayer, it fostered an unparalleled sense of unity and collective identity. The daily congregation reinforced the understanding that all believers were brothers, united in their devotion and purpose. This sacred call transformed the city, filling its air with a spiritual resonance that continuously invited adherence to the true faith and deeper comprehension of its divine message.

For those who responded to the call, the *Adhan* brought immense solace and inner peace. True *Iman*, cultivated through adherence to the Prophet's (s) teachings and responsiveness to the divine summons, led to a profound sense of tranquility. This inner peace was not merely an emotional state but a deep spiritual contentment that empowered believers to face life's challenges with steadfastness, akin to unshakeable mountains. Just as one might draw fresh water from a pure spring, so too did the *Adhan* invite believers to purify their souls and strengthen their spiritual resolve, reminding them that faith was the ultimate source of inner composure and outer strength.

The *Adhan*, therefore, became a cornerstone of the Medinan society, a vibrant symbol of Islam's public presence and a constant spiritual anchor for its growing community. It was a profound declaration of the Prophet's (s) mission, echoing the promise of peace and success for all who em-

braced the path of Allah through sincere *Iman*.

Chapter 65

Forging Unity and Facing Early Aggression in Medina

The *Hijrah* to Medina marked a profound transition for the nascent Muslim community, shifting from an era of relentless persecution and struggle to one of establishing and governing an Islamic society. This new phase presented a distinct set of challenges, far more complex than the trials of Mecca. While the earlier Meccan period tested endurance and faith against overwhelming odds, Medina required the Prophet (s) to demonstrate the practical application of Islamic principles in governance, administration, and inter-communal relations. The true test lay in fulfilling the promises of justice, peace, and divine success that Islam offered, not just in the hereafter, but also in this world.

The Prophet's (s) assumption of direct leadership in Medina, overseeing both the spiritual and temporal affairs of the nascent state, underscored a fundamental Islamic concept: the inseparability of religion and governance. He did not retreat to the confines of *Masjid an-Nabawi* after gaining authority, but actively engaged in the political and social administration of the city. This approach established a precedent for righteous leader-

ship, affirming that those most knowledgeable and pious are indeed the most qualified to govern, a principle that continues to inspire Islamic governance.

Initially, the *Quraysh* in Mecca underestimated the Muslim community's ability to thrive in Medina. They mistakenly believed that Medina's pre-existing tribal feuds between the *Aws* and *Khazraj*, coupled with the presence of powerful Jewish tribes, would internally destabilize the new Muslim state. They anticipated that the Prophet (s) would be overwhelmed by these internal divisions and that Islam would ultimately fail to consolidate power. However, as the days turned into weeks, the *Quraysh* witnessed the remarkable unity fostered by the Prophet (s) through the *Mu'akhat* (brotherhood), the establishment of *Masjid an-Nabawi* as a central hub, and the daily growth of conversions. Their initial complacency soon gave way to deep concern, and they recognized the growing threat that Islam in Medina posed to their economic and political dominance. Consequently, their strategy shifted from passive observation to active sabotage and, eventually, open confrontation.

Internally, the Prophet (s) also faced the complex challenge posed by the *Munafiqeen*, or hypocrites, within Medina. These individuals, outwardly professing Islam but secretly harboring malice and working against the Muslim community, found allies among certain Jewish factions. Jewish homes and gardens often served as clandestine meeting places for these hypocrites, providing them a safe haven to plot against the Prophet (s) and his followers. Recognizing these multifaceted threats, the Prophet (s) employed a strategic approach that combined diplomacy, proactive engagement, and, when necessary, firm differentiation.

In his early efforts to foster harmony and establish the Islamic state, the Prophet (s) had sought to build alliances with the local Jewish tribes, culminating in the **Mithaq al-Madina** (Covenant of Medina), which out-

lined reciprocal rights and obligations. He also sought to draw them closer through shared practices. For instance, he ordered Muslims to fast on the day of *Ashura*, aligning with the Jewish observance of the day of *Yom Kippur*, which commemorated Prophet Musa's (a) liberation from Pharaoh. Similarly, for a period, the *Qibla* (direction of prayer) for Muslims remained *Bayt al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem), aligning with the Jewish *Qibla*. However, this period of accommodation was contingent on good faith. When it became evident that some Jewish elements were exploiting this proximity, providing refuge and support to the *Munafiqeen* and actively inciting discord among Muslims, the Prophet (s) began to differentiate Islamic practices. The emphasis on *Ashura* fasting was gradually phased out with the advent of **Ramadan** fasting, and the *Qibla* was eventually changed to the **Ka'aba** in Mecca, marking Islam's distinct identity.

One prominent instance of internal conspiracy involved *Abdullah ibn Ubayy*, the chieftain of the *Khazraj* who had aspirations for leadership in Medina before the Prophet's (s) arrival and subsequently became the head of the *Munafiqeen*. Abu Jahl, the leader of the *Quraysh* in Mecca, sent a provocative letter to *Abdullah ibn Ubayy*, urging him to either expel the Prophet (s) and his followers from Medina or fight them. Upon receiving the letter, *Abdullah ibn Ubayy* immediately convened a secret meeting with his sympathizers in his garden, strategizing how to implement Abu Jahl's demands. However, the Prophet (s), through his established intelligence network—which included loyal companions who gathered vital information without engaging in forbidden spying—was swiftly informed of the gathering. The Prophet (s) immediately proceeded to *Abdullah ibn Ubayy's* garden, directly confronting the conspirators. He recited verses from the **Qur'an** and sternly reminded *Abdullah ibn Ubayy* that the Muslims' unity transcended tribal and regional loyalties. He emphasized that the bond among believers was based solely on faith (*Iman*) and piety (*Taqwa*), not on shared lineage or geographic origin, and that

any attack on the Muslims would be met by their resolute defense, even if it meant confronting their own kin who chose to side with the enemies of Islam. Faced with the Prophet's (s) decisive intervention and the obvious loyalty of the Muslims, *Abdullah ibn Ubayy* was humiliated and forced to abandon his immediate plot.

Another incident of Jewish incitement occurred when a Jew named Hash attempted to reignite the ancient animosities between the *Aws* and *Khazraj* tribes. He began reminiscing about their pre-Islamic battles, aiming to sow seeds of discord among the newly united *Ansar*. The Prophet (s) swiftly intervened, reminding them of Allah's immense blessing of unity and how He had transformed their long-standing enmity into brotherhood through Islam. He warned them against succumbing to tribalism and prejudice, emphasizing that such divisions were antithetical to the spirit of Islam. His timely intervention diffused the tension and reinforced the bonds of unity among the *Ansar*.

As the first year of *Hijrah* concluded, and it became clear that their internal destabilization efforts had failed, the *Quraysh* escalated their tactics. They began sending small, armed groups to patrol near Medina, openly displaying weapons and spreading rumors of impending invasions. Their aim was to instill fear and create an atmosphere of constant intimidation, hoping to demoralize the Muslims. These skirmishes marked the beginning of open hostilities.

In response to these escalating threats, the Prophet (s) initiated a series of military expeditions, some led by himself (*Ghazawat*) and others by his trusted companions (*Saraya*). These expeditions were primarily defensive and intelligence-gathering in nature, aimed at monitoring Quraysh movements, establishing alliances with neutral tribes, and asserting the Muslim community's presence.

Among the early *Ghazawat* (expeditions led by the Prophet (s)) were: *

Ghazwa al-Abwa' (Waddan): In the month of Safar, the Prophet (s) led an expedition to Abwa, a place significant as the burial site of his mother, *Sayyida Aminah*, and the birthplace of *Imam Musa al-Kadhim* (a). Although the news of a Qurayshi force proved false, the Prophet (s) used this opportunity to establish treaties with local tribes, strengthening the Muslim state's regional influence. * **Ghazwa Buwat:** Another expedition in Rabi' al-Awwal to Buwat, near Medina, also turned out to be based on a false report of Qurayshi movement, but served a similar purpose of outreach and demonstration of strength. * **Ghazwa al-Ushayra:** In Jumada al-Ula, the Prophet (s) led an expedition to Ushayra, near the Red Sea, a wealthy area inhabited by the *Banu Mudlij* tribe. This time, a Qurayshi detachment was indeed present, but it retreated upon learning of the Muslim force. The Prophet (s) stayed for ten to twelve days, fostering good relations with the *Banu Mudlij*. It was during this expedition that a profound incident occurred: *Imam Ali* (a) and *Ammar ibn Yasir* (r.a.) were resting under a tree, having fallen asleep and become covered in dust. The Prophet (s) affectionately awoke *Imam Ali* (a), gently wiping the dust from his hair and body, and called him "Abu Turab" (Father of Dust), a title *Imam Ali* (a) deeply cherished. At this same moment, the Prophet (s) delivered a prophecy of *Imam Ali's* (a) eventual martyrdom, stating that "the most wretched person of my *Ummah*" would strike him on the head, staining his blessed beard with his own blood. This early dating of the "Abu Turab" epithet, prior to the Battle of Badr, is significant in establishing its historical context.

Parallel to these *Ghazawat*, the Prophet (s) dispatched *Saraya* (expeditions led by companions): * **Sariya of Hamza:** The first *Sariya* was led by *Hamza* (r.a.), comprising 30 *Muhajireen* (specifically chosen to demonstrate their self-reliance, not relying on *Ansar* for survival in Medina). They confronted a 300-strong Qurayshi force led by Abu Jahl near the coast. A local tribal chief intervened, preventing battle. *Hamza* (r.a.), despite the

eagerness of some zealous young Muslims to engage, strictly adhered to the Prophet's (s) command not to initiate hostilities, demonstrating exemplary obedience to authority. * **Sariya of Ubaydah ibn al-Harith:** A similar expedition led by *Ubaydah ibn al-Harith* (r.a.) against *Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl* also occurred without direct combat, further underscoring the Prophet's (s) policy of non-aggression unless provoked.

The most significant and controversial of these early *Saraya* was the **Nakhlah Raid** led by *Abdullah ibn Jahsh* (r.a.). In the month of Rajab (a sacred month in which fighting was forbidden), the Prophet (s) dispatched *Abdullah ibn Jahsh* (r.a.) with twelve men, giving him a sealed letter to be opened after two or three days' travel from Medina. The letter instructed them to observe a Quraysh trade caravan traveling from Mecca to Ta'if and report its movements. However, either due to misinterpretation or overzealousness, *Abdullah ibn Jahsh* (r.a.) and his men attacked the caravan. They killed *Amr ibn al-Hadrami*, a prominent Qurayshi merchant and ally of Abu Sufyan, and captured two others, along with valuable goods.

Upon their return to Medina, jubilant about their perceived success and the recovery of some of their confiscated Meccan property, they presented the spoils and captives to the Prophet (s). However, the Prophet (s) was extremely displeased. He sternly rebuked them for violating his explicit command not to initiate hostilities and, crucially, for fighting during the sacred month of Rajab. He rejected the spoils and captives, emphasizing that obedience to divine command superseded all other considerations. This incident, despite the good intentions of the companions, was a significant misstep that the *Quraysh* immediately exploited. They launched a massive propaganda campaign throughout Arabia, accusing Muslims of violating sacred months, shedding blood, and engaging in theft, effectively using it as a major pretext to rally tribes against the Muslims and prepare for open war. This unforeseen outcome highlighted the immense importance of discipline, patience, and strict adherence to the leader's

instructions, especially when navigating complex and volatile political landscapes. The stage was now set for the first major confrontation between the Muslims and the *Quraysh*—the Battle of Badr.

Chapter 66

The Nakhla Raid: A Divine Justification Amidst Accusations

The luminous life of Prophet Muhammad (s) stands as a profound source of guidance for all humanity, offering solutions and insights into every conceivable human condition. As highlighted in **Surah Ash-Sharh, Ayats 1-4**: "**Did We not expand for you, [O Muhammad], your breast? And We removed from you your burden. Which had weighed upon your back? And raised high for you your mention?**" This divine exaltation of the Prophet's (s) mention underscores the imperative of understanding his *Sirah* (biography). Salvation, as the **Qur'an** declares, hinges upon adherence to the Prophet's (s) path. To follow him truly, one must comprehend the circumstances, challenges, and opportunities that shaped his blessed life, for within it lies a blueprint for navigating prosperity and adversity, governance and persecution, peace and war. From the era of utter oppression to the establishment of a powerful state, from moments of isolation to the triumph of the Muslim community, the Prophet's (s) life offers a comprehensive model for societal transformation and individual perseverance.

Upon his birth, Prophet Muhammad (s) spent his early childhood, up to the age of five, with his foster mother, *Halima Sa'diya*, beyond the confines of Mecca. At five, he returned to his revered mother, *Amina*, only for her to pass away in the same year. He then came under the loving care of his grandfather, *Abdul Muttalib*, for three years. However, at the tender age of eight, his grandfather too departed this world. The Prophet (s) subsequently moved into the household of his uncle, *Abu Talib*, who became his staunch protector and guardian. From eight to twenty-five years of age, he resided with *Abu Talib*, initially engaging in trade alongside him, and later establishing his own independent commerce while maintaining his residence within *Abu Talib's* home.

At twenty-five, he married the virtuous *Khadijah* (a), relocating to her quarter of *Banu Asad*. At thirty, his beloved cousin, *Imam Ali* (a), was born, and the Prophet (s) took *Imam Ali* (a) into his own household. When he reached the age of forty, the first revelation descended upon him through *Jibra'il* (Gabriel) (a), not merely to announce his prophethood but to affirm a station he already held, commanding him to declare his divine mission. For three years, he propagated Islam secretly, then publicly declared his prophethood at forty-three. Two years later, at forty-five, he commanded the first *Hijrah* to Abyssinia. At forty-seven, the infamous boycott of *Shi'b Abi Talib* began, lasting three arduous years.

At fifty years of age, having endured a decade of public prophethood and the severe trials of the boycott, the Prophet (s) emerged from the valley and embarked upon the miraculous journey of *Mi'raj* (Ascension). This celestial journey, deeply explored in previous discourses, was in essence a preparation for the momentous *Hijrah* to Medina. Following *Mi'raj*, the Prophet (s) began conveying the message of migration to Medina. Gradually, Muslims, seizing every opportunity, began their perilous journey from Mecca to Medina. This migration process unfolded over three years, until Mecca was virtually emptied of its Muslim inhabitants, save

for those who, for valid reasons, could not undertake the journey. Finally, at the age of fifty-three, the Prophet (s) himself, accompanied by *Abu Bakr*, embarked on his sacred *Hijrah* to Medina.

His arrival in Medina marked the dawn of the Islamic calendar, initiating the first year after *Hijrah* (1 AH). The Prophet's (s) first year in Medina was dedicated to establishing the foundations of the nascent Islamic state. He oversaw the construction of *Masjid an-Nabawi*, the central hub for Muslim community life, and fostered the sacred bonds of *Mu'akhat* (brotherhood) between the *Muhajireen* and the *Ansar*. Prayer *rak'ahs* were increased, and the call to prayer, the *Adhan*, was formally instituted, further solidifying the communal identity.

Internally, Medina was home not only to Muslims but also to two other significant groups: the local polytheists and the Jewish tribes. The Prophet (s) entered into covenants with both to secure internal stability. While the polytheists, many of whom had familial ties to the *Ansar*, gradually embraced Islam, the Jewish tribes, despite initial agreements, began to sow seeds of discord. Their envy of the Prophet's (s) growing influence led them to instigate internal strife among the Muslims and to incite the *Quraysh* in Mecca against the burgeoning Islamic state.

Leveraging their perceived knowledge of scriptures as "People of the Book," the Jewish leaders engaged in relentless propaganda and taunts against the Muslims. They sought to re-ignite ancient tribal feuds between the *Ansar*'s *Aus* and *Khazraj* clans, though these attempts were largely thwarted by the Prophet's (s) unifying efforts. A particularly persistent taunt from the Jews was that Muslims would not be blessed with male offspring in Medina, asserting that Islam would fade away without a continuous male lineage. This taunt was disproved by the birth of *Nu'man ibn Bashir* (r.a.), an *Ansari*, the first male child born in Medina after the *Hijrah*. When the Jews shifted their taunt to specifically target the *Muhajireen*, it was again

silenced by the birth of *Abdullah ibn Zubayr* (r.a.), the first male child born to *Muhajir* parents in Medina (his mother *Asma* having been pregnant during the *Hijrah*).

Another significant and prolonged taunt revolved around the *Qibla*. For many months after the *Hijrah*, Muslims continued to pray towards *Bayt al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem), a practice initially adopted to foster harmony with the Jewish community. The Jews exploited this, asserting that Muslims lacked their own distinct *Qibla* and were dependent on theirs, implying the inferiority of Islam. This taunt persisted for over sixteen months, causing considerable distress among some Muslims. The Prophet (s), though patiently awaiting divine instruction, also desired a change in *Qibla* as a response to this continuous antagonism.

As the second year of *Hijrah* began, the *Quraysh*, emboldened by the Jewish promise of internal support within Medina, began to engage in direct military confrontations. Prior to the momentous Battle of Badr, six smaller military expeditions, known as *Ghazawat* (led by the Prophet (s)) and *Saraya* (led by companions), were dispatched. In five of these, the *Quraysh* forces retreated without engagement upon the approach of the Muslim army.

However, the sixth and final expedition before Badr, known as the *Saraya Abdullah ibn Jahsh* or the **Nakhlah Raid**, unfolded differently. The Prophet (s) dispatched his cousin, *Abdullah ibn Jahsh* (r.a.), with twelve companions for a reconnaissance mission to Nakhla, a strategic location near Mecca. He gave *Abdullah* a sealed letter, instructing him to open it only after three days of travel. The letter explicitly directed them to observe the movements of the *Quraysh* and report back, emphasizing intelligence gathering, not direct combat. Two of the companions, having lost a valuable camel, separated from the group to search for it.

The remaining ten companions, including *Abdullah ibn Jahsh*, reached Nakhla.

While there, they unexpectedly encountered a *Quraysh* caravan returning from Ta'if, heavily laden with valuable goods. A crucial dilemma arose: it was the month of Rajab, a sacred month in which all forms of warfare were forbidden, a tradition respected even in the pre-Islamic era of *Jahiliyyah*. The companions debated whether the month had truly begun based on the sighting of the moon. Ultimately, they concluded that Rajab had not yet commenced and decided to engage the caravan.

In the ensuing skirmish, *Amr ibn Hadrami*, a prominent *Quraysh* leader, was killed, marking the first polytheist killed by a Muslim in the history of Islam. Two other *Quraysh* men, *Hakam ibn Kaysan* and *Uthman ibn Abdullah*, were taken captive, becoming the first prisoners of war in Islam. The valuable goods from the caravan were seized, constituting the first spoils of war (*ghanimah*) for the Muslims.

Upon their return to Medina with the captives and spoils, *Abdullah ibn Jahsh* and his companions were met with a disconcerting reality: they learned that Rajab *had* indeed commenced at the time of their raid, meaning they had inadvertently violated a sacred month. The *Quraysh* swiftly seized upon this incident, launching a massive propaganda campaign. They widely condemned the Muslims for violating the sanctity of the month and spilling blood, portraying themselves as victims of aggression.

Initially, the Prophet (s) publicly distanced himself from the actions of *Abdullah ibn Jahsh*'s group. He refused to accept the spoils or the prisoners, indicating his disapproval of the violation of the sacred month, even though his original orders were for reconnaissance, not combat. *Abdullah ibn Jahsh* and his companions were deeply distressed by this reception and the public outcry.

However, divine intervention soon arrived. Allah revealed **Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 217**: "**They ask you about fighting in the sacred month.**

Say: 'Fighting therein is a great (transgression) but averting people from the way of Allah, and disbelief in Him, and [preventing access to] the Sacred Mosque, and expelling its people therefrom are greater (transgressions) in the sight of Allah. And *fitnah* (persecution) is greater than killing.'" This powerful verse decisively addressed the *Quraysh*'s accusations. While acknowledging the gravity of fighting in a sacred month, Allah highlighted the *Quraysh*'s far greater transgressions: preventing people from the path of Allah, disbelief, denying access to *Masjid al-Haram*, expelling its inhabitants, and subjecting Muslims to *fitnah* (persecution, which is worse than killing). This divine revelation justified the Muslims' actions in the broader context of the *Quraysh*'s ongoing oppression and aggression.

Following the revelation, the Prophet (s) accepted the spoils of war and the prisoners. Of the two captives, *Hakam ibn Kaysan* was moved by the Prophet's (s) message and embraced Islam, choosing to remain in Medina. He later attained martyrdom. *Uthman ibn Abdullah*, however, rejected Islam and returned to Mecca, where he eventually died. The **Nakhlah Raid**, initially a source of controversy and propaganda for the *Quraysh*, was thus divinely vindicated, setting the stage for more direct and significant confrontations as the Islamic state continued to grow and defend itself. The persistent taunts of the Jews regarding the *Qibla* would also soon find a divine resolution, marking another pivotal moment in the nascent Islamic community's assertion of its unique identity.

Chapter 67

A Test of Faith: The Changing *Qibla* and the Impending Conflict

As the second year of *Hijrah* dawned, the Prophet Mohammad (s) had successfully laid the foundations of a peaceful and burgeoning Islamic society in Medina. The initial months had been dedicated to remarkable constructive endeavors: three mosques were built, covenants were established with various tribes, and the bond of *Mu'akhat* (brotherhood) integrated the *Muhajireen* with the *Ansar*, ensuring their well-being and self-sufficiency. Throughout this period, no aggressive or warlike actions emanated from the Prophet (s) or his followers, clearly demonstrating a commitment to peace and development.

Yet, despite this tranquility, the embers of animosity flared fiercely in Mecca and among the hypocrites and certain Jewish tribes within Medina. The *Quraysh* leaders, particularly the hardliners like *Abu Jahl*, seethed with frustration at the stability Islam had found. Simultaneously, elements within the Jewish community, despite the *Mithaq al-Madina*, exploited any common ground for ridicule. They frequently taunted Muslims, asserting that Islam had borrowed its practices, such as the *Ashura*

fast or the direction of prayer (*Qibla*) towards *Bayt al-Maqdis*, from Jewish tradition. These constant provocations were designed to undermine Muslim faith and sow discord.

The Prophet (s), recognizing the deep-seated prejudice and the futility of further overtures, awaited a divine decree that would clearly distinguish Islam's independent identity. Often, during his prayers and especially before *Salat al-Layl* (night prayers), his gaze would turn towards the heavens, yearning for the revelation regarding the change of *Qibla*. His anticipation was met with a momentous divine command, as **Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 144** was revealed: **"Indeed, We have seen the turning of your face toward the heaven; so We will surely turn you to a *Qibla* with which you will be pleased. So turn your face toward *al-Masjid al-Haram*. And wherever you are, turn your faces toward it."**

This pivotal moment occurred during the *Dhuhr* prayer on the 15th of Rajab, 2 AH. The Prophet (s) was leading the congregational prayer at a mosque in the locality of *Banu Salama* (now known as *Masjid Qiblatayn*, the Mosque of Two *Qiblas*). Mid-prayer, as the divine instruction descended, the Prophet (s) immediately turned his face 180 degrees from *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem towards the *Ka'bah* in Mecca. The companions, witnessing this miraculous shift, followed suit without hesitation. The men in the front rows turned, followed by the women in the rows behind, exemplifying their absolute and unwavering obedience to the Messenger of Allah (s). This immediate transition, mid-prayer, served as a profound testament to their submission and an indelible lesson in the paramount importance of divine command.

The change of *Qibla* was not merely a geographical reorientation; it carried profound theological significance. Firstly, it served as a decisive break from the Jewish tradition, asserting Islam's independent and divinely ordained path. No longer could the Jews taunt Muslims about

borrowing their practices. Secondly, it fulfilled the Prophet's (s) inherent desire to pray towards the *Ka'bah*, the sacred structure built by his revered forefathers, *Prophet Ibrahim* and *Prophet Ismail* (a).

Most importantly, as articulated in **Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 143**: **"And We did not make the *Qibla* which you used to face except that We might test (or make evident) who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels."** This change was a divine test—a spiritual litmus paper to discern the true believers from those whose faith was shallow. It was a clear demonstration that true submission to Allah (SWT) lies in unquestioning obedience to His Messenger (s), even when it seemed contradictory or required a radical departure from established practice. Just as prayers are shortened during travel, or daily obligations change with divine command, these shifts were tests of faith, distinguishing those who observed prayer as an *'ibadah* (act of worship) from those who merely performed it as a *'adah* (habit).

The news of the *Qibla* change spread rapidly throughout Medina. In *Masjid Quba*, people reportedly turned mid-prayer upon hearing the news. The Jewish community, however, seized upon this as another point of contention. They questioned the consistency of Islam, arguing: "If *Bayt al-Maqdis* was the correct *Qibla*, then your past prayers were invalid. If the *Ka'bah* is the correct *Qibla*, then your previous prayers were invalid." To address these doubts and reassure the worried Muslims, Allah (SWT) revealed the latter part of **Ayat 143 of *Surah Al-Baqarah***: **"And never would Allah have caused your faith to be lost. Indeed Allah is, to the people, Kind and Merciful."** This verse emphatically confirmed that all prayers offered towards *Bayt al-Maqdis* were valid and accepted by Allah (SWT), explicitly equating *salat* (prayer) with *Iman* (faith), thus highlighting the immense significance of prayer as a pillar of belief.

The second year of *Hijrah* also saw the institution of several fundamental

Islamic practices. In Sha'ban, just before Ramadan, fasting (*Sawm*) was made obligatory for Muslims through **Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 183-185**. Although initially, strict rules applied to eating and drinking after *Iftar* (if one slept, they couldn't eat until the next *Iftar*), these were later eased for the convenience of the believers. *Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq* (a) emphasized the unique honor of fasting for the Prophet's (s) *Ummah*, stating that it was not obligatory on prior nations' common people, but rather an exclusive privilege for Prophets, a divine gift now extended to the believers of this *Ummah*.

Following the institution of fasting, other significant obligations were revealed: *Zakat al-Fitr*, payable at the end of Ramadan, was commanded. The first *Eid al-Fitr* prayer was performed by the Prophet (s) in an open field outside the mosque, establishing a lasting *sunnah* for Eid prayers. Soon after, the first *Eid al-Adha* in Medina was celebrated, and the commandment of *Qurbani* (animal sacrifice) was revealed. The Prophet (s) himself set the precedent by sacrificing two rams, one on his own behalf and one for his entire *Ummah*. Additionally, the practice of *I'tikaf* (spiritual retreat in a mosque for at least three days, completely detached from worldly affairs) was also commanded in this year. Although not obligatory, its profound importance was highlighted by the Prophet's (s) intention to perform it, which was only deferred due to the outbreak of the Battle of Badr. He later made up for it by performing *I'tikaf* for twenty days the following year, underscoring its spiritual significance.

While Medina flourished, the *Quraysh* in Mecca grew increasingly restless. Hardliners, led by *Abu Jahl*, sought any pretext to confront the Muslims militarily. Their opportunity arose with the return of a wealthy *Quraysh* trade caravan from Syria, led by *Abu Sufyan*. The caravan's route passed dangerously close to Medina. Fearing an attack and seeking to rally the entire Meccan population against the Muslims, *Abu Sufyan* dispatched a messenger to Mecca, falsely claiming the caravan was in dire peril and

calling for immediate aid.

This alarm was a calculated move to ignite war. *Abu Jahl* seized the moment, stirring the Meccan populace into a frenzy, proclaiming that their very livelihoods and honor were at stake. He argued that Mohammad (s) and his followers, having found peace in Medina, now posed a direct threat to Meccan trade. A formidable army of 950 men, primarily comprising wealthy *Quraysh* leaders (who had a stake in the caravan's safety), set out from Mecca. This was not merely a rescue mission; it was a grand display of power intended to decisively crush the nascent Muslim community. The Meccan army marched in a lavish manner, accompanied by musicians and female singers, with prominent leaders hosting daily feasts to bolster morale.

News of this formidable force reached Medina. The Prophet (s), demonstrating his strategic acumen and reliance on intellect, interrogated a captured *Quraysh* slave to ascertain the enemy's strength. Instead of directly asking about numbers, he inquired about their daily provisions, specifically the number of camels slaughtered for food. From the slave's answers (e.g., nine camels on one day, ten on another), the Prophet (s) astutely deduced that the army comprised between 900 and 1,000 men. This precise intelligence, gathered through astute reasoning rather than brute force, underscored the Prophet's (s) emphasis on wisdom and informed decision-making in the face of adversity. The stage was now set for the first major confrontation between the fledgling Muslim state and the mighty *Quraysh* of Mecca, a confrontation that would shape the future of Islam.

Chapter 68

Consolidating the Islamic State: Taunts, Skirmishes, and the Change of *Qibla*

The life of Prophet Mohammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny, offers a universal paradigm for humanity, encompassing every imaginable human experience. From the depths of hardship to the zenith of governance, his blessed *Seerah* provides guidance for all, in all circumstances. As the **Holy Qur'an** declares, "**And We raised high for you your mention**" (**94:4**), emphasizing the exalted status of his name and legacy. Furthermore, the divine injunction, "**Say: 'If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you...'**" (**3:31**), underscores the profound necessity of adhering to his example for salvation. To truly follow him, one must understand the environment in which he lived, the challenges he faced, and the *Sunnah* (practice and tradition) he established at various junctures. His *Seerah* is unique among all prophets, providing solutions for every human situation.

Having established an Islamic government in Medina, the Prophet faced multifaceted challenges during his initial years. He arrived in Medina at the age of fifty-three, and the Islamic calendar commenced with this piv-

otal migration. His immediate tasks included forging unity among the Muslims—the *Muhajireen* (emigrants from Mecca) and the *Ansar* (native Medinan helpers)—and forming treaties with the non-Muslim communities of Medina. These included the polytheists, many of whom had familial ties with the Muslims and gradually embraced Islam, and the Jews, who were generally more learned but harbored deep-seated animosity towards the nascent Muslim community.

While the polytheists of Medina eventually converted, the Jews, despite initial treaties, soon resorted to insidious internal conspiracies and overt provocations. Their primary objective was to destabilize the fledgling Islamic state. They attempted to sow discord between the *Muhajireen* and the *Ansar*, exploiting old tribal rivalries. When this failed, they opened communication channels with the Quraysh polytheists in Mecca, inciting them to attack Medina and promising support from within.

Beyond direct instigation, the Jews adopted another insidious tactic: intellectual taunts and verbal assaults. Being people of the Book, they possessed scriptural knowledge and were generally more educated than the Meccan polytheists. They used their perceived intellectual superiority to challenge and demoralize the Muslims. The nascent Muslim community, still in its early stages of learning and far from fully absorbing the Prophet's wisdom, often found themselves perplexed by these taunts. Consequently, for the initial three years in Medina, Muslims frequently brought Jewish questions and criticisms to the Prophet for answers.

One such taunt concerned the future of the Muslim community in Medina. Upon the Muslims' arrival, the Jews scoffed, claiming that Islam would end in Medina, and no male children would be born to the Muslims, suggesting their lineage would be extinguished. This was a particularly painful taunt in a society where male offspring were vital for continuation of lineage. However, Allah refuted this claim through His

divine plan. Soon after this taunt, Nu'man ibn Bashir, an *Ansari* child, was born, marking the first Muslim birth in Medina after the *Hijrah*. This brought immense joy and relief to the community, seemingly nullifying the Jewish claim. Yet, the Jews, unwavering in their malice, merely shifted their taunt, asserting that their prediction only applied to the *Muhajireen*, those who had left their homes and come to Medina. Again, Allah's grace intervened. Shortly thereafter, Abdullah ibn Zubayr was born to Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr, who was pregnant when she arrived in Medina. Abdullah ibn Zubayr was the first male child born to the *Muhajireen* in Medina, shattering the Jewish prophecy once more. Other significant births during this period included Mukhtar al-Thaqafi and Ziyad ibn Abih, though their roles in later Islamic history would be marked by immense controversy.

Another persistent taunt from the Jews revolved around the direction of prayer (*Qibla*). From the inception of Islam, Muslims prayed towards Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). In Mecca, this was not a major issue as one could align oneself to face both the Ka'bah and Bayt al-Maqdis. However, in Medina, facing Bayt al-Maqdis meant turning one's back on the Ka'bah. The Jews repeatedly taunted Muslims, asserting that a "new religion" like Islam should have its own *Qibla*, rather than relying on the Jewish sacred site. This taunt, despite its apparent triviality in retrospect, caused significant distress to the early Muslims. It persisted for sixteen or seventeen months after the Prophet's arrival in Medina. The Prophet himself, observing the heaven with anticipation, yearned for a divine command to change the *Qibla*. This yearning is acknowledged in the **Holy Qur'an**: "**We have certainly seen the turning of your face, [O Muhammad], toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a *Qibla* with which you will be pleased...**" (**2:144**).

While facing internal and external provocations, the nascent Islamic state also had to contend with the aggressive posturing of the Meccan poly-

theists. Before the major confrontation of Badr, there were six smaller military expeditions. Three were *ghazwat*, meaning the Prophet himself led the army, while three were *sariyyat*, expeditions led by his companions. In the *ghazwat*, the enemy fled before any battle could ensue. The *sariyyat* too mostly saw the enemy retreating.

The sixth and final *sariyyah* before the Battle of Badr was led by Abdullah ibn Jahsh, a close relative of the Prophet. This significant event, occurring in *Jumada al-Thani* or *Rajab*, profoundly shaped the early Muslim consciousness. The Prophet instructed Abdullah ibn Jahsh to take twelve companions, gave him a sealed letter, and commanded him to open it only after three days of travel from Medina. Upon opening the letter, they found instructions to proceed to Nakhlah, a strategic location between Mecca and Ta'if, to gather intelligence on Quraysh movements. Abdullah ibn Jahsh cautioned his companions about the perilous nature of their mission, emphasizing the constant risk of martyrdom. Ten companions bravely pledged their readiness, while two remained behind to search for a lost camel, highlighting the human element in such critical moments.

At Nakhlah, the small Muslim detachment encountered a Quraysh trade caravan returning from Ta'if, laden with goods. A critical dilemma arose: it was the 29th of *Jumada al-Thani*. If the new moon was sighted, *Rajab*, a sacred month during which warfare was forbidden, would begin. If not, *Jumada al-Thani* would continue, permitting engagement. Believing that *Rajab* had not yet commenced, the Muslims, after consultation, decided to attack the caravan. In the ensuing skirmish, Amr ibn al-Hadrami, a prominent Quraysh chief, was killed – the first polytheist killed by Muslims in battle. Two others, Hakam ibn Kaysan and Uthman ibn Abdullah, were captured, becoming the first prisoners of war in Islamic history. The caravan's goods were seized, constituting the first *ghanimah* (spoils of war) for the Muslims.

Upon their return to Medina, the Muslims learned that the moon for *Rajab* had indeed been sighted, meaning the battle had occurred during a sacred month. This immediately drew severe criticism from the Meccan polytheists, who taunted the Muslims for violating ancient Arab customs, accusing them of transgressing norms even pre-Islamic pagans respected. The Jews in Medina seized this opportunity to amplify their propaganda, questioning Islam's claim as a religion of peace.

Initially, the Prophet remained silent, neither accepting the spoils nor the prisoners. He awaited divine guidance. Soon, the **Holy Qur'an** addressed the situation directly with the revelation of **Surah al-Baqarah, verse 217**: "**They ask you about fighting in the sacred month. Say, 'Fighting therein is great [sin], but averting [people] from the way of Allah and disbelief in Him and [preventing access to] al-Masjid al-Haram and expelling its people therefrom are greater [sins] in the sight of Allah. And *Fitna* (discord/persecution) is greater than killing.'**" This powerful revelation justified the Muslims' action by highlighting the far greater sins committed by the polytheists: obstructing the path of Allah, disbelief, preventing access to the Sacred Mosque, expelling its people, and perpetrating *fitna* (persecution and oppression) which was deemed worse than killing.

Following this divine clarification, the Prophet accepted the spoils of war, distributing them among the *Mujahideen* after setting aside a portion for the *Baytul Maal* (public treasury). The prisoners were brought forth. One, Hakam ibn Kaysan, embraced Islam and remained in Medina, later attaining martyrdom. The other, Uthman ibn Abdullah, was eventually ransomed. The Prophet connected his release to the fate of the two Muslims who had initially stayed behind to search for their lost camel, who were later martyred by the Meccans.

This pivotal event solidified the Muslims' understanding of their strug-

gle: it was not merely about tactical warfare but a profound battle against oppression and injustice. The Jewish taunts, however, continued. On the 15th of *Rajab*, two months before the monumental Battle of Badr, Allah's command finally came. While the Prophet was leading the *Asr* (afternoon) prayer, the revelation descended, instructing him to turn his face towards the **Sacred Mosque** in Mecca. In a miraculous moment, the Prophet and the congregation shifted their direction mid-prayer, changing the *Qibla* from Bayt al-Maqdis to the Ka'bah. This transformation was a significant turning point, affirming the unique identity of Islam and granting the Prophet the *Qibla* he had silently yearned for, thus silencing a major Jewish taunt and paving the way for the decisive confrontations ahead.

Chapter 69

The Road to Badr: Divine Sanction and Strategic Preparations

The narrative of Islam's formative years culminates in the monumental confrontation known as the Battle of Badr, a pivotal moment in the nascent Muslim community's history. Before delving into the specifics of this clash, it is essential to understand the sacred context of *Jihad* within Islam. Just as *Salat* (prayer), *Sawm* (fasting), *Zakat* (charity), and *Hajj* (pilgrimage) are fundamental pillars of faith, *Jihad*, particularly defensive *Jihad*, stands as a profoundly important act of worship. Indeed, when its obligation arises, its significance can transcend that of other devotions, representing a paramount duty to protect the faith and its adherents.

The divine permission for armed engagement was revealed in a critical juncture, following years of relentless persecution and forced migrations. **Qur'an 2:217** declared: "**Permission is granted to those who are being fought, because they have been wronged.**" This sacred verse marked a turning point, sanctioning the oppressed Muslims to defend themselves against their aggressors. The first major engagement to follow this divine decree was the Battle of Badr.

Allah Almighty Himself testified to His support for the believers in **Qur'an Surah Anfal**, recalling: "**And verily Allah assisted you at Badr when you were weak.**" This divine assurance was a testament to Allah's succor, manifested both psychologically and tangibly. Before the fighting even began, a sense of awe and dread was cast into the hearts of the enemy. Furthermore, Allah reinforced His faithful servants with divine aid, dispatching 5,000 angels to bolster their ranks, a powerful testament to the spiritual backing the Muslims received.

Historically, the military engagements of the Prophet's era are categorized into two primary types: a *Ghazwa* (plural: *Ghazawat*) refers to any battle in which the Prophet Mohammad (s) personally participated, leading the Muslim forces. A *Sariyyah* (plural: *Saraya*), on the other hand, describes an expedition where the Prophet appointed a commander but did not physically join the contingent. While *Saraya* could be further classified by the size of the accompanying force—such as *Mans*, *Jaish*, and *Hazibaan*—the widely understood distinction remains the Prophet's direct presence. For instance, the renowned *Jaish Usama* refers to the army dispatched by the Prophet in his final days under the command of Usama ibn Zayd.

The Battle of Badr unfolded near a well-known location called Badr, situated approximately 150 kilometers from Medina on the road to Mecca. This pivotal clash is widely held to have occurred on the 17th of Ramadan in the 2nd year after the *Hijrah*. Some scholars, however, suggest slightly different dates, including the 19th or 21st of Ramadan.

The Muslim army numbered a mere 313 individuals, a stark contrast to the strength of their adversary. This small force was predominantly composed of 236 *Ansar* (the Helpers from Medina) and 77 *Muhajireen* (the Emigrants from Mecca). Their equipment was remarkably sparse: a meager 6 armors, 8 swords, only 3 horses (some accounts say 2, or even 1), and a total of 70 camels (some sources even suggest only 7). Against

this, the Quraysh army boasted a formidable force of 950 to 1000 men, supported by 700 camels and 300 horses. To amplify their swagger and instill fear, the Quraysh advanced with singing women, drums, and music, embodying their arrogant might. The battle resulted in 14 Muslim martyrs—6 *Muhajireen* and 8 *Ansar*—while the Quraysh suffered a heavy toll, with 70 killed and between 50 to 80 taken as prisoners.

The genesis of the Quraysh's march to Badr was ostensibly to protect a lucrative trade caravan returning from Syria, laden with goods, under the leadership of Abu Sufyan. However, this pretext concealed a deeper, more malicious intent. Key influential figures in Mecca, vehemently opposed to Islam, feared that the initial fervor against the Muslims was waning. They seized upon the caravan's perceived threat as an opportunity to reignite animosity and provoke a direct confrontation, presenting it to the Meccan populace as a necessary measure to safeguard their wealth and honor.

Such was the prevailing social pressure and the cunning manipulation of these instigators that even prominent individuals, some of whom were reluctant, were compelled to join the Quraysh army. Members of the Banu Hashim, including Abu Talib's sons—Talib, Aqeel, and Abbas—were forced to march with the Meccan forces. Notably, Ali ibn Abi Talib was already with the Prophet, and Ja'far ibn Abi Talib was in Abyssinia. Among the sons of Abu Talib who were forced to join, Talib's fate became a historical enigma. He left Mecca under duress, but vanished before the battle commenced, his whereabouts unknown to this day. Some historians speculate he may have drowned himself in the Red Sea, while others offer more mystical explanations. What remains certain, however, is that he did not participate in the fighting against the Muslims.

Before the main armies clashed, the Prophet Mohammad (s), ever the strategic leader, dispatched two scouts to gather intelligence on the ap-

proaching caravan and the Quraysh army. These scouts reached the wells of Badr and overheard two women discussing the caravan's imminent arrival, revealing its plans to encamp there. This crucial information was relayed back to the Prophet.

Later, as the Muslims advanced, they captured two slaves belonging to the Quraysh army. When questioned about the approaching forces, the slaves insisted that only a trade caravan was near, denying the presence of a hostile army. Misinterpreting their responses as attempts to conceal the truth, some Muslims initially treated them harshly. However, the Prophet, completing his prayers, stepped forward and confirmed the slaves' testimony. He revealed that both the caravan and a formidable army were indeed approaching. He further interrogated the slaves about the Quraysh's daily provisions, deducing from the number of camels slaughtered that the enemy force numbered approximately 1,000 men.

This revelation was a shock to many Muslims, who had initially believed they were only intercepting a trade caravan, not preparing for a full-scale battle. The Prophet then consulted with his companions, particularly the *Ansar*. The *Ansar* had pledged allegiance to the Prophet in Medina, promising to defend him within the city's bounds. Now, facing a battle outside Medina, the Prophet sought their counsel. Sa'd ibn Mu'adh, a revered leader of the *Ansar*, rose and delivered a powerful declaration of unwavering loyalty. He proclaimed that the *Ansar* would follow the Prophet wherever he led, even if he were to command them to plunge into the sea. This profound statement solidified the *Ansar*'s commitment, leaving no doubt about their steadfast support.

With the battle imminent, the Prophet made crucial logistical and strategic decisions. He appointed Ali ibn Abi Talib to carry the great standard (*Liwa*) of the Muslim army. Other flags were designated for the *Muhajireen* and *Ansar*. For the administration of Medina during his absence,

the Prophet appointed Abu Lubaba as the city's governor and Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum to lead prayers in the Prophet's Mosque.

During their arduous journey, the Muslims faced a severe shortage of riding animals, often sharing one camel among three men, taking turns walking. The Prophet Mohammad (s) himself shared a camel with Ali ibn Abi Talib and Abu Lubaba. Despite their offers to walk entirely so that the Prophet could ride comfortably, he graciously declined, stating that he too sought the reward from Allah that came with such hardship. This demonstrated his humility and equality with his companions.

Upon reaching Badr, the Prophet strategically chose the battlefield. He selected a site near the wells, ensuring the Muslim army had access to water. He ordered the other wells to be filled or covered, thereby denying the enemy this vital resource, and had a reservoir constructed from the existing springs. In contrast, the Quraysh encamped on soft, sandy ground, far from any reliable water source.

A miraculous event then occurred: rain began to fall. This divine intervention served two crucial purposes for the Muslims. Firstly, it allowed them to perform *ghusl* and *wudu'* with ease, purifying themselves collectively. Secondly, the rain compacted the loose, sandy terrain beneath the Muslim camp, firming it for battle, while simultaneously turning the Quraysh's soft ground into heavy, muddy mire, hindering their movement and making it difficult for them to fight.

Before the actual fighting commenced, the Prophet Mohammad (s) walked through the battlefield, pointing to specific spots and prophesying: "This is where Abu Jahl will be killed. This is where Utbah will be killed. This is where Umayyah ibn Khalaf will be killed," and so on, naming numerous Quraysh leaders. Remarkably, every single prophecy came true, with each of the named individuals perishing exactly at the designated spot.

In a final attempt to avert bloodshed, the Prophet dispatched a messenger to the Quraysh, urging them to return to Mecca. He conveyed that he harbored no ill will towards them, nor did he seek to harm them. This plea, however, caused a significant rift within the Quraysh ranks. Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, a respected leader and Abu Jahl's father-in-law, advocated for peace, arguing that their caravan was now safe, making further conflict unnecessary. Yet, Abu Jahl, driven by his stubborn pride and deep-seated animosity, vehemently opposed any peaceful resolution. He publicly accused Utbah of cowardice, claiming he wished to avoid battle out of concern for his son who had embraced Islam.

The tension escalated rapidly. To further incite the Quraysh, Abu Jahl orchestrated a dramatic scene: he brought the brother of Amr ibn al-Hadrami, who had been killed by Muslims in the Nakhlah expedition. This man tore his clothes, smeared his body with blood, and cried out for revenge, reminding the Quraysh of their fallen comrade and shaming them for their hesitation. Almost simultaneously, a brave but reckless Quraysh warrior challenged the Muslims, vowing to either drink from their secured well, destroy it, or die in the attempt. He charged towards the Muslim lines and was swiftly confronted by Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib, the Prophet's uncle. Hamza engaged him in combat, delivering a decisive blow that tragically took the warrior's life.

These twin provocations ignited the dormant fires of war. The Quraysh responded with a volley of arrows, leading to the martyrdom of some Muslims. According to some Shi'a traditions, these initial martyrdoms occurred *after* Hamza's valorous act and the subsequent surge of archery, indicating a specific sequence of events leading up to the full-scale engagement that would follow. The stage was now set for the first major confrontation between the forces of truth and falsehood.

Chapter 70

The First Encounter: Duels, Divine Aid, and the Price of Injustice

The Battle of Badr, unfolding on the 17th of Ramadan in the second year of the *Hijrah*, stands as an unparalleled milestone in the annals of Islamic history. It was not merely a clash of armies but the foundational engagement between the forces of truth and falsehood, marking the very first *Jihad* fought between Muslims and disbelievers. Its profound significance resonates even in later historical events, as evidenced by Yazid's declaration after Karbala that he had avenged his ancestors slain at Badr. The battle's impact was so immense that its consequences rippled throughout the lives of the *Ahlulbayt* (a.s.), becoming a root cause of the enmity that later generations, particularly the Umayyads, harbored against the Household of the Prophet. Indeed, the suffering endured by Lady Fatima (s.a.) can be traced, in part, to the resentment of those families whose prominent figures were defeated by Ali (a.s.) at Badr, a bitterness they carried for decades.

Qur'an 29:69 declares, **"And those who strive for Us – We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good."**

This universal principle, reiterated annually during Ramadan in the recitation of *Surah Ankabut*, found its most eloquent manifestation at Badr. The battle was a testament to divine assistance: **Qur'an 3:123** reminds the believers, **"And already had Allah given you victory at Badr while you were few in number..."** This support was strikingly evident, as **Qur'an 3:124-125** further clarifies: **"When you said to the believers, 'Is it not sufficient for you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down?' Yes, if you remain patient and fear Allah and the enemy come upon you in force, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels having marks [of distinction]."**

The night before Badr (16th Ramadan) was one of stark contrast. While the Quraysh prepared for battle, the Muslim camp was enveloped in peace and sleep, with the exception of the Prophet Mohammad (s) who spent the entire night in fervent worship. A miraculous rain descended, a blessing that simultaneously purified the Muslims, solidified the sandy ground beneath their feet, and turned the Quraysh's terrain into heavy mud.

As dawn broke, discord plagued the Quraysh. A majority preferred avoiding conflict, but Abu Jahl, arrogant and relentless, insisted on engagement, seeing it as a prime opportunity to crush the nascent Muslim community. He defiantly rejected any overture for peace, even as figures like Utbah and Shaybah, warned by the Prophet (s) of their impending doom, hesitated. The killing of a disbeliever by Hamza (a.s.) further inflamed passions, solidifying the Quraysh's resolve to fight. When Utbah attempted to rally his comrades for a retreat, Abu Jahl, mounted on his horse, publicly taunted him, accusing him of cowardice. Enraged, Utbah dismounted, grabbed Abu Jahl by the collar, and slammed him to the ground, declaring his readiness to fight. This confrontation extinguished any remaining hope for peaceful resolution.

Observing the enemy's unyielding determination, the Prophet (s) began

organizing the Muslim ranks. With an arrow in hand, he meticulously aligned the 313 believers, pulling forward those who had strayed behind and ensuring perfect formation. During this process, he gently prodded a companion, Sawad ibn Ghaziyyah, who had stepped slightly out of line. Sawad, seizing the moment, humorously asked for retribution for the gentle prod, reminding the Prophet of the principle of justice for the wronged. The Prophet (s), embodying ultimate humility, immediately bared his stomach and offered Sawad the arrow, allowing him to exact his due. Overwhelmed, Sawad embraced the Prophet's blessed body, seeking to touch it one last time before entering the battle.

The battle officially commenced with the traditional duels (*Mubarazah*) between champions. From the Quraysh emerged three prominent figures: Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, his brother Shaybah, and Utbah's son Walid. From the Muslim ranks, three Ansar stepped forward, but the Quraysh rejected them, demanding champions of their own clan. In response, the Prophet (s) called upon his own family: Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib (a.s.), the Lion of Allah; Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), the young Lion of God; and Ubaydah ibn Harith (a.s.), a respected elder.

According to the reliable narrations of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.), which are held in higher esteem than common historical accounts, the duels unfolded as follows: Walid confronted Ali (a.s.), Shaybah faced Hamza (a.s.), and Utbah engaged Ubaydah (a.s.). Ali (a.s.), swiftly defeated Walid, severing his arm with a powerful stroke. As Walid attempted to flee, Ali (a.s.) struck him again, causing him to fall from his horse, before delivering the final blow that sent him to Hellfire. Surveying the field, Ali (a.s.) saw Hamza (a.s.) locked in a fierce, seemingly even duel with Shaybah, both having dismounted to grapple. Ali (a.s.) called out to Hamza (a.s.) to lower his head. As Hamza (a.s.) complied, Ali (a.s.) seized the opportunity, striking Shaybah and severing his head. Finally, Ali (a.s.) turned to assist Ubaydah (a.s.), who had bravely wounded Utbah but had

himself suffered severe injuries, losing both his legs. Ali (a.s.) swiftly dispatched Utbah, thus killing all three prominent Quraysh champions. This account, supported by Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) and corroborated by Ali's own words in *Nahj al-Balagha* to Mu'awiyah, where he boasted of killing his ancestors and kin, highlights Ali's unparalleled bravery and decisive role in eliminating the enemy's most formidable leaders.

With their champions fallen, the Quraysh launched a full-scale assault. At this critical juncture, Satan, appearing in the guise of Suraqah, the chief of the Banu Kinanah tribe (an old enemy of Quraysh), approached the Meccan army. He guaranteed them his tribe's support, bolstering their morale. However, upon witnessing the descending angels, Satan fled in terror, realizing the divine intervention. Centuries later, Suraqah, upon converting to Islam, expressed surprise at being attributed with this act at Badr, confirming that it was indeed Satan masquerading as him.

Despite the numerical disadvantage, the Muslims fought with extraordinary zeal. The Prophet (s) called out, promising paradise to those who fought bravely and stood firm. Umayr ibn al-Humam, hearing this, threw away the dates he was eating, exclaiming that paradise was now too cheap to wait for, and plunged into the enemy lines, achieving martyrdom. Similarly, Harithah, another Muslim, asked the Prophet (s) what act would make Allah and His angels smile. The Prophet replied, "To face the enemies of Allah and achieve martyrdom." Harithah immediately shed his armor, took two swords, and entered the battle, seeking the ultimate reward.

During the height of the battle, as Muslim morale wavered under the immense pressure of the enemy, the Prophet (s) experienced a profound spiritual state, a moment of divine revelation. His eyes closed, and sweat beaded on his face. When he opened them, he took a handful of pebbles from the ground and hurled them towards the Quraysh, uttering,

"**May your faces be ruined!**" This act, described in **Qur'an 8:17 – "And you threw not, [O Muhammad], when you threw, but Allah threw..."** – miraculously caused each pebble to strike a prominent Quraysh leader in the eye, disorienting and scattering them. This divine intervention, coupled with the visible arrival of thousands of angels on white horses, further bolstered the Muslims and terrified the disbelievers. These angels, who had gathered in the vicinity the night before, were now actively participating, turning the tide of the battle. It is narrated that some of these angels are still awaiting the arrival of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) to join his army in the final battles. The flag of Badr itself was a divine gift, brought by Jibra'il from heaven, given to the Prophet (s), and then entrusted to Ali (a.s.). This same flag will be unfurled by Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) upon his advent, a testament to the enduring significance of Badr in the cosmic struggle.

As the battle concluded, the Prophet (s) commanded his followers to cease killing and treat the prisoners with kindness. However, two individuals were singled out for execution due to their extreme enmity and grave crimes against Islam and the Prophet's household. Ali (a.s.) was instructed to personally carry out these executions.

The first was Nadr ibn Harith, a man notorious for mocking the Qur'an. Four years prior, when the Prophet (s) began reciting Qur'an in Mecca, Nadr traveled to Persia and Rome, bringing back storytellers and singing slave girls to compete with and drown out the divine verses in the Kaaba. He would say, "I have better stories than Muhammad's tales of ancient nations." His grave sin of *Tawheen-e-Qur'an* (insulting the Qur'an) rendered him unforgivable. Ali (a.s.) executed him, making him the first captive to be put to death.

The second was Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt, whose crime was even more heinous. Years before Badr, while the Prophet (s) was prostrating in prayer near

the Kaaba, Uqbah, at the instigation of Abu Jahl, dumped camel entrails and filth upon the Prophet's blessed back. This vile act deeply wounded the Prophet (s) and his daughter, Lady Fatima (s.a.), who rushed to the Kaaba, weeping as she removed the filth from her father. The Prophet (s) comforted her, promising divine retribution. Now, at Badr, the time for that retribution had arrived. The Prophet (s) ordered Ali (a.s.) to execute Uqbah, stating that he was unforgivable not only for his many crimes but specifically for causing sorrow and tears to Lady Fatima (s.a.). This incident underscores the profound significance of not causing distress to the Prophet's Household, particularly Lady Fatima (s.a.). Even the **"Mercy to the Worlds"** (Prophet Mohammad) ordered the execution of one who caused sorrow to his daughter.

This incident also serves as a profound lesson on justice and the consequences of causing harm to the innocent, particularly women. The Prophet (s) emphasized that if a righteous woman is unjustly divorced without a legitimate *Shari'i* reason, he himself will be her advocate on the Day of Judgment. This principle extends to parents who wrongfully pressure their children into divorce; such obedience is not required in Islam. The Prophet (s) taught that a true believer is swift to seek reconciliation and compromise in disputes, even if they are in the right, recognizing that sometimes, yielding one's right for peace is an act of worship itself, promising a home in paradise for those who do so.

The suffering of Lady Fatima (s.a.) after her father's passing, particularly her deep grief, became unbearable. To mourn her father, she sought a secluded place. Salman al-Farsi (a.s.) helped her construct a small dwelling near the Baqi' cemetery, known as *Bayt al-Ahzan* (House of Sorrows), the world's first *Imambargah* dedicated solely to mourning. Every day, after completing her household duties, Lady Fatima (s.a.) would take her children, Hasan and Husayn (a.s.), to *Bayt al-Ahzan* to lament her father. Her lamentations were so profound that some individuals complained,

claiming they could not rest due to her constant weeping. This further illustrates the immense pain she endured, to the point that she became so weak that she needed a staff to walk, despite being only eighteen years old.

A poignant illustration of her grief occurred when Bilal, the Prophet's *mu'azzin*, returned to Medina. After the Prophet's demise, Bilal had vowed never to give the *adhan* again for anyone else, leaving Medina for Syria. In a dream, the Prophet (s) asked him why he had abandoned him. Bilal, heartbroken, immediately returned to Medina. The people of Medina implored him to give the *adhan* once more, but he refused. However, when Lady Fatima (s.a.) sent her servant Fizza with a plea, Bilal could not refuse. He began the *adhan*, and as he reached "**Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah**" (I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah), Lady Fatima (s.a.) let out a cry and fainted, unable to bear the mention of her beloved father's name. Bilal then ceased the *adhan*, heartbroken. The immense pain and grief endured by Lady Fatima (s.a.) serve as a powerful reminder of the profound cost of injustice and the suffering inflicted upon the Prophet's pure household.

Chapter 71

Badr's Reckoning: The Demise of Quraysh Leaders

The Battle of Badr stood as a testament to the fulfillment of divine promises, a pivotal moment where the tides of fate shifted definitively in favor of truth. It was a site where the Lord's assurances, spoken in the verses of the **Holy Qur'an** – particularly the final *ayah* of **Surah al-Ankabut** and the opening *ayat* of **Surah al-Rum** – manifested in tangible reality. The first of these promises declared that those who strive in His path (*jihad*) and exert every effort, regardless of their limited resources or apparent weakness, or the overwhelming numbers of their adversaries, would find their way guided to their ultimate destination: "**And those who strive for Us – We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good**" (**Qur'an 29:69**). This divine pledge was visibly honored in the battle of Badr, notably when the Muslim forces found themselves in a precarious situation, and it seemed their resolve might falter. It was at this crucial juncture that the Almighty fulfilled His word, dispatching a celestial army of five thousand angels to aid the believers.

The historical accounts describe the profound impact of this angelic in-

tervention. Following the initial duels (*Mubarazah*) where Ali ibn Abi Talib, Hamza, and Ubaydah ibn al-Harith bravely faced and decisively eliminated the three prominent Quraysh chiefs—Utbah, Shaybah, and Walid—the morale of the polytheists began to wane. Observing this decline, Abu Jahl, the staunch enemy of Islam, frantically rallied his forces, ordering a full-scale charge against the Muslim ranks. It was then that Iblis, in the guise of Suraqa ibn Malik, appeared with a large contingent of devils, attempting to bolster the pagan army. However, the moment Iblis perceived the descent of Jibra'il and the five thousand angels into the battlefield, a wave of terror gripped him. He instantly fled the scene, abandoning his human allies. His retreat left the pagan chieftain, Harith ibn Hisham, utterly bewildered. Harith, mistaking Iblis for an actual ally, desperately pursued him, reproaching him for deserting them when they most needed encouragement. At this, Iblis uttered the words, later recorded in the **Holy Qur'an**: "**Indeed, I see what you do not see, and I fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is severe in penalty**" (**Qur'an 8:48**). Having uttered this, Satan vanished from the battlefield, leaving the angels to fulfill their divine mission of aiding the Muslims.

Numerous accounts corroborate the presence of these celestial warriors. Companions testified to seeing swords striking and heads falling without any visible wielder, a phenomenon that defied natural explanation. Abu Burdah, the son of a *kafir*, recounted bringing two severed heads to the Prophet, claiming his kills, but then found a third severed head without recollection of his own blow. The Prophet (s) confirmed that angels were indeed aiding them. A youth from the Banu Ghifar, the tribe of Abu Dharr, recounted how, while still a pagan, he and his cousin were observing the battle from a distance when they suddenly heard the terrifying sounds of a vast, invisible army passing by, accompanied by thunderous hooves. His cousin fainted from fear, while the youth himself, overwhelmed, sought out the Prophet (s) and immediately embraced Islam.

Even among the Quraysh prisoners, the angelic presence was acknowledged. When the Prophet's uncle, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, who had been forcibly brought to Badr by the Quraysh, was captured by a Muslim, he firmly denied being captured by a mere human. He stated that a tall, white-clad rider had taken him. The Prophet (s) confirmed this, explaining that it was an angel who had aided his capture. Sa'ib, a pagan who later converted, also described being captured by an unusually tall, formidable figure who bound him before leaving him on the battlefield.

In Mecca, the news of the Quraysh defeat plunged the city into mourning, though for the secret Muslims like Abu Rafi', the Prophet's servant, and his uncle Abbas and his wife Umm al-Fadl, it was a moment of quiet rejoice. Abu Rafi', who worked in a tent-making shop near the Zamzam well, recounts how Abu Lahab, the Prophet's bitter and ailing uncle, came to his shop seeking news. Abu Lahab, crippled by age and disease, was joined by a few others, including Abu Sufyan ibn Harith, a grandson of Abdul Muttalib and a cousin of the Prophet (s), who had participated in the battle. Abu Lahab pressed his nephew for details of the crushing defeat, demanding to know how their great chiefs had fallen. Abu Sufyan, though initially hesitant, confessed that while they were prepared for the Muslims, they were overwhelmed by "white-clothed, tall men" who were impervious to their weapons and impossible to defeat. Upon hearing this, Abu Rafi' could not restrain himself and exclaimed that these were the angels of Allah sent to aid the Muslims. Enraged, Abu Lahab lunged at Abu Rafi', but Umm al-Fadl, Abu Lahab's sister-in-law and a formidable woman, intervened, striking Abu Lahab with a wooden club used for tent-making, warning him not to touch Abu Rafi' whose master (her husband Abbas) was now a captive of the Muslims. This eyewitness account from a Quraysh perspective further solidified the miraculous nature of the Muslim victory.

Soon after, Abu Lahab was afflicted with a severe form of smallpox, a

highly contagious and dreaded disease. His family, terrified of contagion, abandoned him to die alone. His body was left unburied for days until, under extreme pressure from the community, his sons used long poles to push his corpse into a pit outside Mecca, covering it with stones. Thus, one of the Prophet's staunchest enemies met a humiliating and unceremonious end, denied even a proper burial.

Beyond the angelic aid, the battle of Badr also witnessed other miracles performed by the Prophet (s) himself. After receiving the news of the complete rout of the Quraysh, the Prophet (s) performed the first *Sajdah al-Shukr* (prostration of gratitude) in Medina, a gesture of profound thankfulness to Allah. During the battle, when Akasha ibn Mihsan's sword broke, the Prophet (s) gave him a branch from a tree, which miraculously transformed into a sturdy sword. This miraculous blade served Akasha not only at Badr but in all subsequent battles until the time of *Uthman's caliphate*. Similarly, a companion whose eye was dislodged during the fighting had it gently reinserted by the Prophet's blessed hand, becoming perfectly normal, indistinguishable from his other eye. In another incident, a companion whose arm was severed while fighting Abu Jahl, had it miraculously reattached by the Prophet's hand, healing completely and allowing him to fight normally in all future battles.

The Battle of Badr thus spelled the end for many of the Quraysh's most prominent leaders and ardent enemies of Islam. Four figures, in particular, stood out among the slain:

Firstly, **Abul Bakhtari ibn Hisham**. He was among those noble Quraysh who had opposed the harsh boycott of Banu Hashim, earning the Prophet's respect. Therefore, the Prophet (s) had ordered that he should not be killed, but captured alive. However, when Mujadhdhar ibn Ziyad Ansari encountered him, Abul Bakhtari refused to surrender without his companion, his nephew. Mujadhdhar, seeing his defiance, reluctantly killed

him. The Prophet (s) was saddened by his death but accepted it as his destiny.

Secondly, **Umayya ibn Khalaf**, the cruel master of Bilal al-Habashi, who had inflicted unimaginable torture upon him for his faith. Umayya had a pre-Islamic pact of friendship with Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, a prominent Muslim *Muhajir*. During the chaotic retreat, Umayya and his son Ali sought protection from Abd al-Rahman. Abd al-Rahman, burdened by the large amount of war booty he had collected, initially tried to protect them. But when Bilal, seeing his former tormentor, cried out, "The head of *kufr* is here! Umayya ibn Khalaf!" the *Ansar* rushed to kill him. Despite Abd al-Rahman's desperate efforts to protect Umayya and his son, even lying over them, the *Ansar*, fueled by their indignation and led by Bilal, overwhelmed them and killed both Umayya and his son. In the struggle, Abd al-Rahman lost his collected booty and suffered a wound to his ear.

Thirdly, **Abu Jahl**, the arch-enemy whom the Prophet (s) had termed the "Pharaoh of this *Ummah*." His animosity towards Islam and the Prophet (s) dated back to their childhood. The Prophet (s) even knew a distinct mark on Abu Jahl's knee from an old altercation. During the battle, two young Ansar boys, Mu'awwidh and Mu'adh, barely fifteen or sixteen years old, specifically sought out Abu Jahl, determined to eliminate him due to his incessant insults against the Prophet (s). They attacked him, leaving him severely wounded. Later, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, a humble companion, found Abu Jahl barely alive. Even in his dying moments, Abu Jahl's arrogance persisted. He contemptuously addressed Abdullah ibn Mas'ud as a "shepherd boy" and demanded that his head be cut from high on his neck, so it would appear noble even in death. Defying this final display of pride, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, as a sign of humiliation for the enemy of Allah and His Prophet, cut Abu Jahl's head from as low as possible. When the severed head was brought before the Prophet (s), he declared, "This is the Pharaoh of this *Ummah*!" He further emphasized

that Abu Jahl was worse than the Pharaoh of Moses, as that Pharaoh had ultimately professed belief at the brink of death, while Abu Jahl died in defiance, refusing to utter a word of faith.

Finally, **Nawfal**, another fierce enemy of the Prophet (s), fell in battle at the hands of Ali ibn Abi Talib. The Prophet (s) had prayed for his downfall before the battle and, upon learning of his death, offered immense praise and gratitude to Allah for accepting his supplication.

After the battle, the Prophet (s) ordered the bodies of the slain Quraysh leaders, estimated to be around seventy, to be gathered and thrown into the dry well (*Qalib*) of Badr. Once the bodies were cast into the pit, the well was sealed. The Prophet (s) then approached the *Qalib* and, standing at its edge, addressed the dead by their names – Abu Jahl, Umayya, Utbah, Shaybah, Walid, and others. He solemnly declared, "O people of Quraysh! Verily, the promise my Lord made to me has been fulfilled. Has the promise made to you been fulfilled as well?" He contrasted their hostile actions – their calling him a liar, expelling him from his homeland, and waging war against him – with the support he received from strangers, ultimately leading to this victory. He concluded, "You were indeed the worst neighbors to me. My Lord's promise has been fulfilled, and you must have seen it." When some companions, surprised, asked if the dead could hear him, the Prophet (s) affirmed, "You do not hear better than them; they just cannot reply."

Among the bodies in the *Qalib* was that of Utbah, who had challenged the Muslims to the initial duels and was killed by Ali (a.s.). His body was so swollen in his heavy armor that the Muslims could not remove it. The Prophet (s) instructed them not to disfigure the corpse but to simply cover him with earth as he was, demonstrating reverence even for the body of a fallen enemy.

The historical accounts surrounding the *Qalib* of Badr and the Prophet's

address to the dead serve as a potent precedent, echoing later events in Islamic history concerning the sanctity of graves. This was tragically exemplified in the fate of Lady Fatima az-Zahra (s.a.). After her passing, in fulfillment of her will, she was secretly buried by Imam Ali (a.s.) to prevent those who had wronged her from participating in her funeral. When the authorities realized the implications of her secret burial—that it was a public humiliation for them and a testament to her profound displeasure—they decided to exhume her body for a public re-burial. Upon hearing this, Imam Ali (a.s.), who had stoically borne countless indignities—the breaking of the door, the fall of the *qawl* on his wife's ribs, the martyrdom of Muhsin, the suppression of Fatima's mourning, and the destruction of her *matam* tent—could bear no more. He emerged from his home in a state of righteous fury, wearing a yellow robe, his buttons undone, tears streaming down his face, and his sword in hand. He strode towards Lady Fatima's grave, declaring that if anyone dared to lay a hand upon her sacred resting place, Ali would no longer tolerate it, and his sword would move. The people, recognizing Ali's (a.s.) profound wrath, retreated in fear, and the desecration of Lady Fatima's grave was averted at that time. This historical account serves as a poignant reminder of the sanctity of graves, especially those of the revered household of the Prophet (s), and the severe consequences for those who transgress against them, a sorrowful legacy that would tragically recur in history, witnessed by Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) with his own eyes on the 8th of Shawwal.

Chapter 72

Victory's Aftermath: Justice, Mercy, and the First Eid

Following the decisive victory at Badr, the Prophet Mohammad (s) meticulously oversaw the aftermath of the battle. Fourteen Muslim martyrs had sacrificed their lives for the cause of Islam. On the opposing side, seventy polytheists had fallen. The Prophet ordered the collection of all bodies, both Muslim martyrs and the slain Quraysh leaders, to be buried in the *Qalib* (dry well) of Badr. This act was a profound departure from the customary practices of war, where enemy bodies were often left exposed or desecrated. The Prophet's directive underscored Islam's emphasis on respect for the deceased, even for the fallen enemy, showcasing a unique standard of human dignity.

As the sun began to set on the victorious day of Badr, the Prophet (s) led the *Asr* prayer in the very battlefield. During this sacred moment, he received salutations from Jibra'il (a.s.) and other angels who were returning to the heavens. Remarkably, the Prophet (s) responded to these angelic greetings even while engaged in prayer, a precedent that clarified for all future generations that a Muslim may respond to a greeting of

peace (*salam*) during prayer without invalidating it. After concluding the *Asr* prayer, the Prophet (s) and his companions began their journey back to Medina, carrying the weighty spoils of war and the captured polytheist prisoners.

Along the path back to Medina, the Prophet (s) issued a stern command for the execution of two captives: Harith and another individual. These men had committed egregious crimes against Muslims, and their continued existence posed a grave threat. This decision, though seemingly harsh, served as a vital lesson: while Prophet Mohammad (s) was the embodiment of mercy and compassion, there were instances where justice necessitated severe measures, especially when dealing with individuals who had demonstrated persistent and dangerous animosity towards the fledgling Muslim community. His boundless mercy did not extend to those whose release would jeopardize the safety and future of the believers.

The immediate aftermath of Badr also presented a new challenge: the equitable distribution of the spoils of war, known as *Ghanimah*. This was the first major battle between Muslims and polytheists, and the *Ghanimah* was substantial. Predictably, some disagreements arose among the *Muhajireen* and *Ansar*. Some who had fought fiercely in the front lines believed they deserved a larger share. Others, who had pursued the fleeing enemy or guarded the Prophet (s) at the rear, also put forth their claims, arguing their roles were equally crucial. One notable incident involved the father of Umar ibn Sa'd (who would later lead the army against Imam Hussain (a.s.) in Karbala). He vehemently protested, demanding a larger share, stating that his family's prestige in Arabia warranted it. The Prophet (s) firmly intervened, establishing a fundamental principle of Islam: in the eyes of Allah, all believers are equal, regardless of their tribal lineage, wealth, or specific role in battle. He declared that every person who participated in the *Jihad* of Badr, whether fighting, guarding, pursuing, or

providing support, would receive an equal share of the *Ghanimah*. He explained that he had come to dismantle such tribal distinctions and emphasize spiritual merit over worldly status. To further alleviate tensions and foster unity, the Prophet (s) even waived his own right to *Khums* (the one-fifth share of *Ghanimah* designated for Allah and His Messenger), ensuring that the entire spoils were distributed among the Muslims. This unique act underscored his commitment to strengthening the bonds of brotherhood within the community, though *Khums* would be collected in subsequent battles.

Beyond the distribution of *Ghanimah*, the Prophet (s) laid down clear guidelines for the humane treatment of the prisoners of war. He instructed the Muslims to treat them with utmost kindness and care, even prioritizing their comfort over their own. This directive was upheld so strictly that captives themselves recounted their surprise. Mus'ab ibn Umayr, a prominent companion who had been sent to Medina prior to the *Hijrah*, had a brother among the captives. His brother later attested that the *Ansar* hosts consistently offered the captives the best bread while contenting themselves with dates. Such was the Prophet's emphasis on compassion that even when a prisoner was captured, the Prophet (s) ensured their welfare. When new clothing was needed for the large, tall captives whose garments had worn out, the Prophet (s) ordered that they be given new clothes. When no one in Medina had a shirt long enough for one particular captive, Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites, was asked to lend his own shirt, which fit the prisoner perfectly. Some scholars suggest that it was this gesture of kindness that prompted the Prophet (s) to later offer his own shirt for Abdullah ibn Ubayy's burial shroud, despite his hypocrisy.

For the release of the captives, the Prophet (s) established a tiered system. Wealthy captives were required to pay a *fidyah* (ransom) ranging from one thousand to four thousand *dirhams*. Those who were poor but

literate were given a unique condition: they could earn their freedom by teaching ten Muslim children to read and write, a testament to Islam's profound emphasis on knowledge. The very poor and illiterate were simply released without any conditions.

Among the captives were several notable figures. One was **Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib**, the Prophet's uncle, who was secretly a Muslim but had been compelled to fight alongside the Quraysh due to his financial ties and obligations in Mecca. When the Prophet (s) called him to account for his ransom, Abbas pleaded poverty, claiming all his wealth was tied up in loans. The Prophet (s) then miraculously revealed the precise details of gold coins Abbas had secretly entrusted to his wife, Umm al-Fadl, before leaving Mecca, instructing her to use them for their children if he did not return. Abbas was astonished, realizing that only he and his wife knew of this. This miracle served as a powerful sign, further strengthening his faith and leading to immense blessings in his business thereafter.

Another poignant case was **Abul 'As ibn Rabi'**, the husband of the Prophet's eldest daughter, Zainab. Zainab had remained in Mecca after the *Hijrah* because her marriage to a polytheist was still valid under the initial laws (before the revelation forbidding Muslim women from marrying polytheists). When Abul 'As was captured, Zainab sent her mother, Khadijah's (s.a.) precious necklace, as his ransom. Upon seeing the necklace, a cherished memento given by Khadijah (s.a.) to Zainab on her wedding day, the Prophet (s) was overcome with emotion. It brought forth a flood of memories of Khadijah's (s.a.) unwavering support, her immense sacrifices, and her profound love for Islam and for him. The Prophet (s) wept openly. Witnessing his sorrow, the companions gathered around, asking the reason. He explained that it was a remembrance of his beloved Khadijah (s.a.). Out of his profound respect for Khadijah (s.a.) and as a gesture of mercy, he requested his companions, though it was their rightful share of the *Ghanimah*, to return the necklace to Zainab and release Abul 'As on

the condition that he send Zainab to Medina. The companions, out of love and obedience to the Prophet (s), agreed. Abul 'As, upon his return to Mecca, fulfilled his promise, sending Zainab to Medina, where she was finally reunited with her father.

A final significant captive was **Suhayl ibn Amr**, a highly eloquent orator who had vigorously campaigned against Islam with his speeches. A companion, witnessing Suhayl's continued defiance, suggested that the Prophet (s) should break his teeth to prevent him from delivering further speeches against Islam. The Prophet (s) immediately rebuked this suggestion, stating that he would never disfigure a living person, nor would he allow such a thing to be done to a dead body. He prophesied that Suhayl's powerful tongue would one day serve Islam. Indeed, Suhayl ibn Amr later embraced Islam and became a respected orator for the Muslim cause, fulfilling the Prophet's words and demonstrating his foresight and unwavering adherence to noble principles.

Meanwhile, in Mecca, the first news of the devastating defeat at Badr arrived. A rider galloped into the city, his horse exhausted, announcing the calamity. Initially, the Meccans, confident in their superior numbers and strength, dismissed it as a joke or a delusion. Safwan ibn Umayyah, a prominent Meccan leader, ridiculed the messenger, claiming he must be mad. However, as the names of their slain leaders—Abu Jahl, Utbah, Shaybah, Walid, and others—were recited, the grim reality began to sink in. Abu Sufyan, now effectively the new leader of Mecca, immediately imposed a strict ban on mourning for the dead of Badr. He vowed not to wash his head or approach his wives until he had avenged the defeat. This ban was an attempt to curb demoralization and maintain a facade of strength, even as the city was consumed by grief. There were instances where women, forbidden to mourn their lost sons, would instead weep for a lost camel to circumvent the ban and express their profound sorrow.

Back in Medina, the month of Ramadan had just concluded. In light of the immense blessings of the Badr victory, the establishment of the *Zakat al-Fitr* (charity at the end of Ramadan) and the Eid al-Fitr prayer were ordained. This marked the very first Eid in Islamic history, a day of collective thanksgiving and joy for the Muslim community, celebrating both their spiritual achievements during Ramadan and their miraculous victory at Badr.

These initial days after Badr laid foundational principles for the Islamic state: the sanctity of life even for enemies, the importance of justice and equal rights regardless of status, the supreme value of knowledge, and the Prophet's (s) unwavering compassion, even in the face of deep-seated animosity. His actions became the blueprint for a just and humane society, demonstrating that true victory lay not only in military triumph but in the moral elevation of humanity.

Chapter 73

The Aftermath of Badr: Zainab's Ordeal and the First Jewish Treachery

The echoes of the glorious victory at Badr reverberated throughout the Arabian Peninsula, yet the nascent Islamic state in Medina was not without its immediate trials. Following the compassionate release of prisoners of war—each according to their means, whether by ransom, teaching literacy, or sheer benevolence—the Prophet Mohammad (s) continued to solidify the foundations of the Muslim community, navigating both personal tribulations and emergent threats.

Among the captives released was Abul 'As ibn Rabi', the husband of Zainab, who was widely recognized as the Prophet's eldest daughter, though Islamic scholars generally agree that she was in fact his niece, raised in his household with profound affection and thus referred to as his daughter. Abul 'As's release was contingent upon a solemn promise: he would send Zainab to Medina. Upon his return to Mecca, Abul 'As conveyed this condition to Zainab, who immediately began preparations for her *Hijrah*.

As Zainab made her arrangements, her preparations were noticed by Hind,

Abu Sufyan's wife, a staunch adversary of Islam. Hind, consumed by animosity, confronted Zainab, questioning her intentions and expressing suspicion about her departure for Medina, implying a betrayal of Mecca. Despite Hind's aggressive questioning, Zainab remained firm, seeking to conceal her true purpose until the moment of her departure.

Zainab eventually set out from Mecca towards Medina, accompanied by a close male relative who had committed to ensuring her safe passage. However, her journey was tragically interrupted near the locality of *Tan'eem*, where a group of Quraysh horsemen, including Habbār ibn al-Aswad, ambushed her caravan. In the ensuing chaos, Zainab, who was pregnant, was violently pushed or fell from her camel. The fall was severe, leading to a devastating miscarriage and causing her immense physical and emotional suffering.

News of this barbaric act quickly reached Abu Sufyan. While he initially desired to prevent Zainab from reaching Medina to preserve the Quraysh's perceived strength and dignity in the aftermath of Badr, he recognized the public relations disaster that such a brazen act of violence against a woman would cause. He instructed her escorts to bring her back to Mecca temporarily, suggesting that she depart secretly after a few days when public sentiment had calmed. True to his word, after a brief respite, Zainab was discreetly sent on her way again. This time, the Prophet (s) had dispatched Zayd ibn Haritha, his beloved adopted son and companion, to meet her. Zayd successfully escorted Zainab to Medina. Upon her arrival, the Prophet (s) embraced her, his heart filled with both sorrow for her ordeal and relief at her safety. He remarked that with Zainab now in Medina, he had no other close relatives remaining in Mecca, a testament to the profound sacrifices made by his family for the sake of Islam.

Not long after Zainab's *Hijrah*, in the month of Safar, barely a month after the Battle of Badr, intelligence reached the Prophet (s) of a new

threat. Two hostile tribes, Banu Sulaym and Ghatafan, residing approximately 12-15 days' journey from Medina, were mobilizing. Emboldened by the Quraysh's defeat, they intended to launch a surprise attack on Medina. The Prophet (s), ever vigilant, swiftly gathered his companions and marched out to confront this looming danger. This expedition, though not resulting in a direct clash, came to be known as *Ghazwa Dhu Amarr*. Upon learning of the Prophet's swift and decisive advance, the enemy tribes abandoned their positions and fled into the mountains, leaving behind considerable spoils of war (*ghanīmah*) including weapons, camels, and other provisions.

During the return journey, the Muslim army passed through the renowned market of *Dhu Amarr*. Many companions engaged in trade, acquiring goods from the market. Some were concerned whether trading during a military expedition might detract from the spiritual reward of their *jihād*. The Prophet (s) assuaged their concerns, clarifying that engaging in lawful trade during such expeditions was permissible and did not diminish the spiritual merit, as long as it did not divert them from their primary purpose of defending the faith. Having averted a potential conflict and secured valuable *ghanīmah*, the Prophet (s) returned to Medina, further consolidating the security and economic stability of the fledgling Islamic state.

However, challenges persisted not only from external adversaries but also from within Medina itself. Among the Jewish tribes residing in Medina, Banu Qaynuqa' held a central and influential position. Unlike other Jewish tribes, they lived within the city's heart, holding sway over its economy as goldsmiths, silversmiths, and moneylenders. Their market was the primary hub of trade, and their wealth and influence made them particularly arrogant, especially after the Battle of Badr. They began to openly mock and provoke the Muslims, even forging alliances with Mecca's polytheists.

Their animosity culminated in a heinous incident at their market. A Muslim woman, visiting a Jewish jeweler's shop, was subjected to a vile prank: the jeweler cunningly pinned her dress to the back of her garment. When she rose to leave, her *awrah* (a part of the body that must be covered according to Islamic dress code) was exposed, causing her immense humiliation and distress. Her cries for help attracted a Muslim man who, witnessing her plight, immediately confronted the Jewish jeweler and killed him in righteous indignation. The surrounding Jews retaliated instantly, overwhelming the Muslim man and slaying him.

News of these murders reached the Prophet (s) swiftly, sparking outrage within the Muslim community. The Banu Qaynuqa' barricaded themselves in their strongholds, refusing to surrender. The Prophet (s) approached them, reminding them of the covenant they had with the Muslims and warning them of the consequences of their treachery, drawing a parallel to the fate of the Quraysh at Badr. Their response, however, was saturated with arrogance. They scoffed at the Prophet (s), claiming that unlike the unskilled Quraysh, they were formidable warriors and warned him that he would regret engaging them. Their insolent defiance left no room for peaceful resolution.

The Prophet (s) immediately laid siege to their fortresses. The siege lasted for fifteen days, during which time the Banu Qaynuqa' remained entrenched. At this critical juncture, Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites in Medina, who maintained a strong alliance with Banu Qaynuqa', interceded on their behalf. He approached the Prophet (s), physically blocking his path, and vehemently pleaded for the Jews, insisting on their past alliance and utility. The Prophet (s), with his characteristic patience, listened to his plea. Finally, he decreed that the Banu Qaynuqa' would be expelled from Medina. They were allowed to take only what their camels could carry, leaving behind all their weapons, armor, and property. This decision, while firm, also prevented further bloodshed and

showcased the Prophet's pragmatic leadership in dealing with a volatile internal threat while managing the complexities of tribal alliances.

The Banu Qaynuqa' were subsequently expelled from Medina and eventually settled in *Adhri'at* in Syria, where they faded into obscurity. This marked the first instance of a Jewish tribe being expelled from Medina, setting a precedent for dealing with those who betrayed covenants and posed a threat to the security and peace of the Muslim state. It also exposed the true colors of Abdullah ibn Ubayy, demonstrating his wavering loyalty and the depth of hypocrisy within Medina. The consolidation of the Islamic state continued, but the seeds of conflict with other Jewish tribes had now been sown.

Chapter 74

Pivotal Moments in Medina: Sacred Bonds and Prophetic Wisdom in the Second Year of Hijrah

The initial years following the *Hijrah* of the Prophet Mohammad (s) to Medina were a period of intense transition and foundational development for the nascent Islamic state. Historians and biographers have noted a degree of ambiguity in the exact chronological placement of certain events during the first two years post-*Hijrah*. However, prevailing scholarly consensus places many significant occurrences, particularly those related to the establishment of the Prophet's household and the community's social fabric, squarely within the second year of the *Hijrah* (2 AH).

Following the critical victories and challenges of Ramadan and Shawwal of 2 AH—including the Battle of Badr and the expulsion of Banu Qaynuqa'—the events of Dhul Qa'dah and Dhul Hijjah brought further consolidation and profound spiritual lessons. In Dhul Qa'dah, a significant incident occurred involving Abu Sufyan. Driven by a vow to avenge the losses at Badr, Abu Sufyan led a raiding party from Mecca towards Medina, seek-

ing to disrupt the peace and plunder. This episode, known as *Ghazwa al-Sawiq*, saw the Prophet (s) swiftly mobilize his forces. However, Abu Sufyan's contingent fled before a direct confrontation, leaving behind sacks of roasted grain (*sawiq*) to lighten their load, thus marking a failed attempt at retaliation and reaffirming Medina's growing security.

As the Islamic calendar concluded its second year with the arrival of Dhul Hijjah, two profoundly important events unfolded, offering deep insights into both belief and character.

The first was the passing of Uthman ibn Maz'un, a companion held in immense esteem by the Prophet (s) and Imam Ali (a.s.). Uthman ibn Maz'un was among the earliest converts to Islam, the fourteenth individual to embrace the faith. He bore the unique distinction of having participated in two *Hijrahs*: first, to Abyssinia, where Muslims found refuge from Meccan persecution, and later, his migration to Medina alongside the Prophet (s). After approximately twenty months in Medina, Uthman ibn Maz'un passed away, becoming the first *Muhajir* (emigrant) to be buried in *Jannat al-Baqi'*, the revered cemetery in Medina. His death was a moment of profound grief for the Prophet (s), who personally attended his burial, bowing to kiss his forehead, and weeping openly. Such was the Prophet's sorrow and love for Uthman that he explicitly ordered a stone to be placed at the head of his grave, ensuring it would not be obscured by time or forgotten—an act that firmly established the permissibility and significance of marking graves for recognition and remembrance, a practice later affirmed by the Prophet's continued visits to Uthman's resting place.

The life of Uthman ibn Maz'un also provided a critical lesson in the balanced practice of faith. Driven by an intense desire for piety, Uthman had adopted a life of extreme asceticism, perpetually fasting and dedicating himself entirely to night prayers, to the neglect of his marital and famil-

ial duties. His wife eventually sought the Prophet's counsel, describing Uthman's withdrawal from family life. Upon hearing this, the Prophet (s) emerged from his chamber with an expression of divine displeasure, addressing Uthman directly and sternly. He reminded Uthman that while worship is paramount, it must not come at the expense of other rights—the rights of one's body, one's spouse, and one's children. The Prophet (s) emphatically declared, **"Indeed, I am the Prophet of Allah. I also fast and pray, but I also marry and fulfill my family duties. Marriage is my *Sunnah* (practice). Whoever turns away from my *Sunnah* is not from me."** This pivotal admonition underscored Islam's emphasis on moderation and the fulfillment of all rights, rejecting the notion that true piety lies in excessive self-denial or neglecting one's responsibilities to others. It served as a timeless lesson for all believers, highlighting that genuine *taqwa* (piety) is characterized by a comprehensive adherence to divine commands and the fulfillment of all duties, not just ritualistic worship.

The second monumental event of Dhul Hijjah 2 AH was the sacred marriage of Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.), the beloved daughter of the Prophet (s), to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.). This union, widely celebrated in Islamic tradition, is said to have been ordained in the heavens before its solemnization on earth. While her marriage took place in 2 AH, it is important to first contextualize the Prophet's own marital life during this period. After the passing of Sayyidah Khadijah (s.a.) before *Hijrah*, the Prophet (s) had married Sawdah, a widow whom he took into his care as an act of compassion. Shortly after the *Hijrah*, in Mecca, the Prophet (s) entered into a *nikah* with Aisha, the daughter of Abu Bakr. Her *rukhsati* (formal entry into the husband's home) occurred in Medina in Shawwal 2 AH, after the Battle of Badr, when she was nine years old.

During the *rukhsati* ceremony of Aisha, an incident occurred that further illustrated the Prophet's profound wisdom and ethical guidance. Asma, Aisha's elder sister, served milk to the women present. Out of apparent

modesty or politeness, some women initially declined the offer. Observing their hesitation, the Prophet (s) gently admonished them, stating that one should not combine two evils: hunger and pretense. He taught that feigning disinterest or denying a need out of false modesty is a form of untruthfulness, which displeases Allah. This teaching underscored the importance of sincerity and genuine behavior, even in social interactions.

The marriage of Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.) to Imam Ali (a.s.) was unlike any other. When prominent companions sought her hand, the Prophet (s) remained silent or subtly indicated his daughter's lack of inclination. However, when Imam Ali (a.s.) came forward with his proposal, Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.) remained silent, but a sense of contentment graced her face. The Prophet (s) interpreted her silence as consent, proclaiming, **"Her silence is her affirmation!"** This established a precedent in Islamic law and ethics that a maiden's silence, when asked for her consent in marriage by her guardian, can be taken as acceptance.

The simplicity of this divine union stands as an enduring example. Imam Ali (a.s.) offered his meager possessions as *mahr*, which was fixed at 500 *dirhams* of silver (equivalent to approximately 1250 grams of silver)—the *Sunnah mahr* for all the Prophet's wives and the Imams. Ali (a.s.) sold his armor (*zira*) to raise this amount. The Prophet (s) then took a portion of this *mahr* money to purchase a modest *jahez* (dowry/bridal trousseau) for Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.), a stark contrast to the extravagant dowries demanded in later eras. This *jahez* consisted of only sixteen simple, essential items: clothing (a shirt, a head covering, a veil), four pieces of bedding (a mattress of palm leaves, two bedspreads filled with palm fiber and animal hair, four pillows), two household items (a hand-grinding mill, a water skin), and five utensils (a water cup, an earthen jar, a leather water container, a wooden bowl for milk, and a few small cups and glasses). This incredibly humble trousseau provided a powerful lesson against materialism in marriage, emphasizing that the sanctity of the union lies in piety,

~~mutual love, and simplicity, not material possessions.~~

The Prophet (s) consistently encouraged prompt marriages for his daughters once they reached maturity, comparing it to a ripe fruit that should be harvested without delay. At the time of her marriage, Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.) was nine years old, a point that emphasizes the importance of facilitating marriage when a person is mature and ready, rather than imposing undue financial or social burdens that delay or complicate this sacred bond. The Prophet (s) stressed that making marriage difficult can inadvertently pave the way for people to fall into *haram* (forbidden) acts, and those who create such obstacles also bear responsibility for the consequences.

About a month after the *nikah*, Imam Ali (a.s.) and the women close to Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.) conveyed to the Prophet (s) their desire for the *rukhsati*. The Prophet (s) responded, expressing his readiness and instructing Ali (a.s.) to arrange a *walimah* (marriage feast), a *Sunnah* practice that serves to announce the joyous occasion to the community.

These pivotal events of 2 AH, particularly the poignant lessons from Uthman ibn Maz'un's life and the profound simplicity of the marriage of Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.) and Imam Ali (a.s.), were instrumental in shaping the socio-spiritual landscape of the burgeoning Islamic society in Medina. They underscored the Prophet's commitment to balanced living, the importance of fulfilling all rights, and the establishment of family life upon foundations of piety, consent, and simplicity, serving as a beacon of guidance for all generations to come.

Chapter 75

The Concluding Chapters of a Blessed Union and the Upholding of Divine Justice

The final days of Dhul Hijjah in the second year of *Hijrah* continued to unfold with events of profound significance for the burgeoning Muslim community, particularly the concluding moments of the celestial union between Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.) and Imam Ali (a.s.). The Prophet Mohammad (s) had previously declared, "Fatimah is a part of me" (**Fatimah tu bid'ati minni**), a statement that underscored her unique connection to his very essence and prophethood. This blessed marriage, preordained in the heavens, was not merely a family affair but a foundational pillar for the Islamic social structure, setting precedents for generations to come.

As the time for Sayyidah Fatimah's (s.a.) departure to her husband's home, the *rukhsati*, approached, the Prophet (s) ensured that every aspect adhered to the principles of simplicity and spiritual depth. He prepared a dowry (*jahez*) for his beloved daughter that comprised merely sixteen essential items, a stark contrast to the opulent displays often associated with such unions. This included a single dress, a *burqa* (veil), a *khimar* (head covering), a curtain for the door, basic bedding, a water skin, a mat,

a leather sheet, two grindstones, a comb, a pitcher for water, a wooden bowl for milk, a copper vessel for washing, and several small cups. Notably, these items were purchased from the modest *mahr* (dower) that Imam Ali (a.s.) had paid, symbolizing that the dowry was, in essence, the daughter's own property. This act demonstrated that the Prophet's profound love for Fatimah (s.a.) was not expressed through worldly riches but through spiritual guidance and a life grounded in piety.

When the moment arrived for Fatimah (s.a.) to leave her father's home, the Prophet (s) called upon the women of his household to prepare her. She donned the one new dress that had been purchased for her. As she approached her father, overcome with natural shyness, the Prophet (s) lovingly held her and offered a profound supplication, asking Allah to safeguard her and Ali (a.s.) in this world and the hereafter. He then seated her on one side and Ali (a.s.) on the other, positioning himself between them, symbolizing the sacred bond and his pivotal role in guiding their lives.

In a moment of profound paternal wisdom, the Prophet (s) imparted invaluable counsel to his daughter. He began by revealing a divine truth: "O Fatimah, a short while ago, Jibra'il came to me and informed me that had Ali not been created, there would have been no match for you among all of creation." He then underscored the paramount importance of a wife respecting her husband, advising Fatimah (s.a.) to never make demands that Ali (a.s.) could not fulfill. This counsel served as an eternal lesson for all fathers on how to guide their daughters into a marriage based on mutual respect and understanding, prioritizing harmony over material desires. The Prophet (s) then raised his hands in prayer, beseeching Allah to make Ali (a.s.) and Fatimah (s.a.) companions and helpers to one another, emphasizing that true marital bliss stemmed from divine blessings and mutual support, not just worldly preparations. Before her departure, he performed a symbolic ritual, sprinkling water over her head,

chest, and body as a blessing.

The procession began, with Salman Farsi (r.a.) holding the reins of Fatimah's (s.a.) mount, while women from the *Muhajireen* and *Ansar* accompanied her, chanting praises, creating an atmosphere of spiritual jubilation. The Prophet (s) had arranged for Ali (a.s.) and Fatimah (s.a.) to reside for a week in a rented house outside Medina, near the location of **Masjid Quba**, a place that, until recently, stood as a historical marker before being regrettably demolished for urban development.

The very next morning, the Prophet (s) visited his daughter. He noticed that Fatimah (s.a.) was wearing her old, worn clothes, not the new wedding dress he had bought for her. When asked, she explained that she had given the new dress to a beggar who had approached their home for charity during the morning prayers. She recounted that her mother, Sayyidah Khadijah (s.a.), had taught her that true wealth is what is given in the way of Allah, as it is preserved for the Hereafter, while what is kept for oneself in this world perishes. She desired her wedding dress to be preserved as a reward for her in the hereafter, following her mother's example and her father's *Sunnah*. This profound act of selfless charity, just hours after her wedding, exemplified Sayyidah Fatimah's (s.a.) unwavering commitment to the values taught by her parents.

Following this, it was time for the *walima* (wedding feast). Imam Ali (a.s.) had prepared a humble meal sufficient for about seventy people. Upon hearing this, the Prophet (s) instructed Ali (a.s.) to invite everyone from the mosque. When Ali (a.s.) went to extend the invitation, he found the entire mosque filled with people, far exceeding the prepared food. However, by the grace of Allah, the small amount of food miraculously sufficed for all the inhabitants of Medina who attended, making it the first and only *walima* in the city's history where everyone participated without exception, with the food miraculously remaining undiminished.

After a week, Ali (a.s.) and Fatimah (s.a.) returned from their temporary abode to a house situated next to the Prophet's (s) own residence in Medina. Here, the Prophet (s) again intervened to establish a model for domestic harmony. He visited his daughter and son-in-law and formally divided the household chores: Ali (a.s.) was assigned all outdoor tasks, such as fetching water and firewood, while Fatimah (s.a.) was entrusted with all indoor responsibilities, including grinding flour, cleaning, and preparing food. Fatimah (s.a.) expressed immense joy at this arrangement, as it meant she would not have to leave the house, reinforcing the Islamic emphasis on modesty and the dignity of women within their homes. This division of labor laid a powerful foundation for a household free from discord and disputes, enduring through hardship and poverty.

As the third year of *Hijrah* began, the Prophet (s) and the nascent Muslim community faced increasing hostility from the Jewish tribes in Medina. Their predictions of a Muslim defeat at Badr had been dramatically overturned, leading to intensified resentment and treachery. After the expulsion of Banu Qaynuqa', two prominent Jewish figures, known for their extreme audacity and incitement against Muslims, became the focus of divine justice.

The first was Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf, a wealthy and influential Jewish poet and orator with mixed Arab and Jewish parentage. He was known for his sharp intellect and ability to sway opinion, even controlling the stipends of Jewish scholars to ensure their loyalty. After the Battle of Badr, Ka'b traveled to Mecca, openly mourning the polytheist dead and composing provocative poetry that not only mocked the Prophet (s) but also openly insulted the honorable Muslim women. His audacity grew to the point where he even attempted to lure the Prophet (s) to his house under the pretense of a feast, with the intention of assassination.

The Prophet (s) had tolerated much, but Ka'b's actions crossed a crit-

ical line, prompting the revelation of **Surah Aal-e-Imran**, verses 25-27, which commanded his elimination. When the Prophet (s) conveyed this divine directive to the Muslims, a spirited young man from the *Aws* tribe, Muhammad ibn Maslamah, immediately volunteered. The Prophet (s) advised him to consult Sa'd ibn Mu'adh, the wise and experienced chief of the *Aws*, stressing the importance of wisdom and foresight over mere youthful enthusiasm in matters of religious duty. Sa'd advised against a direct attack, suggesting a more calculated approach to avoid unnecessary Muslim casualties.

Thus, a plan was devised involving Muhammad ibn Maslamah, Abu Na'ilah (Ka'b's close friend or foster brother), and three other companions. Abu Na'ilah skillfully approached Ka'b, feigning distress over the Muslims' perceived hardship and asking for a loan of wheat, offering their weapons as collateral. Ka'b, driven by greed and a desire to see Muslims humiliated, readily agreed to meet them at night. On the moonlit night of the 14th of Rabi al-Awwal in 3 AH, the group met Ka'b outside his fortress. Despite his new wife's ominous premonition of danger, Ka'b dismissed her fears. As they walked, Muhammad ibn Maslamah, under the guise of admiring Ka'b's perfumed hair, seized him firmly. The group immediately attacked. Ka'b, a powerful man, resisted the initial blows. Muhammad ibn Maslamah then used a dagger, striking him repeatedly in the abdomen until he finally succumbed. In the ensuing chaos, Harith ibn Aws accidentally wounded himself. They swiftly decapitated Ka'b and hastened back to Medina, presenting his head to the Prophet (s) at dawn as a testament to their mission's success. The Prophet (s) praised them, and miraculously healed Harith's accidental wound with a touch of his hand. When the Jews complained, the Prophet (s) firmly justified Ka'b's killing, declaring that such blatant enmity, defamation of Muslim women, and incitement against Islam were punishable offenses. He then reiterated a new treaty, emphasizing the consequences of breaking it.

Shortly after, another prominent Jewish leader, Abu Rafi' Sallam ibn Abil Huqayq, known as "Tajir al-Hijaz" (the Merchant of Hejaz) due to his immense wealth and trade network, also met his end. Residing in a heavily fortified stronghold near Khaybar, he was another key figure in instigating opposition against the Prophet (s). The *Khazraj* tribe, feeling a sense of rivalry with the *Aws* who had killed Ka'b, sought permission to eliminate Abu Rafi'. The Prophet (s) granted their request and offered a special prayer for their success.

Five young men from the *Khazraj* tribe, led by Abdullah ibn Atik, embarked on this perilous mission. Upon reaching Abu Rafi's fortress at dusk, Abdullah ingeniously slipped inside by pretending to relieve himself near the gate as it was being closed for the night. Once inside, he located the keys to the inner chambers and stealthily made his way to Abu Rafi's private quarters, where he found him listening to a storyteller. After the storyteller left and Abu Rafi' had fallen asleep, Abdullah entered. He hesitated to attack a sleeping man, choosing instead to awaken him by calling his name. In the darkness, he struck Abu Rafi' with his sword. The initial blow was not fatal, and Abu Rafi' cried out. Abdullah, thinking quickly, changed his voice and feigned the arrival of a servant, luring Abu Rafi' closer before delivering a decisive, fatal blow. As he made his escape, Abdullah tragically slipped on the stairs, breaking his shin bone, but still managed to crawl out and rejoin his waiting companions. They returned to Medina and presented the news to the Prophet (s), who again, with a touch of his blessed hand, miraculously healed Abdullah ibn Atik's broken leg.

These events firmly established the Prophet's (s) resolute stance against blasphemy, treachery, and incitement to violence against the Muslim community. The Prophet's (s) actions served as a clear precedent, demonstrating that such egregious acts would not be tolerated and would be met with swift and decisive justice, a principle that would echo through

Islamic history. The lecture concluded with a brief, poignant reflection on the parallels between the Prophet's (s) suffering from his enemies' insults and the later suffering of Imam Ali al-Naqi (a.s.), who endured similar persecution, including the desecration of sacred sites and the verbal abuse against Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.) by tyrannical rulers like Mutawakkil, highlighting the timeless struggle against those who seek to defame divine sanctity.

Chapter 76

The Growing Storm: Jewish Plots and Early Muslim Expeditions

The third year after the *Hijrah* (3 AH) unfolded as a pivotal period, marked by escalating tensions and the increasing consolidation of the Islamic state in Medina, even as powerful adversaries plotted its downfall. While the defining event of this year would be the Battle of Uhud, the months leading up to it were fraught with significant developments, primarily driven by the persistent animosity of the Jewish tribes and the mounting threat from Makkah.

Following the expulsions of Banu Qaynuqa' and the assassinations of hostile Jewish leaders like Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf and Abu Rafi', the remaining Jewish factions in Medina intensified their efforts to undermine the nascent Muslim community. Their tactics evolved, ranging from subtle deception to overt psychological warfare.

One notable instance of their deceit occurred when a dispute arose among the Jews involving a man and a woman who had committed adultery, for which the Torah prescribed stoning as punishment. However, hoping to evade this severe penalty, the prominent Jewish scholars involved

sought the Prophet's (s) judgment, believing he might issue a lighter sentence. When they approached the Prophet (s), he immediately inquired whether they wished for the judgment to be based on the **Qur'an** or the Torah. Confidently, they chose the Torah, expecting to manipulate the outcome. The Prophet (s) then declared that the punishment prescribed in their own scripture was stoning. When the Jewish scholars feigned ignorance and denied this, the Prophet (s) challenged them to produce the Torah and show the verse. With great reluctance, they brought the holy book, but as their most learned scholar began to read, he deliberately skipped the verse pertaining to stoning, concealing it with his finger. At this critical moment, Abdullah ibn Salam, a revered Jewish scholar who had sincerely embraced Islam, stepped forward. Having known the Torah intimately, he exposed their duplicity by pointing to the exact verse. The revelation of their deliberate distortion of their own sacred text left the Jewish scholars utterly humiliated before their community, while reinforcing the truth for many of their ordinary followers.

Beyond such direct confrontations, the Jewish community employed a series of insidious tactics to erode the Muslims' faith and unity. They began to alter their greetings, replacing the respectful *Assalamu Alaykum* (peace be upon you) with *Assamu Alaykum* (death be upon you), a veiled curse aimed at the Prophet (s) and his followers. Furthermore, they attempted to corrupt the very source of Islamic guidance. When verses of the **Qur'an** were revealed and recited by the Prophet (s), Jewish individuals would memorize them only to later recite them with subtle alterations in diacritics (*harakat*), thereby changing the meaning of words and verses entirely. This deliberate misrepresentation aimed to sow confusion and doubt among Muslims.

Perhaps most cunningly, they devised a psychological strategy of "fake conversions." A group of young men from among them would approach the Prophet (s), outwardly professing belief in Islam and embracing the

faith. They would spend a few weeks or months living among the Muslims, observing their ways. Then, they would dramatically revert to Judaism, publicly proclaiming that they had found no truth or special qualities in the Prophet (s) or his teachings. This act of apostasy, accompanied by their false testimonies, was intended to sow seeds of doubt, demoralize recent converts, and deter potential newcomers to Islam, suggesting that even those who had experienced Islam closely found it lacking.

Amidst these internal challenges, the external threat from Makkah and its allied tribes intensified. The Prophet (s), with his highly effective intelligence network, remained acutely aware of the machinations of Quraysh, who, frustrated by their previous defeats and the Muslims' growing strength, began inciting surrounding Arab tribes to attack Medina.

One such expedition, *Ghazwa Banu Sulaym*, took place in the region of Gohran (or Bahran), near Yemen. Quraysh instigated the Banu Sulaym tribe to raid Medina, hoping to weaken the Muslims through constant harassment and plunder. Upon receiving intelligence of their preparations, the Prophet (s) swiftly mobilized a force and marched towards their territory. The sudden appearance of the Muslim army, far from Medina, caught Banu Sulaym completely by surprise, causing them to abandon their plans and scatter without engaging in a battle. This display of Muslim readiness and the Prophet's (s) proactive defense deterred further attacks from that quarter.

Similarly, in the Najd region, another tribe, Banu Ghatafan, was incited by Quraysh to launch an attack on Medina. The Prophet (s) again led an expedition of 400 soldiers, leaving Uthman ibn Affan in charge of Medina. They surprised the Banu Ghatafan near a spring called Dhu Amarr. The enemy, unprepared for such a swift and distant response, fled into the mountains without a fight.

It was during this *Ghazwa Banu Ghatafan* that a profound incident oc-

curred, highlighting the Prophet's (s) unwavering *tawakkul* (reliance on **Allah**). While the Muslim army rested by the spring, the Prophet (s) separated himself slightly from the main group to dry his clothes after a sudden downpour. Ghawrath ibn al-Harith, the chief of Banu Ghatafan, seized what he believed to be a golden opportunity. Stealthily approaching the Prophet (s) with a drawn sword, he stood over him and menacingly asked, "Who will save you from me now, O Muhammad?" The Prophet (s), with absolute tranquility and unwavering faith, calmly replied, "**Allah**." This simple, yet profound declaration, born of complete conviction, struck Ghawrath with awe and fear. His hand trembled, and the sword slipped from his grasp. The Prophet (s) immediately picked up the sword and asked Ghawrath, "And who will save you from me now?" Ghawrath, utterly disarmed and overwhelmed by the Prophet's (s) serene composure and spiritual power, immediately confessed, "No one." The Prophet (s), with unparalleled mercy, returned the sword to him and forgave him. Deeply moved by this miraculous encounter and the Prophet's (s) magnanimity, Ghawrath embraced Islam and returned to his tribe, becoming a dedicated preacher of the faith, converting his entire people. This incident served as a powerful testament to the Prophet's (s) divine protection and his character, demonstrating that true victory lay not merely in physical triumph but in the transformation of hearts through faith and compassion.

While these military expeditions were underway, the Prophet's (s) household continued to expand. In Sha'ban 3 AH, the Prophet (s) married Hafsa bint Umar, the daughter of Umar ibn al-Khattab. Hafsa had recently been widowed after her husband, Khunays ibn Hudhafa, succumbed to injuries sustained in the Battle of Badr. Before the Prophet's (s) proposal, Umar had attempted to arrange Hafsa's marriage to Abu Bakr and then Uthman, both of whom politely declined. The Prophet's (s) marriage to Hafsa offered her protection and support, symbolizing his com-

passion towards the widows of martyrs.

Soon after, in the same month, the Prophet (s) also married his daughter Umm Kulthum to Uthman ibn Affan. This marriage followed the passing of Uthman's first wife, Ruqayyah, who was also a daughter of the Prophet (s). This union reaffirmed Uthman's esteemed position, granting him the unique title of **"Dhun-Noorayn"** (possessor of two lights) for having married two daughters of the Prophet (s). These marriages, occurring after the *rukhsati* (consummation) of Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.) to Imam Ali (a.s.) in Dhul Hijjah 2 AH, further cemented the social fabric of the nascent Muslim community.

Amidst these significant domestic developments, the household of Prophet Muhammad (s) was blessed with a momentous event on the 15th of Ramadan, 3 AH: the birth of Imam Hasan (a.s.), the first son of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.). Upon his birth, Imam Ali (a.s.) brought the newborn to the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) lovingly took the child, recited the *adhan* in one ear and the *iqamah* in the other, and then named him Hasan, a name divinely revealed to him by Archangel Jibreel, signifying its Arabic equivalent to Shabbar, the name of Prophet Harun's (a.s.) son. On the seventh day after his birth, the Prophet (s) performed the *aqiqa* (sacrifice) for Hasan (a.s.) and shaved his head, upholding the *Sunnah* (Prophetic tradition) for newborns. The birth of Imam Hasan (a.s.) brought immense joy and served as a profound blessing, ensuring the continuation of the Prophet's (s) lineage and the **Ahlulbayt's** purity, as foretold by divine decree.

As the month of Shawwal approached, the stage was set for the greatest confrontation Medina had yet faced. The failed attempts by Quraysh to incite smaller tribes against Medina only solidified their resolve for a direct, decisive attack. The final warning came in the form of a letter to the Prophet (s) from his uncle, Abbas, who, though still in Makkah, had

accepted Islam in secret. The letter, delivered by a young man named Damdam with astonishing speed, contained urgent intelligence: Quraysh had fully mobilized a massive army and had already set out from Makkah, marching towards Medina. Abbas's letter specifically warned the Prophet (s) to take extra precautions for the safety of Ali and Hamza, understanding their pivotal roles in the Muslim defense.

The detailed intelligence revealed that Abu Sufyan was leading this formidable army. His wife, Hind, consumed by vengeance for the death of her father and other relatives at Badr, had made a solemn vow to disfigure Hamza and had specifically hired Wahshi, a skilled Abyssinian slave renowned for his spear-throwing accuracy from a distance, to kill him. What made this Quraysh army particularly unusual and indicative of their fierce determination was the prominent presence of women among them, including Hind herself and other leading women of Quraysh. This was a radical departure from traditional Arab warfare, where women were typically left behind in their settlements to ensure their safety. Their inclusion signaled an unprecedented level of resolve, aiming to instill both courage in their own ranks and fear in the enemy, emphasizing that this was a fight to the absolute end.

Upon receiving Abbas's letter, the Prophet (s) immediately ordered his companions to prepare for battle, the forces of Makkah already closing in on Medina's doorstep. The stage was now set for the momentous Battle of Uhud.

Chapter 77

The Gathering Storm: Preparations for Uhud

The tranquil life of Medina, fostered by the spirit of brotherhood and fortified by divine victories, was once again poised for a monumental challenge. The third year of *Hijrah* (3 AH) was drawing to a close, and as Shawwal approached, the stage was set for the Battle of Uhud, an engagement that would profoundly test the nascent Muslim community.

Allah, the Almighty, declares in His Glorious Book: "Indeed, **Allah** has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of **Allah**, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than **Allah**? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment."** (Al-Tawbah 9:111). This profound verse elucidates the essence of *jihad*, the spiritual and physical struggle in the path of **Allah**, which plays a vital, indeed fundamental, role in the establishment and spread of Islam. The verse outlines a divine covenant: in exchange for their lives and wealth, believ-

ers are promised **Paradise**. The path to this divine reward involves fighting in **Allah's** cause, leading to one of two outcomes: either vanquishing the adversaries or embracing martyrdom.

It is crucial to understand that while ultimate devotion to **Allah** for His sake alone is the highest form of worship, the Qur'an itself presents the pursuit of **Paradise** and seeking refuge from **Hellfire** as valid motivations for believers. This is evident throughout the Qur'an, particularly in the verses emphasizing the delights of **Paradise** and the terrors of **Hell**. Even during the most sacred moments, such as the day of *Arafat*, Muslims are encouraged to supplicate for **Paradise** and seek protection from **Hellfire**, demonstrating that these aspirations are not antithetical to true faith but rather integral to it.

The approaching confrontation, the Battle of Uhud, was born out of several converging factors:

Firstly, the **Quraysh** were burning with an insatiable thirst for revenge. The humiliating defeat at Badr, where seventy of their prominent leaders and warriors had perished, was a wound too deep for their tribal honor to bear. In the Arab culture, blood vengeance was a sacred duty, often pursued across generations, and the loss at Badr demanded an unparalleled retaliation.

Secondly, the Jewish tribes in Medina, particularly Banu Nadir and Banu Qurayzah, intensified their animosity towards the Muslims. Although not directly involved in the Battle of Badr, they witnessed the growing strength of Islam and felt their influence wane. Figures like Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf, a Jewish poet, actively travelled to Mecca after Badr, composing inflammatory verses to incite the **Quraysh** against the Prophet (s) and the Muslims.

Thirdly, economic concerns played a significant role. The Muslim pres-

ence in Medina disrupted the crucial trade routes of Mecca, which passed perilously close to the nascent Islamic state. A false rumor, strategically spread by some **Quraysh** individuals, claimed that a trade caravan had been attacked near Medina, further inflaming passions and creating a pretext for war.

Fourthly, the financial resources for this campaign were substantial. Abu Sufyan, the leader of the caravan that had narrowly escaped Muslim capture before Badr, dedicated the entire profits of that caravan—a staggering fifty thousand *mithqal* of gold and one thousand camels—to finance the war against the Muslims. This decision was formally ratified at *Dar al-Nadwa*, the traditional assembly hall of the **Quraysh** in Mecca, symbolizing their collective commitment to the conflict.

Finally, the **Quraysh** employed several ingenious psychological tactics to ensure their army would fight with unparalleled ferocity:

1. **Massive Fundraising:** Beyond the caravan profits, widespread appeals were made for donations from every citizen of Mecca, ensuring a broad financial base for the war effort.
2. **Suppression of Mourning:** A strict ban was imposed on mourning for the dead of Badr. Widows were forbidden to grieve their husbands, and orphans their fathers. This was designed to keep the fires of anger and vengeance burning intensely in their hearts, preventing any emotional closure that might diminish their desire for retribution.
3. **Poetic Incitement:** Recognizing the profound influence of poetry in Arab society, the **Quraysh** enlisted renowned poets. These bards would compose stirring verses that roused the warriors' courage, appealed to their tribal pride, and intensified their hatred for the Muslims. Amr ibn al-Aas, a prominent poet and future convert to Islam, initially refused to participate but was compelled to by Abu Sufyan's

threat of ostracization. His powerful verses, along with others, were instrumental in galvanizing the Meccan youth.

4. **Inclusion of Women:** For the first time, **Quraysh** brought a contingent of women to the battlefield. This was a radical departure from traditional Arab warfare. The women, led by Hind bint Utbah (whose father and brother were killed at Badr and who had hired Wahshi to kill Hamza), were there to shame any man who might contemplate retreat. In Arab culture, the taunts of women were a profound dishonor, a psychological deterrent to flight. The presence of women from powerful tribes, who historically never buried their daughters (unlike weaker tribes who practiced female infanticide out of fear of shame from defeat), was also a calculated move to reinforce their belief in their invincibility and prevent any thought of surrender.

The **Quraysh** army, numbering around five thousand (though some accounts state three thousand), was a formidable force. It included three thousand camels, two hundred horses, and seven hundred armored youth. They set out from Mecca, taking an unusual route to avoid the difficult terrain near Medina's usual entrance, aiming for the open plains near Uhud, which would be more favorable for their cavalry.

During their march, a disturbing incident occurred. The army passed by the grave of Amina, the Prophet's mother. Some of the more zealous and misguided **Quraysh** youth proposed desecrating her grave, perhaps seeing it as an act of defiance against the Prophet (s). However, the older, wiser leaders among the **Quraysh** swiftly intervened, preventing this sacrilege. They understood that such an act would not only provoke fierce retaliation from other Arab tribes who held graves sacred but also further strengthen the resolve of the Muslims. This momentary restraint, ironically, mirrored Islamic teachings about the sanctity of graves, even of adversaries.

News of the approaching army reached Medina swiftly through the Prophet's uncle, Abbas, who had sent a letter. The Prophet (s) immediately dispatched two young scouts to ascertain the enemy's strength. They returned, visibly shaken, reporting an overwhelmingly large force. Another scout later provided a more precise estimate of at least three thousand men.

On a Friday, after the morning prayers, the Prophet (s) convened a crucial meeting with the Muslims to decide their strategy. Two main opinions emerged:

Firstly, Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites in Medina, along with some respected elder *Ansar* like Saad ibn Muadh and Saad ibn Ubadah, advocated fighting from within Medina. They argued that the city's narrow streets and fortified houses would offer a defensive advantage against the larger **Quraysh** army. Women and children could participate by throwing stones from rooftops, while men defended the alleys. This strategy was seen as prudent given the numerical inferiority of the Muslim forces.

Secondly, the younger *Muhajireen* and *Ansar*, many of whom had missed the glory of Badr, passionately urged for an open battle outside Medina. They yearned for martyrdom and argued that staying behind fortified walls would be a sign of weakness, damaging their reputation and inviting further aggression. Prominent among them were Hamza, the Prophet's uncle, and Saad ibn Muadh, both eager for direct confrontation.

An illustrative and poignant moment during this consultation was the plea of Khaythama, an old man whose son, Saad, had been martyred at Badr. Khaythama rose and passionately implored the Prophet (s) to allow him to join the battle outside Medina, seeking martyrdom before death. He expressed his longing to join his son in the afterlife, highlighting the profound desire for *shahadah* that permeated the Muslim commu-

nity.

After hearing the varying opinions, the Prophet (s) remained silent for a while. The young men, fearing they had been too assertive, expressed regret for their forceful advocacy. Then, the Prophet (s) emerged from his home, fully clad in his armor, his sword at his side. His appearance signified his decision: the battle would be fought outside Medina. He declared, as a prophet, once he donned his armor for battle, it was not permissible for him to remove it until the engagement was concluded. This left no room for further debate.

As the Muslim army prepared, the Prophet (s) faced another challenge. He ordered all underage boys to return, as *jihad* was not obligatory for minors. However, the fervor for defending Islam was so intense that many young boys passionately pleaded to be allowed to join. Among them were Samurah and Rafe', who demonstrated their physical strength and combat readiness, even wrestling each other to prove their ability to fight. The Prophet (s), moved by their zeal, allowed those who proved capable to join the ranks. This spirit echoed the profound wisdom and early spiritual maturity seen in the progeny of the Prophet, such as Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (a.s.), whose wisdom at a young age astonished even the greatest scholars of his time, proving that spiritual and intellectual greatness can manifest irrespective of physical age.

With the Prophet's decision made and the army assembled, the Muslims prepared to face the formidable **Quraysh** force, ready to write another chapter in the defense of Islam.

Chapter 78

The Faltering and the Valiant at Uhud

The grand theatre of Uhud, a turning point of immense significance, was not merely a clash of armies but a profound test of faith for the nascent Muslim community. As the **Quraysh** forces, fueled by vengeance and numerical superiority, advanced upon Medina, the divine wisdom behind such trials became clearer. The **Qur'an** declares in **Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayah 2**: **"Do people think that they will be left alone because they say, 'We believe,' and will not be tested?"** This profound verse served as a constant reminder that the path of belief is not free from hardship, but rather, is paved with trials that distinguish the sincere from the false, the true believer from the hypocrite.

The Muslim army, numbering a thousand strong, departed Medina after the Friday prayers, led by the Prophet Mohammad (s) himself. Their journey was not without its immediate internal challenges. Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites, who had previously advocated for a defensive battle within the city walls, saw an opportunity for further sabotage. As the army halted at a strategic point, Abdullah ibn Ubayy approached the Prophet (s) with another cunning proposal. He suggested an alliance with the Jewish tribes of the *Hurra* region, claiming their intimate knowledge of the terrain would be invaluable. The Prophet (s),

gifted with divine insight into the hearts of men, saw through this deceit. Firmly, yet without direct accusation, he rejected the offer, stating that Muslims do not seek assistance from polytheists. This rejection was seized upon by Abdullah ibn Ubayy as a pretext for withdrawal. Feeling his 'dignity' slighted, he abandoned the Muslim army, taking with him three hundred hypocrites. This act of blatant betrayal reduced the Muslim forces to a mere seven hundred, a stark contrast to the **Quraysh** army of five thousand. This moment served as an immediate and severe test of loyalty for the remaining Muslims, forcing them to choose between their faith and their tribal or familial ties.

The march continued, and the army soon encountered another unexpected obstacle. To reach the battlefield of Uhud quickly, the Prophet (s) intended to lead the army through a shortcut that traversed the private orchards of a Muslim owner. Upon being informed, the owner, prioritizing his personal property over the urgent military need, initially refused passage, fearing damage to his fields. This incident, seemingly minor, yet again highlighted the diverse degrees of faith within the community. The Prophet (s), with his characteristic patience, ultimately convinced him to grant passage. This was another small, yet significant, moment that revealed the internal struggles of the believers, where worldly attachments sometimes eclipsed the call of duty.

As the Muslim army positioned itself on the battlefield, the **Quraysh** leader, Abu Sufyan, tried to demoralize the Muslims. His propagandist, Abu Amir, the father of Hanzalah, a former Medinan monk and now a hypocrite allied with the **Quraysh**, stepped forward. He attempted to appeal to the *Ansar*'s old tribal loyalties, claiming that the **Quraysh** had no quarrel with the Medinans, only with the *Muhajireen*. He boasted of his past influence and urged the *Ansar* to abandon the Prophet (s). However, the *Ansar*, steadfast in their commitment, vehemently rejected his overtures, pelting him with stones and reaffirming their unwavering devotion to

Islam. Abu Amir, utterly humiliated, retreated into the **Quraysh** ranks. History would later reveal him as the instigator behind *Masjid al-Dirar*, a mosque built with malevolent intentions to sow discord among Muslims.

Amidst these early skirmishes, the Battle of Uhud witnessed acts of extraordinary valour and sacrifice. One such testament was the story of Hanzalah ibn Abi Amir. He was the son of Abu Amir, the very hypocrite who had just attempted to sow discord. Despite his father's treachery, Hanzalah was a man of profound faith. The night before Uhud, Hanzalah had just married. As the Prophet (s) prepared his army, he granted Hanzalah an exemption from battle, recognizing that a newlywed was not obligated to participate in *jihad* on his wedding night. However, when news reached Medina that the Muslims were achieving initial successes on the battlefield, Hanzalah's zeal for martyrdom overwhelmed him. He rushed to join the fray, leaving his new wife. In a poignant moment, his wife, the daughter of Abdullah ibn Ubayy, remarkably asked him to bring four witnesses to their consummation, a request born of foresight to protect her honor and the lineage of a potential child, should Hanzalah be martyred and accusations be made.

Hanzalah joined the battle, fighting with unmatched bravery. He singlehandedly charged at Abu Sufyan, striking at him. However, he was then ambushed from behind by a spear. Even as he fell mortally wounded, Hanzalah managed to strike back, severing the neck of his assailant before succumbing to martyrdom. His sacrifice left a lasting mark. The Prophet (s), later, while tending to the martyrs, saw angels giving *ghusl* (ritual bath) to Hanzalah's body. His body was found dripping with water, earning him the revered title of **"Ghasil al-Mala'ika"** (the one bathed by angels). His wife's premonition proved true; a son was born from that union, a son who would later, years after the tragedy of Karbala, lead the righteous people of Medina against the tyrannical forces of Yazid.

The **Quraysh** standard-bearers were a formidable sight, hailing from the Banu Abd al-Dar clan, known for their unwavering resolve and never letting their banner fall. Talha ibn Abi Talha, a powerful and audacious warrior, held the first standard. He stepped forward, issuing a challenge to the Muslims. Imam Ali (a.s.), with his unparalleled courage, sought the Prophet's permission to confront him. The Prophet (s) assented. In a swift and decisive encounter, Imam Ali (a.s.) struck Talha with such force that his sword passed through him, felling the enemy standard-bearer.

This monumental victory was not only a blow to the **Quraysh** morale but also elucidated a significant aspect of Imam Ali's (a.s.) earlier life. As Talha fell, he was heard screaming and cursing, using the epithet *'Khatam'* (meaning "burier" or "finisher"). This refers to an incident in Mecca before the *Hijrah*, during the initial public declaration of prophethood. When mischievous children and youth, instigated by their elders, would harass the Prophet (s) in the streets and markets, Imam Ali (a.s.), then a young boy, would step forward to defend him. He would physically confront these harassers, "finishing" their mischief by causing them discomfort or injury, ensuring they would not dare to bother the Prophet (s) again. This early act of profound loyalty and protection earned him the epithet *Khatam* among the **Quraysh** mischief-makers.

After Talha's demise, nine more standard-bearers from the Banu Abd al-Dar clan successively took up the banner, only to be struck down by the unparalleled might of Imam Ali (a.s.), one after another, until the last of them was eliminated. The fall of their standard-bearers, a source of immense pride and courage for the **Quraysh**, marked a critical turning point in the initial phase of the battle.

Years after the Battle of Uhud, in the 5th year of *Hijrah* (5 AH), another significant event occurred, though chronologically separate from Uhud, yet thematically linked by the thread of sacrifice and future trials: the

birth of Sayyidah Zaynab (s.a.). When the Prophet (s) was away on a journey, Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.) gave birth to her third child, a daughter. Both Imam Ali (a.s.) and Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.), out of profound reverence, awaited the Prophet's return to name their beloved daughter. Upon his arrival in Medina, the Prophet (s) immediately went to Fatimah's home, which was his custom. He took the infant in his arms and, gazing at her, revealed that Allah had commanded him to name her Zaynab, which means "the adornment of her father." As he held her, tears welled in his blessed eyes. When asked why he wept on such a joyous occasion, the Prophet (s) revealed the foresight of Allah. He spoke of the immense trials and tribulations this beloved granddaughter would endure, trials so severe that she would bear marks of physical hardship. He compared her to his late wife, Sayyidah Khadijah (s.a.), stating that Zaynab would inherit her grandmother's strength, steadfastness, and unparalleled contribution to the preservation of Islam through immense sacrifice. This prophetic vision, though joyous in birth, was laced with the profound knowledge of future suffering, underscoring that the path of Allah's chosen ones is one of enduring tests and unwavering devotion.

Chapter 79

The Battle of Uhud: Trial, Sacrifice, and Prophetic Resilience

The Battle of Uhud, unfolding on the 7th of Shawwal in the third year of *Hijrah*, tested the nascent Muslim community in profound ways. Following the strategic withdrawal of Abdullah ibn Ubayy and his 300 hypocrites, the Muslim army, now reduced to 700, marched towards Uhud, facing a formidable Quraysh force driven by a thirst for revenge and psychological warfare.

The polytheists, keen to avoid a repeat of Badr's defeat, employed every tactic to bolster their morale and prevent retreat. Their standard-bearer, Talha ibn Abi Talha from the esteemed Banu Abd al-Dar clan, was strategically chosen. Abu Sufyan, the Quraysh leader, had prepared this family to hold the standard at all costs, emphasizing that their honor and the very essence of the battle rested on their unwavering grip on the banner. He taunted them, proclaiming that if they showed cowardice like at Badr, others would take their place. This psychological manipulation ignited a ferocious zeal within them, making the standard an unyielding point of honor.

Simultaneously, the women of Quraysh, led by Hind bint Utbah, played a crucial role. They positioned themselves amongst the ranks, beating drums and singing verses designed to incite courage and shame any who dared to flee. Their chant, "We are daughters of Tariq... if you advance, we will embrace you, but if you flee, we will shun you," served as a powerful deterrent against desertion, intertwining battle with personal honor and familial ties.

On the Muslim side, the Prophet Mohammad (s) had entrusted the banner of Islam to his cousin, Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), symbolizing the vanguard of their faith. Before the battle commenced, the Prophet (s) held aloft his sword, challenging his companions, "Who will take this sword and fulfill its right?" Many rose, eager to accept, but it was Abu Dujanah al-Ansari, a distinguished *Ansar* companion, who approached. He was known for tying a red band around his forehead in battle, a sign of his unwavering commitment to fight until martyrdom. The Prophet (s) clarified the sword's right: "It is that you do not kill any Muslim, nor spare any disbeliever, and that you fight in the way of Allah until the sword bends." Abu Dujanah took the sword, tying his red band, signifying his resolve to fulfill its sacred duty.

The initial phase of the battle saw immense Muslim success. Imam Ali (a.s.) displayed unparalleled valor, single-handedly confronting and systematically eliminating the standard-bearers of the Banu Abd al-Dar clan. Talha and his brothers, one after another, fell to Ali's (a.s.) might, effectively neutralizing the enemy's rallying point and causing disarray. Simultaneously, Abu Dujanah fought with ferocious intensity, cutting through the enemy lines. He even reached Hind and the women who were inciting the polytheists. He raised his sword to strike Hind but paused, declaring that the Prophet's (s) sword was too noble to be stained with the blood of a defenseless woman. This act exemplified the ethical conduct of warfare in Islam, even amidst the chaos of battle.

The combined might of Imam Ali (a.s.), Hamza (a.s.), Abu Dujanah, and other valiant Muslims pressed the Quraysh force, which began to crumble and flee in disarray, abandoning their possessions and spoils. It appeared to be a decisive victory for the Muslims.

However, this early triumph soon turned into a severe test. The Prophet (s) had strategically positioned 50 archers on a vital hill, under the command of Abdullah ibn Jubayr (r.a.), with strict instructions: "Do not leave your post, whether we win or lose, until I send for you." Seeing the enemy retreat and their abandoned goods scattered, most of the archers (around 40-45) believed the battle was over and descended to collect the *ghanimah* (spoils), despite Abdullah ibn Jubayr's fervent pleas to remain at their post.

This fateful act of disobedience created a critical opening. Khalid ibn al-Walid (who was then a polytheist commander) and Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl, who had been observing the archers' hill, seized the opportunity. They led their cavalry in a swift counter-attack from the rear, catching the Muslim army by surprise. The retreating Quraysh, seeing this sudden turn of events, also rallied and returned to the fight. The Muslims were now caught between two fires, leading to widespread confusion and heavy casualties. Abdullah ibn Jubayr and the few archers who remained on the hill were martyred defending their position to the last man.

Amidst the chaos, the Prophet (s) found himself isolated with only a handful of devoted companions. A rumor spread like wildfire that the Prophet (s) had been martyred, primarily due to Mus'ab ibn Umayr, who bore a strong resemblance to the Prophet (s) and was indeed martyred. This false news further demoralized many Muslims, causing some to flee the battlefield entirely, seeking refuge in the hills, or even contemplating approaching Abdullah ibn Ubayy for protection.

Despite being wounded, the Prophet (s) stood firm, calling out to his

scattered army, urging them to return. Yet, few heard or responded. It was in this moment of extreme peril that the profound loyalty of his closest companions shone brightest. Umm Umarah (Nusaybah bint Ka'b al-Ansariyyah), a woman who had come to provide water for the wounded, dropped her water-skin, seized a sword, and bravely defended the Prophet (s) from the advancing polytheists. She fought with incredible courage, sustaining injuries but inspiring others to rally around the Prophet (s).

The enemy, now specifically targeting the Prophet (s), launched a fierce assault. Abdullah ibn Qami'ah struck the Prophet (s) on his blessed forehead, causing blood to flow. Another blow resulted in the martyrdom of two of his front teeth. A blow struck his side. Despite the severe injuries, the Prophet (s) remained steadfast. In a remarkable fulfillment of prophecy, a Bedouin, Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, who had daily taunted the Prophet (s) and vowed to kill him with his horse, advanced. The Prophet (s) parried his attack with a small stick or shield, and the Bedouin, struck with terror, fled the battlefield, only to die on his way back to Mecca, precisely as the Prophet (s) had foretold.

It was during this critical juncture, when the Prophet (s) was most vulnerable, that Gabriel (a.s.) descended, proclaiming, **"La fata illa Ali, la sayf illa Dhulfiqar!"** ("There is no youth but Ali, no sword but Dhulfiqar!"). Imam Ali (a.s.) had, throughout the battle, displayed unparalleled courage. He fought fiercely, breaking nine swords in defense of the Prophet (s), clearing the path from attackers on all sides, and was bestowed with the legendary sword, Dhulfiqar, from the heavens. His unwavering defense saved the Prophet's (s) life amidst the onslaught.

Tragically, during this phase of the battle, Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib (a.s.), the Prophet's (s) uncle and the Lion of Allah, met his martyrdom. Wahshi, a slave specifically hired by Hind bint Utbah to avenge her father's death at Badr, successfully hurled his javelin, piercing Hamza's

(a.s.) abdomen. Upon Hamza's (a.s.) fall, Hind approached his body and, in a gruesome act of revenge, mutilated his corpse, attempting to eat his liver, though she was divinely prevented from doing so. She then made a necklace of his body parts, publicly displaying her malice.

The Prophet (s) was deeply grieved by Hamza's (a.s.) martyrdom and the horrific mutilation of his body. As the polytheists began their retreat, Abu Sufyan, now emboldened, climbed a hill and taunted the Muslims, proclaiming, "Hubal is exalted! We have Uzza, you have no Uzza!" The Prophet (s) commanded the Muslims to respond with firm conviction: "Allah is exalted and most honored! Allah is our Protector, you have no protector!" Abu Sufyan then declared, "A year for a year!" implying that this battle served as retribution for Badr and that future conflicts awaited. The Prophet (s), understanding that the Quraysh would not press their attack on Medina, allowed them to retreat.

As evening approached, the battle concluded. The Prophet (s) led his companions in prayer, perhaps sitting due to his injuries. He then turned his attention to the martyrs. Witnessing the horrific mutilation of Hamza's (a.s.) body, his grief was immense. Due to the large number of martyrs and the exhaustion of the Muslims, the Prophet (s) instructed that two or three bodies be buried together in common graves. For Hamza (a.s.), however, he performed a special honor: he led the funeral prayer over his body seventy times, bringing other martyrs to Hamza's (a.s.) side so they too could be part of his blessed funeral prayer. He also prevented Safiyyah (Hamza's sister and Zubayr's mother) from seeing her brother's mutilated body, sparing her the profound anguish.

It was in the aftermath of this battle, in response to the enemy's desecration of the martyrs, that Allah revealed a significant verse: **"And if you punish [an enemy], punish with an equivalent of that with which you were punished. But if you are patient, it is better for those who**

are patient." (**Surah An-Nahl 16:126**). This verse encouraged patience and restraint, forbidding the Muslims from retaliating with similar acts of mutilation, even in the face of immense provocation.

The Battle of Uhud, despite its heavy losses, became a profound lesson in obedience, steadfastness, and the true cost of war. The Prophet (s) bore his wounds with patience and continued to comfort his companions, teaching them resilience and faith in Allah's ultimate plan.

Chapter 80

The Enduring Lessons of Uhud: True Sacrifice and Pure Intentions

The third year after the *Hijrah*, specifically in Shawwal 3 AH, continued to unfold with the shadow of the Battle of Uhud. The Prophet Mohammad's (s) blessed age was fifty-six years, and sixteen years had passed since the commencement of his Prophethood, with three years now in Medina. The memories of the Battle of Badr remained vivid, particularly among the Quraysh, who sought fierce revenge, determined to overturn their previous defeat. They came to Uhud with overwhelming numbers and an unwavering belief in their victory, convinced that this battle would put an end to the nascent Islamic state.

The Battle of Uhud, though a severe trial for the Muslims, yielded profound spiritual and moral lessons, etched into the fabric of Islamic history. The battlefield served as a crucible, exposing the depths of human intention and devotion. Among the many narratives that emerged from this momentous day were stories that illuminated the true essence of sacrifice and the paramount importance of *niyyat*, or pure intention, in the sight of Allah.

One such story involved a poet from Mecca named Abul 'Aza al-Jumahi. He had been captured during the Battle of Badr. When brought before the Prophet (s), he pleaded with great humility, citing his extreme poverty and the numerous young daughters dependent solely on him. The Prophet (s), moved by his apparent destitution and compassion for his children, released him without ransom, on the condition that Abul 'Aza would never again fight against the Muslims. Furthermore, the Prophet (s) asked him to teach literacy to the Muslim children in Medina—a remarkable condition that underscored the Prophet's (s) emphasis on education, even in times of war. Abul 'Aza solemnly swore by his faith and idols that he would uphold this promise.

However, when the Quraysh were gathering forces for Uhud, they approached Abul 'Aza, urging him to join them. Initially, he hesitated, recalling his oath and the Prophet's (s) generosity. But the Quraysh, filled with vengeful zeal and certain of triumph, reassured him, claiming that this time, victory was assured and that the Prophet's (s) head would be brought to Mecca. Swayed by their conviction, Abul 'Aza broke his sacred vow and joined the polytheist army. He was captured again in Uhud. Brought before the Prophet (s), he repeated his pleas of poverty and family responsibility. The Prophet (s), however, looked at him with an unwavering gaze and refused to release him again. He recited a powerful truth that would become a profound Islamic proverb: **"Al-mu'minu la yuldaghu min juhrin wahidin marratayn"** (A believer is not stung from the same hole twice). Abul 'Aza was executed, a stark reminder that promises made in the name of God and the Prophet (s) were not to be trifled with, and that sincerity was a cornerstone of faith.

Another poignant incident involved a young man from Medina whose name was either Khirban or Khutman, as historical accounts vary. This youth was known for his exceptional generosity and humanitarian spirit. He dedicated himself to helping the poor, the sick, and the needy, earn-

ing immense public praise. People would often laud his virtues to the Prophet (s), marveling at his compassion and selflessness. Yet, to the astonishment of all, the Prophet (s) declared that this man was destined for Hell. This pronouncement perplexed the companions, who struggled to reconcile such a pious outward appearance with the Prophet's (s) stern verdict.

As the Battle of Uhud commenced, this young man rushed to the battlefield with fervent zeal, joining the front ranks of the Muslim fighters. He displayed extraordinary bravery, personally killing six or seven of the polytheist warriors. Eventually, he sustained a severe wound and fell to the ground. As he lay dying, some companions approached him, commending his valor and asking about his motivation. In his final moments, he shockingly revealed that he had not fought for Allah, nor for His Messenger, nor for the sake of Islam. Instead, he had fought solely to defend the honor of his tribe and city, driven by *hamiyat* (tribal zeal) and a desire for worldly recognition. Overwhelmed by the pain of his injury, and without seeking Allah's mercy or patience, he took a spear and plunged it into his own chest, committing suicide. His death, by his own hand and with his own confession, tragically confirmed the Prophet's (s) earlier, bewildering prophecy, underscoring that while actions may appear righteous, only those performed with sincere and pure intentions for Allah's sake hold true value.

In stark contrast to these tales of deception and misguided intentions, was the inspiring story of Mukhayriq, a prominent Jewish chief of Banu Nadir. He was a wealthy and learned man who possessed a treaty with the Prophet (s). On the day of the Battle of Uhud, which happened to be the Sabbath (Saturday), Mukhayriq approached his community, reminding them of their covenant with the Prophet (s) and urging them to join him in the battle. His people, however, refused, citing the sanctity of the Sabbath, which forbade them from engaging in warfare. Mukhayriq,

deeply disappointed by their refusal to honor the treaty, declared that if they would abandon their covenant with the Prophet (s) for the sake of their Sabbath, then he would abandon their religion. He immediately embraced Islam and announced that if he were to be martyred, all his extensive wealth should be given to the Prophet (s). He then rushed to the battlefield, fighting with immense bravery and conviction for the sake of Allah and His Messenger (s). Mukhayriq was martyred on the very day of his conversion. His wealth was subsequently transferred to the Prophet (s), marking a profound instance of sincere devotion and sacrifice, illustrating that true faith could manifest spontaneously and unequivocally, even in the face of imminent death.

Another remarkable figure from Uhud was a woman from Medina, sometimes identified as Umm Umarah or Nasibah bint Ka'b. The battle took a devastating toll on her family: her husband, her son, and her brother were all martyred. As the news from the battlefield reached Medina, she rushed out, seeking any information. First, she inquired about her husband, then her brother, and finally her son. With each confirmation of martyrdom, she responded with the profound declaration: **"Inna Lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un"** (To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return), accepting Allah's decree with patience. But with every loss, her anxiety grew, not for her own family, but for the safety of the Prophet (s). Her paramount concern was always, "What has happened to the Messenger of Allah?"

When she finally caught sight of the Prophet (s), alive and safe, despite his wounds, she fell into a prostration of gratitude. Tears streamed down her face, not of sorrow for her personal losses, but of immense relief and profound love. She declared, **"Kullu musibati ba'daka jalalun"** (Every calamity after you is trivial). The martyrdom of her husband, brother, and son, which would have devastated any other person, became utterly insignificant in the face of the Prophet's (s) survival. Her tranquility and

joy at seeing the Prophet (s) safe provided immense solace and strength to the other Muslim women and companions who were also suffering great losses. This unwavering devotion, where the safety of the Prophet (s) eclipsed all personal tragedies, exemplified the pinnacle of love and sacrifice in Islam. Such steadfastness is a source of eternal inspiration, particularly when contemplating the trials faced by the *ahlulbayt* in *Karbala*, where similar devotion was displayed, yet the outcome was the tragic martyrdom of their beloved leader, Imam Husayn (a.s.).

These narratives from Uhud serve as timeless reminders of the profound importance of pure intention in every act of worship and sacrifice. They emphasize that while external deeds may appear virtuous, it is the underlying *niyyat* that determines their true worth in the sight of Allah. The Battle of Uhud, despite its immediate hardships, ultimately forged a community deeply rooted in faith, where devotion to Allah and His Messenger (s) transcended all personal attachments and worldly desires.

Chapter 81

Uhud's Enduring Wisdom: Divine Accountability, Sacred Mourning, and Unyielding Resolve

The Battle of Uhud, a pivotal moment in early Islamic history, offered profound lessons, revealing the dual nature of human character and the intricate workings of divine justice. As we reflect on this arduous conflict, it becomes evident that while some demonstrated unwavering devotion and self-sacrifice for Allah and His Messenger, others, despite grand declarations of faith, faltered under the crucible of trial, retreating from the battlefield. Uhud stands as the costliest battle for the Muslims in terms of human lives, with seventy believers attaining martyrdom, while the disbelievers suffered twenty to twenty-two casualties. This stark contrast with the Battle of Badr, where only fourteen Muslims were martyred compared to seventy disbelievers killed and seventy captured, prompted a deeper inquiry into the divine wisdom behind such a severe trial.

The answer, profound and instructive, is conveyed through **Surah Aal-e-Imran, verse 3:165**: **"Or when a misfortune befell you, and you had**

inflicted twice as much (on the enemy), did you say, 'How did this happen?' Say: 'It is from yourselves.'" Esteemed commentators explain that this verse alludes to the events following Badr. When the seventy captured Quraysh prisoners were brought to Medina, the Prophet Mohammad (s) proposed their execution, viewing them as lifelong enemies of Islam. However, some companions, particularly among the *Muhajireen* who shared familial ties with the prisoners, argued for their ransom, suggesting that their release in exchange for wealth would benefit the nascent Muslim state. Despite the Prophet's (s) initial inclination to execute them, and after much deliberation and consultation, the decision was made to accept ransom. This choice, prioritizing worldly gain over a divinely-guided directive for justice, incurred a severe consequence a year later at Uhud, where Muslims suffered double the casualties they had inflicted at Badr (70 martyrs at Uhud vs. 70 killed at Badr). It was a powerful reminder that deviation from divine counsel, even with seemingly good intentions, carries accountability.

Among the luminous examples of devotion at Uhud was Amr ibn Jamuh. Despite being elderly and lame, and thus exempt from *Jihad*, his fervent desire for martyrdom led him to plead with the Prophet (s) for permission to join the battle. Seeing his profound sincerity, the Prophet (s) eventually granted his wish. Amr ibn Jamuh fought valiantly and achieved his cherished martyrdom, alongside his brother-in-law Abdullah (father of Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari) and one of his sons. Abdullah, Jabir's father, had a premonition of his martyrdom through a dream where he saw his martyred friend from Badr, Mubashshir ibn Mundhir, inviting him to the company of martyrs.

The profound steadfastness of Hind, the wife of Amr ibn Jamuh and sister of Abdullah, further illuminated the spirit of sacrifice. After the battle, she bravely proceeded to the battlefield, locating the bodies of her martyred husband, brother, and son. With astonishing fortitude, de-

void of any visible distress, she loaded their three bodies onto a camel. As she journeyed back towards Medina, her camel refused to proceed. The Prophet's (s) wives, who were also returning, suggested the burden might be too heavy. But Hind, a woman of deep insight, knew her camel was strong. She realized there was a spiritual reason. When the camel was turned back towards the battlefield, it moved joyfully. The Prophet (s) later explained that Amr ibn Jamuh had prayed to Allah that he would not return to Medina, and Allah had accepted his prayer, causing the camel to refuse entry into the city. Hind then left the bodies on the battlefield for burial, in accordance with the Prophet's (s) instructions for the martyrs to be buried where they fell.

A miraculous testament to the martyrs' status occurred 46 years after Uhud. Due to flooding or deliberate disturbance by the then-ruler, the graves of the Uhud martyrs were exposed. Witnesses, including Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari (who lived long enough to meet Imam al-Baqir), observed that the bodies of the martyrs, including Abdullah and Amr ibn Jamuh, were as fresh as if they had just passed away. The *idhkir* grass placed under Hamza's (a.s.) feet, which was also found fresh, further confirmed this extraordinary phenomenon. In one instance, a martyr's hand, placed over a wound, began to bleed afresh when moved, demonstrating the vibrant life of the martyrs in the sight of Allah. This event reaffirmed the Qur'anic truth of their enduring life and blessing.

The burial of the martyrs followed, with the Prophet (s) overseeing the arrangements. For his beloved uncle, Hamza (a.s.), the Prophet (s) ordered an unprecedented seventy funeral prayers. First, Hamza (a.s.) was buried in his own shroud. Then, the body of each of the other sixty-nine martyrs was brought and placed next to Hamza's (a.s.) body, and a funeral prayer was recited, effectively resulting in seventy prayers for Hamza (a.s.)—one individual prayer, and sixty-nine prayers where he was included alongside other martyrs.

Following the burials, as the weary Muslims returned to Medina, the Prophet (s) observed that everyone was mourning their lost loved ones, yet no one was mourning his uncle, Hamza (a.s.). He expressed his sorrow, remarking, "My uncle Hamza has no one to mourn him." Hearing this, the women of Ansar, including those who had lost their own family members, gathered at the Prophet's (s) house and began to mourn Hamza (a.s.) profoundly. This act, sanctioned by the Prophet (s), became a deeply rooted tradition in Medina, establishing the permissibility and spiritual significance of mourning for martyrs. It was a clear demonstration that martyrdom, while a high spiritual station, does not negate the human sorrow and the spiritual merit of mourning. The Prophet (s) himself joined in the weeping and praised the Ansar women for their empathy, highlighting that mourning for the martyrs of Islam, especially those who gave their lives for Allah, is a blessed act. This historical event serves as a direct rebuttal to those who question the legitimacy of mourning for martyrs, even those like Imam Husayn (a.s.) in Karbala, asserting that such practices are indeed sanctioned by the practice of the Prophet (s).

Despite their wounds and exhaustion, the Prophet (s) did not allow the Muslims to rest. The very next morning, the Prophet (s) issued a command for the wounded to prepare for another expedition, the pursuit of the retreating Quraysh. Only those who had participated in Uhud and sustained injuries were permitted to join, excluding those who had not fought or those who had fought but remained unharmed. This was a strategic move, demonstrating unyielding resolve to the enemy and preventing any notion of Muslim weakness. The Quraysh, after retreating, had halted at a place called Rawha (or Hamra al-Asad), deliberating whether to return and finish off the wounded Muslims.

During this period, a neutral merchant, Abu Tuhaifa, encountered Abu Sufyan, who attempted to use him for psychological warfare. Abu Su-

Iyan offered Abu Tuhaifa ten camels laden with dates to spread a false rumor in Medina that the Quraysh had gathered vast reinforcements and were returning to annihilate the Muslims. Abu Tuhaifa, greedy for the reward, proceeded towards Medina. En route, he encountered the Prophet (s) and the Muslim army, still wounded but resolute, camping at Hamra al-Asad. Abu Tuhaifa delivered Abu Sufyan's deceptive message, but the Muslims' faith remained unshaken. When the Prophet (s) heard this, he simply declared, **"Hasbunallahu wa Ni'mal Wakeel!"** (**"Allah is sufficient for us, and He is the best Disposer of affairs!"**) This powerful affirmation, revealed in **Surah Aal-e-Imran 3:173-174**, filled them with even greater faith, removing any fear.

Simultaneously, another man, Fajrah (or Nu'aim ibn Mas'ud, chief of Banu Khuzah), encountered Abu Sufyan's forces. Upon hearing their plans, Fajrah advised Abu Sufyan that the Muslims were strong and eager to fight, and that any return would lead to their defeat. This false intelligence, coupled with the Muslims' resolute advance towards Hamra al-Asad, caused Abu Sufyan to abandon his plans and retreat towards Mecca.

To confirm the enemy's movements, the Prophet (s) ordered Imam Ali (a.s.) to scout the Quraysh army. He specifically instructed Ali (a.s.) to observe their movements carefully and return without engaging them. This was a tremendous test for Imam Ali (a.s.), renowned for his bravery and eagerness to confront the enemies of Allah. To witness the enemies who had just inflicted harm on the Prophet (s) and martyred Hamza (a.s.), and to hold back his sword, was a profound act of obedience and self-control. This moment mirrors the trial of Abbas (a.s.) at Karbala, who, despite his immense courage and capacity to fight, was bound by the Imam's command to prioritize fetching water and protecting the camp, not to engage in battle. Both instances highlight the paramount importance of absolute obedience to the Imam/Prophet, even when it demands

suppressing one's deepest martial instincts.

After three days at Hamra al-Asad, confirming the Quraysh's full retreat, the Prophet (s) and the Muslims returned to Medina. The Battle of Uhud, though a severe trial, ultimately underscored the resilience of the Islamic community, the profound meaning of martyrdom, the sanctity of mourning for the righteous, and the unwavering resolve of the Prophet (s) and his devoted companions in the face of adversity.

Chapter 82

Uhud's Lingering Shadows: Rebuilding Trust and Community through Justice and Compassion

The aftermath of the Battle of Uhud marked a pivotal phase in the nascent Islamic state, demanding a renewed commitment to the practical application of the Prophet's *Seerah*. While a military setback, Uhud inadvertently emboldened the Quraysh, who believed they had inflicted irreparable damage upon the Muslims. Seventy Muslim martyrs lay on the field, and a significant contingent of hypocrites had abandoned the army before the battle, further fueling the illusion of Muslim weakness. The Quraysh, understanding the Muslims' strength in direct confrontation, now shifted their strategy towards insidious conspiracies and internal destabilization, often aided by their sympathizers within Medina.

The Prophet Mohammad (s), however, displayed unwavering resolve. Immediately after Uhud, he had commanded the wounded Muslims to pursue the retreating Quraysh to Hamra al-Asad, a decisive move that shattered any lingering enemy illusions of Muslim vulnerability and com-

pelled their full retreat. This period of intense vigilance also necessitated addressing internal threats.

One such threat came from a woman in Medina who was an ardent enemy of the Prophet (s), persistently composing and reciting defamatory poetry against him. Her venomous verses, fueled by the perceived Muslim defeat at Uhud, grew increasingly audacious, causing immense pain and distress to the believers. One night, a Muslim youth named Amr ibn Uday, whose entire tribe remained in disbelief save for himself, could no longer bear this affront to the sanctity of the Prophet's (s) mission. Driven by profound devotion and without seeking permission, he infiltrated her house and killed her. Upon learning of the act, the Prophet (s) publicly praised Amr ibn Uday, validating his action as having been undertaken for the pleasure of Allah and His Messenger, and declared that no retribution was due for the shedding of her blood. This incident underscored that while Islam champions mercy, blasphemy against the sanctity of prophethood was a grave transgression warranting decisive action.

Another critical issue arose with the capture of two individuals after Uhud. One was Abu Azzah al-Jumahi, who had been captured at Badr and released on the condition of not fighting the Muslims again. Upon his recapture, he pleaded for mercy, citing family responsibilities. The Prophet (s), however, refused, stating, "**A believer is not bitten twice from the same hole**," and he was executed. The second captive was Mu'awiyah ibn al-Mughira, a cousin of Uthman, who sought protection for him. Suspecting Mu'awiyah of espionage, the Prophet (s) granted him a mere three-day reprieve to leave Medina, warning that if he remained, he would be killed. When Mu'awiyah failed to depart within the stipulated time, Zayd ibn Haritha and Ammar ibn Yasir were dispatched to execute him. These firm actions demonstrated the Prophet's (s) resolute commitment to protecting the nascent Islamic state from treachery, both internal and exter-

nal.

Beyond military and security concerns, Uhud also presented a significant societal challenge. Seventy Muslim men, many of them young and recently married, had attained martyrdom, leaving behind numerous widows and young orphans. In a society where women relied heavily on male providers and where lifelong celibacy was not encouraged, this created a pressing social and economic dilemma. Islam strongly advocates for marriage as a fundamental institution for societal well-being and moral preservation. To address this crisis, the Prophet (s) exemplified a solution by taking on more wives himself, thereby setting a precedent for compassion, care for the vulnerable, and the integration of these women into the fabric of the community.

Within months of Uhud, the Prophet (s) entered into three significant marriages:

First, he married **Zaynab bint Khuzayma**, whose husband had been martyred at Uhud. Zaynab was renowned for her boundless generosity and compassion towards the poor and needy, earning her the venerable title of **"Umm al-Masakin"** (Mother of the Destitute). Tragically, she passed away only two to three months after her marriage to the Prophet (s), at the young age of thirty. The Prophet (s) himself performed her funeral prayer and laid her to rest in *Jannat al-Baqi'*.

Following Zaynab's passing, the Prophet (s) married **Hafsa bint Umar**. Her husband, Khunays ibn Hudhafa, had also been martyred at Uhud. This union, occurring just a few months after Uhud, further cemented familial ties among the early Muslims and exemplified the Prophet's (s) commitment to caring for the bereaved families.

The third marriage during this period was to **Umm Salama**, whose story exemplifies profound trust in divine decree and the Prophet's (s) com-

passionate leadership. Umm Salama's husband, Abu Salama, was a cousin of the Prophet (s) and a distinguished early Muslim who had participated in two *Hijrahs*. Abu Salama was gravely wounded at Uhud, and although he initially recovered, the wound reopened during a subsequent punitive expedition against the Banu Asad tribe in the month of Safar (4 AH), leading to his martyrdom. Umm Salama was left a young widow with several small children, and crucially, no immediate family or relatives in Medina to support her.

Deeply grieved and feeling isolated, Umm Salama was consoled by the Prophet (s). He advised her to recite the Qur'anic verse: **"Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilayhi Raji'oon"** (Indeed, we belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return), and to pray, "O Allah, replace me with something better than what I have lost." Prior to his death, Abu Salama had made an unusual request of Umm Salama, urging her not to remain a widow but to remarry, even if it meant they wouldn't be together in Paradise—a belief held by some Arabs regarding marital reunion in the afterlife if the widow did not remarry. This highlighted Abu Salama's foresight and his prioritization of his wife's well-being.

When the Prophet (s) eventually proposed to Umm Salama, she expressed her concerns: her advanced age, her many children, and her intense grief. The Prophet (s) gently reassured her, promising to care for her children and asking her to trust in Allah's plan. She married the Prophet (s) in Shawwal of 4 AH, becoming another pillar of strength and compassion within his household. These marriages, undertaken in the difficult period immediately following Uhud, were not merely personal acts but served as a profound demonstration of leadership, addressing the critical social needs of the community and providing solace and security to those who had lost their protectors.

However, the period of conspiracies was far from over. An insidious

plot, known as the **Expedition of Bi'r Ma'una** (or the Massacre of the Reciters), soon unfolded. A delegation claiming to be from the tribes of Banu Hazal and Banu Ghatafan approached the Prophet (s), requesting Muslim teachers to instruct them in Islam and the Qur'an. Trusting their plea, the Prophet (s) dispatched seventy prominent companions, known as *Qurra* (reciters of the Qur'an), under the leadership of Munzir ibn Amr. This was a treacherous ambush. The *Qurra* were surrounded and mercilessly martyred.

Among them was Haram ibn Milhan, who, despite being severely wounded and dying of thirst, famously refused to drink water that had become mixed with blood, declaring it *haram*. His principled stand echoed that of Muslim ibn Aqeel (a.s.), the emissary of Imam Hussain (a.s.) to Kufa, who, when dying of thirst, refused water presented to him after realizing it had been rendered impure or *haram*. Such incidents powerfully illustrate the profound commitment of these revered figures to divine law, even in the direst of circumstances.

This phase of the Prophet's (s) life in Medina, following the Battle of Uhud, profoundly illustrates his multifaceted leadership. He confronted external threats with unwavering resolve, eliminated internal treachery with decisive justice, and, critically, rebuilt the fabric of the community through acts of profound compassion, exemplified by his marriages, which provided care and stability to the widows and orphans of Uhud. These actions ensured that even in the face of adversity, the Muslim society remained cohesive and guided by divine principles.

Chapter 83

The Treacherous Ambush at Raji': The Martyrdom of Asim and Khubayb

Following the challenging aftermath of the Battle of Uhud, a period marked by intensified hostilities and conspiracies against the nascent Muslim state began. While the immediate confrontation at Uhud was with the Quraysh, the strategic landscape was shifting. The Prophet Mohammad (s) now faced not only the continued incitement of the Meccan polytheists but also the imminent threat of open conflict with various Arab tribes, and significantly, the hypocritical Jewish factions within and around Medina. Indeed, it was during this time that a new form of struggle emerged, one characterized by profound treachery and targeted assassinations of Muslim missionaries.

The Quraysh, smarting from their incomplete victory at Uhud, were determined not to allow the Muslims any respite. They diligently worked to incite other Arab tribes against Medina, seeking to maintain constant pressure. A particularly vindictive woman from Mecca, whose sons had been slain in the battles of Badr or Uhud, publicly pledged a reward of one hundred camels for the head of any prominent Muslim, especially

the Prophet (s) himself or one of his esteemed companions. This dark incentive fueled the animosity of tribes like Banu Hudhayl, a large and influential tribe situated between Mecca and Medina.

It was against this backdrop that a delegation arrived in Medina from two smaller tribes, Banu Asad and Banu Ghatafan, who were nominally neutral but possibly swayed by the prevailing incitement. They approached the Prophet (s) with a seemingly earnest request: they sought Muslim teachers to instruct their people in the tenets of Islam and the recitation of the **Holy Qur'an**. The Prophet (s), ever vigilant, sensed a deep unease about these tribes, particularly their origins in the volatile region of Najd, known for its treacherous inhabitants. Despite his reservations, the earnest desire to spread the message of Islam superseded his caution. After all, the very purpose of his prophethood was to guide humanity.

Thus, the Prophet (s) dispatched a small but dedicated group of his companions to serve as *da'is*, or callers to Islam. Accounts vary on their exact number, ranging from six to ten individuals. Among them were notable figures like Asim ibn Thabit, Zayd ibn al-Dathina, Khubayb ibn Adiyy, and Abdullah ibn Tariq, with Asim ibn Thabit leading the expedition. These noble souls, embodying the purest spirit of their faith, set out from Medina, journeying with meticulous adherence to travel norms: they would travel by day and rest by night.

Their journey led them to a place called Raji', near a water source. It was here that the insidious trap sprung. The tribes who had sought instruction, or rather, their co-conspirators from Banu Lahyan (a sub-branch of Banu Hudhayl), ambushed the unsuspecting missionaries. The small band of Muslims found themselves surrounded by an overwhelming force of some four hundred armed men. Recognizing the futility of resistance against such odds, the polytheists offered them safe passage if they would surrender.

However, the companions, led by Asim ibn Thabit, refused to compromise their dignity or faith. Asim stood firm, declaring, "By Allah, I will not accept the protection of a disbeliever!" He engaged in a fierce battle, fighting with unmatched bravery until he was martyred. Before his martyrdom, Asim ibn Thabit raised his hands in a profound prayer to Allah, imploring Him not to allow his body to be touched by disbelievers. It is recounted as a testament to his piety that upon his death, a swarm of bees and wasps miraculously encircled his body, forming an impenetrable barrier that prevented the polytheists from mutilating him and claiming the bounty for his head. Later, by divine will, his body was absorbed into the earth, fulfilling his unique prayer.

In the ensuing chaos, most of the companions were martyred. Three, however, were captured: Khubayb ibn Adiyy, Zayd ibn al-Dathina, and Abdullah ibn Tariq. Abdullah ibn Tariq managed to free himself but was later martyred. Khubayb and Zayd were taken to Mecca, their capture a prize for the Quraysh.

In Mecca, Khubayb ibn Adiyy was sold to the sons of Harith ibn Amr, whose father had been killed by Muslims at the Battle of Badr. Zayd ibn al-Dathina was sold to Safwan ibn Umayya, whose father, Umayya ibn Khalaf, had also perished at Badr. The intent of their new masters was clear: vengeance.

Khubayb was imprisoned by the family of Harith. Even in captivity, his character shone. One day, a woman from the household found her young son playing with a razor near Khubayb. Terrified, she cried out, but Khubayb calmly reassured her, saying, "I would never harm him." This act of gentle reassurance, even from a man condemned to death, deeply impressed her.

As the day of his execution approached, Khubayb requested a final grace: to offer two *rak'ahs* of prayer. His captors granted his wish. He prayed

swiftly, concluding his prayer by stating that he was not hastening it out of fear of death, but to avoid giving his captors the impression that he was prolonging his life out of dread. After his prayer, he was led to Tan'im, a place just outside the sacred boundary of Mecca, where crucifixions were typically carried out.

Among the crowd awaiting his execution was Abu Sufyan. With cruel irony, he taunted Khubayb, asking, "Do you not wish that Muhammad were in your place, and you were safe among your family?" Khubayb's reply resonated with unwavering devotion: "By Allah, I would not wish for even a thorn to prick the foot of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, if it meant I would be saved from this fate! My life is nothing compared to his safety!" He then raised his voice in prayer, invoking divine wrath upon the Quraysh. It is said that his prayer brought immediate chaos and fear among the onlookers, signifying the spiritual power of a sincere supplication. He was then martyred, crucified by Uqbah ibn al-Harith.

In Medina, the Prophet (s) received divine revelation of Khubayb's martyrdom. Overwhelmed with sorrow, he immediately dispatched two of his companions, Zubayr ibn al-Awwam and Miqdad ibn al-Aswad (or, according to some narrations, Salamah ibn Usayli), to retrieve Khubayb's blessed body. They set out on their sacred mission. Upon reaching Mecca some forty days later, they found Khubayb's body still fresh and untouched by decay. As they attempted to lift him, his hand, which had been in a specific position, moved. When they placed the body on a camel, it miraculously disappeared into the earth, fulfilling Khubayb's earlier prayer that his body not be desecrated by disbelievers. This was a profound *karamah*, a clear sign of Allah's reverence for His sincere servant.

The tragic events of Raji' served as a stark reminder of the perils faced by those who sought to spread the message of Islam. They underscored

the immense *ikhlas* (sincerity) and *tawakkul* (reliance on Allah) that characterized the Prophet's companions. Their sacrifices became enduring examples of unwavering faith and devotion.

Soon after the incident at Raji', another equally tragic and treacherous event unfolded: the **Expedition of Bi'r Ma'una**. This event involved a similar betrayal, where another large group of Muslim preachers, primarily *qurra* (Qur'an reciters and teachers), were treacherously ambushed and massacred in the Najd region. The Prophet (s)'s grief over these combined losses was immense; he observed the *qunut* (a special supplication during prayer) for a full month, praying against the perpetrators of these heinous acts. These events, though harrowing, forged the Muslim community in the crucible of faith, preparing them for the greater challenges that lay ahead.

Chapter 84

Treachery and Divine Justice: The Massacres at Bi'r Ma'una and the Expulsion of Banu Nadir

The fourth year after the *Hijrah* continued to unfold with grave challenges for the nascent Muslim community in Medina. The Quraysh, though defeated at Badr and having suffered considerable losses at Uhud, were not ready to concede. Recognizing that direct confrontation in Medina would be difficult, they began to instigate other tribes, fostering an environment of continuous unrest and deception against the Muslims. Their grand preparation for a major confrontation, later to become the Battle of the Trench, required considerable time—almost two years—during which they sought to keep the Muslims distracted and embroiled in smaller conflicts. It was during this period of heightened tension and calculated treachery that two significant and tragic events transpired: the massacre at Bi'r Ma'una and the expulsion of the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadir.

Following closely on the heels of the treacherous ambush at Raji', the Prophet Mohammad (s) faced yet another harrowing incident involv-

ing a large-scale betrayal. A delegation from the tribal leaders of Najd, specifically Amir ibn Malik, known as Abu Bara, arrived in Medina. He requested the Prophet (s) to send a group of Muslim *da'is* (preachers and teachers) to their people to spread the message of Islam. Though wary due to recent betrayals, the Prophet (s) was committed to sharing the divine message. He selected seventy of the *Ahl al-Suffa*, those devoted companions who lived at the Prophet's Mosque and dedicated themselves to learning and worship, known for their piety and self-sacrifice. These seventy revered companions, among them men of profound spiritual stature, were dispatched with the understanding that they would be protected.

As this group approached a place called Bi'r Ma'una, they sent ahead two companions, including Haram ibn Milhan, carrying a letter from the Prophet (s) to Amir ibn Tufail, the leader of Banu Amir, who had been hesitant to accept Islam. Tragically, Amir ibn Tufail betrayed the trust. Instead of honoring the Prophet's (s) letter, he attacked and martyred Haram ibn Milhan as he was reading the message. He then incited his tribe, Banu Amir, to ambush the remaining Muslim *da'is*. However, Banu Amir, despite Amir ibn Tufail's instigation, hesitated to fight directly due to an existing covenant of protection with the Muslims. Undeterred, Amir ibn Tufail then appealed to allied tribes, Banu Sulaym (specifically the subtribes of Usayya, Ri'l, and Dhakwan), who had no such treaty. These tribes readily responded, surrounding the unsuspecting Muslim teachers.

Faced with overwhelming numbers, the seventy *Ahl al-Suffa* bravely defended themselves. Among them was Amr ibn Umayya al-Damari and another companion who had been tending to the camels some distance away. When they saw birds circling above the encampment, a grim sign of death, they returned to find their companions massacred. Filled with anguish and a yearning for martyrdom, the other companion rushed into the fray and was swiftly martyred. Amr ibn Umayya, however, was cap-

tured. Due to a previous act of generosity by his mother, who had saved Amir ibn Tufail's life, Amr was released, but only after being humiliated and forced to shave his head. He returned to Medina, carrying the heart-breaking news of the massacre.

This betrayal sent shockwaves through the Muslim community. The Prophet (s) was deeply grieved by the loss of so many dedicated and learned companions. For thirty days, he performed *qunut* (a special supplication) in his prayers, invoking Allah's wrath upon the treacherous tribes of Ri'l, Dhakwan, and Usayya, and upon Amir ibn Tufail.

Amidst this profound sorrow, the hypocrites (*munafiqun*) in Medina began to exploit the situation, spreading demoralizing whispers. They questioned the Prophet's (s) leadership, criticizing the Muslims who had gone forth for jihad and martyrdom, implying that they had foolishly courted death when they could have stayed safe. The Qur'an, in verses from **Surah Aal-e-Imran**, powerfully refuted these insidious arguments. It stated, **"O you who have believed, do not be like those who disbelieved and said to their brothers when they traveled through the land or went out to fight, 'If they had stayed with us, they would not have died or been killed,' so Allah may make that [regret] a sorrow in their hearts. And Allah gives life and causes death, and Allah is Seeing of what you do."** (**3:156**). The verses further emphasized that dying in the path of Allah is far superior to any worldly accumulation, highlighting the profound *ikhlas* (sincerity) and desire for martyrdom among the true believers, a state of being incomprehensible to the worldly-minded hypocrites.

The trauma of Bi'r Ma'una was compounded by an unforeseen consequence. On his journey back to Medina, Amr ibn Umayya encountered two men from the Banu Amir tribe. Believing them to be part of the treacherous group, and without knowing that Banu Amir had a covenant with the Muslims, he killed them in an act of retaliatory justice. Upon re-

turning to Medina, Amr informed the Prophet (s) of his actions. The Prophet (s) was greatly distressed, as this act constituted a breach of treaty. According to the standing agreement with Banu Amir, blood money (*diyat*) was due for these two men. It was also agreed that other tribes, including the Jewish tribes of Medina, were obligated to contribute to *diyat* payments for any lives lost under such covenants.

Thus, the Prophet (s), accompanied by a group of companions including Abu Bakr, Umar, and Ali (a.s.), proceeded to the stronghold of Banu Nadir, one of the three main Jewish tribes in Medina, to request their contribution to the *diyat*. Banu Nadir, like Banu Qaynuqa and Banu Qurayza, had a history of broken covenants and animosity towards Islam, despite living under a treaty of mutual defense with the Muslims. In pre-Islamic times, Banu Nadir, being the wealthier and more powerful tribe, had often imposed unfair terms on Banu Qurayza, demanding only half *diyat* for their own people killed by Banu Qurayza, while demanding full *diyat* for Banu Qurayza killed by them. The Prophet (s) had abolished such discriminatory practices, establishing equal *diyat* for all human lives.

When the Prophet (s) arrived at their fortress, the Banu Nadir leaders, including Salam ibn Mishkam, Huyayy ibn Akhtab, and Kinanah ibn Abi al-Huqayq, greeted him with feigned cordiality, promising to fulfill their obligation. However, their true intention was sinister. While the Prophet (s) sat by the wall of their fortress, Huyayy ibn Akhtab plotted with other leaders to assassinate him by dropping a large millstone from above.

However, divine intervention protected the Prophet (s). Angel Jibril (a.s.) immediately informed him of the plot. Without revealing the exact reason to his companions, the Prophet (s) rose and swiftly departed, heading back to Medina. His companions, initially perplexed by his sudden departure, later followed him. Upon reaching Medina, the Prophet (s) dispatched a messenger to Banu Nadir, giving them ten days to vacate Med-

Ina, citing their breach of covenant through the assassination attempt. He warned them that any delay would be met with force.

The Banu Nadir initially decided to comply, but Huyayy ibn Akhtab, their cunning leader, was instigated by Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites, who promised to support them with two thousand men and alliances from other tribes. Encouraged by this false promise, Huyayy ibn Akhtab changed their minds, sending word to the Prophet (s) that they would not leave.

In response, the Prophet (s) marched his army to Banu Nadir's stronghold and laid siege to their fortresses. The siege lasted for fifteen days. During this time, Abdullah ibn Ubayy and his allies failed to materialize, leaving Banu Nadir isolated. Recognizing their hopeless situation, with no aid arriving and their date palm trees being cut down (a tactic to pressure them), Banu Nadir finally surrendered. Their condition was to leave Medina, taking only what their camels could carry, excluding weapons. They were permitted to take their wealth, but not their houses, which would be given to the *Muhajirun* and some needy *Ansar*.

This expulsion, known as *Ghazwa Banu Nadir*, was a pivotal event. It exposed the perfidy of the Jewish tribes and further strengthened the Muslim state, providing much-needed resources to the *Muhajirun* and easing their economic plight. The spoils of Banu Nadir were distributed by the Prophet (s) primarily among the *Muhajirun* due to their severe economic hardship, and to a few needy *Ansar*, as commanded by divine revelation in **Surah al-Hashr**. The expulsion of Banu Nadir served as a clear message that treachery and conspiracy against the Muslim state would not be tolerated, ensuring greater stability in Medina and demonstrating the Prophet's (s) unwavering resolve backed by divine justice.

Chapter 85

The Prophet's Judicial Authority and the Exile of Banu Nadir

The fourth year after the *Hijrah* (4 AH) marked a distinctive phase in the unfolding history of the nascent Islamic state in Medina. While the preceding years were characterized by monumental confrontations such as the Battle of Badr (2 AH) and Uhud (3 AH), the year 4 AH saw no major *ghazwa* (battle involving the Prophet personally). Instead, it was a period of relentless skirmishes and insidious provocations, as the *kuffar* of Mecca relentlessly incited smaller, surrounding tribes to launch minor, yet frequent, attacks on Medina. This kept the Muslim community in a constant state of vigilance, with barely a month passing without some form of confrontation.

At this juncture, the Prophet Mohammad (s) was 56 years old, having completed 16 years of his prophethood and now entering its 17th. Medina remained home to three primary Jewish tribes: Banu Qaynuqa', Banu Nadir, and Banu Qurayza. As chronicled earlier, Banu Qaynuqa' had already been expelled for their open treachery following the Battle of Badr. Historically, none of these Jewish tribes held governing power in Medina;

they had lived under the rule of the local *Jahili* tribes before Islam. Even Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the chief hypocrite, had been on the verge of being crowned king by the Medinan tribes prior to the Prophet's (s) arrival. The Jewish tribes, being a subdued minority, had clung to the prophecy of a final Prophet, hoping he would establish their dominance. Paradoxically, once the Prophet (s) arrived, they initially entered into treaties with him, acknowledging his authority and promising loyalty and mutual defense.

However, the patterns of betrayal persisted. Among the two remaining Jewish tribes, Banu Nadir was significantly more powerful than Banu Qurayza. This power imbalance was evident in their internal dealings: Banu Nadir had historically imposed an unjust *diyat* (blood money) system, demanding full *diyat* for their own members killed by Banu Qurayza, while offering only half the *diyat* for a Banu Qurayza member killed by one of their own. This grave injustice would soon become a flashpoint for the Prophet's (s) decisive intervention.

A pivotal event occurred in Khaybar, a Jewish stronghold north of Medina, which dramatically demonstrated the Prophet's (s) unwavering commitment to justice and his profound knowledge of divine laws. An instance of adultery involving a married man and a married woman from prominent families had transpired in Khaybar. According to the extant **Tawrat** (Torah), the prescribed punishment for married adulterers was *rajm* (stoning to death). However, the Jewish leadership in Khaybar, unwilling to apply such a severe punishment to their high-status individuals, sought a loophole. They dispatched a delegation to the Jewish scholars of Medina, specifically Banu Nadir, hoping to find a more lenient interpretation or an alternative judgment. The Medinan Jews, in turn, cunningly advised them to approach the Prophet Mohammad (s), assuming that Islam, being a nascent religion, might not yet have a strict ruling on adultery, or that the Prophet (s) might offer a lesser punishment that would serve their agenda. They hoped to exploit the Prophet's

(s) perceived leniency to bypass their own sacred law.

Upon their arrival at **Masjid an-Nabawi**, the delegation from Khaybar, accompanied by Medinan Jewish leaders, presented their case to the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) first inquired whether they wished him to judge by Islamic law or by the **Tawrat**. Expecting a more lenient outcome, they chose the **Tawrat**. The Prophet (s) then requested the **Tawrat** be brought forth. He questioned their most learned scholars, who initially denied that **rajm** was codified in the **Tawrat** for married adulterers. Undeterred, the Prophet (s) specifically asked for a prominent Jewish scholar, Abdullah ibn Suriya, a one-eyed man known for his profound knowledge of the **Tawrat** by heart. When confronted by the Prophet (s), and put under a solemn oath by Allah, Abdullah ibn Suriya reluctantly admitted that **rajm** was indeed the prescribed punishment in the **Tawrat** for married adulterers. He further confessed that their kings had long suppressed this law, fearing its application to themselves and their elite. With this admission, the Prophet (s) upheld the **Tawrat**'s ruling and applied the punishment of *rajm*. This marked the first instance of stoning executed under the Prophet's (s) judicial authority in Medina. This demonstration of impartial justice deeply reassured Banu Qurayza, the weaker Jewish tribe, who saw in the Prophet (s) an equitable arbiter who would apply justice regardless of status or tribal power.

Encouraged by the Prophet's (s) just verdict in the Khaybar case, Banu Qurayza approached him concerning their longstanding *diyat* dispute with Banu Nadir. The Prophet (s) agreed to mediate, as per the terms of the original covenant. Accompanied by several companions, he proceeded to Banu Nadir's stronghold. While there, Banu Nadir initially feigned compliance, agreeing to pay the demanded *diyat*. However, in a moment of treacherous malice, they plotted to assassinate the Prophet (s) by dropping a large millstone on him from the fortress wall. Divinely warned of their impending treachery, the Prophet (s) immediately departed from

their fort, returning to Medina.

Without delay, the Prophet (s) dispatched a message to Banu Nadir, giving them a ten-day ultimatum to evacuate Medina. Failure to comply would result in war. Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites, seized this opportunity to sow discord. He secretly sent a message to Banu Nadir, urging them to resist, promising them the aid of 2,000 men from his own faction and Banu Qurayza, as well as support from the powerful Ghatafan tribe. Emboldened by these false assurances, Banu Nadir defiantly refused to leave Medina.

Consequently, the Prophet (s) mobilized the Muslim forces and laid siege to their fortresses. The siege lasted approximately 15 days. Throughout this period, Abdullah ibn Ubayy and Banu Qurayza failed to honor their promises of aid, and the Ghatafan tribe also remained absent. The **Qur'an** eloquently describes this deception, likening Abdullah ibn Ubayy's instigation to that of Satan, who incites rebellion and then abandons his followers when they face divine punishment.

During the siege, the Prophet (s) issued a command to cut down and burn Banu Nadir's cherished date palms. This was a strategic and devastating blow, targeting their primary source of livelihood and sustenance. While generally discouraging the wanton destruction of property in warfare, this specific command was a tactical necessity, divinely sanctioned, to compel Banu Nadir's surrender and underscore the gravity of their betrayal. This act, mentioned in **Surah Al-Hashr**, verse 5, further disheartened the besieged Jews, leading them to realize the futility of their resistance.

Ultimately, Banu Nadir, isolated and demoralized, sought terms for surrender. They requested permission to depart from Medina, taking with them only what their camels could carry, excluding weapons. The Prophet (s) agreed to these terms. Before their departure, they deliberately de-

stroyed parts of their own homes, not wishing for anything to fall into Muslim hands. Most of Banu Nadir subsequently migrated to Khaybar, while a smaller group settled in Syria.

The wealth acquired from Banu Nadir was unique; it was *fay'*, meaning spoils obtained without actual battle, as the Muslims had not fought for it. The **Qur'an** clarifies the distribution of *fay'* in **Surah Al-Hashr**, verses 6-7. Unlike *ghanimah* (spoils from battle), where four-fifths were distributed among the warriors and one-fifth (**khums**) went to Allah, His Messenger, his close relatives, orphans, the needy, and travelers, *fay'* was entirely at the discretion of the Prophet (s). It was to be used for the benefit of Allah, His Messenger, and for the welfare of the community's most vulnerable.

The Prophet (s) gathered the **Ansar** of Medina – those indigenous Muslims who had so magnanimously opened their homes and shared their possessions with the **Muhajirun** (Meccan immigrants) following the *Hijrah*. He reminded them of their unprecedented generosity and sacrifice. He then presented them with two options regarding the wealth of Banu Nadir: 1. They could receive a share of the *fay'* along with the **Muhajirun**, in which case the **Muhajirun** would return all the homes, lands, and businesses the **Ansar** had previously shared with them, allowing the **Ansar** to reclaim their full properties. 2. Alternatively, the *fay'* would be distributed entirely among the **Muhajirun** to enable them to become self-sufficient, while the **Ansar** would continue their noble act of sharing their own properties with the **Muhajirun** for an extended period.

The **Ansar**, demonstrating an unparalleled level of *ithar* (selflessness) and profound generosity, chose the second option without hesitation. They preferred that the **Muhajirun** attain economic independence, even if it meant continuing their own sacrifices. This extraordinary act of altruism is immortalized in **Qur'an**, **Surah Al-Hashr**, verse 9: **"And [also for] those who were settled in the city and [embraced] the faith be-**

fore them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not in their hearts any need for that which is given them, but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in need of it. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful." The Prophet (s) deeply admired their sacrifice and fervently prayed for the **Ansar** and their descendants, acknowledging their immense contribution to the stability and welfare of the Muslim community.

This period, marked by the expulsion of Banu Nadir and the subsequent distribution of *fay'*, was critical in consolidating the Islamic state, ensuring its economic stability, and firmly establishing the Prophet's (s) judicial and political authority.

Later, in a poignant reflection that transcends time, it is narrated that Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn, known as Imam Sajjad (a.s.), was once passing by a flowing water channel in Medina. He inquired of his companion, Hissan, about the purity of the water. Hissan, assuming it to be clean, expressed surprise at the question. The Imam then revealed that this seemingly pure water originated from the impure drain of Yazid's house. This profound statement subtly conveyed the moral and spiritual defilement of those who opposed the Prophet's (s) **Ahlulbayt**, linking it metaphorically to the physical impurity of their lineage. Imam Sajjad's (a.s.) own life was a testament to suffering, particularly the tragedy of Karbala, where his revered father, Imam Husayn (a.s.), and his companions were denied water for three agonizing days. This poignant anecdote underscores the ultimate sanctity of the **Ahlulbayt** and the enduring impurity of their oppressors, serving as a reminder of the spiritual implications of justice and injustice that began with the Prophet's (s) own life and rulings.

Chapter 86

The Revelation of Moral Laws and Early Expeditions

The period following the expulsion of Banu Nadir, though bringing relative peace and stability to Medina, presented new challenges and opportunities for the burgeoning Islamic state. The influx of wealth, acquired without battle and distributed among the *Muhajirun*, significantly improved the financial standing of the Muslim community. While not yet a state of complete affluence—a transformation that would largely occur after the Battle of Khaybar—it marked a notable improvement from the previous conditions of poverty and hardship. This newfound ease, however, brought with it the necessity for further moral and social reforms, as the human tendency, when relieved of dire poverty, can sometimes lead to moral laxity.

Among the Arabs, certain deeply ingrained habits, particularly the consumption of alcohol, were prevalent even before Islam. Though the Prophet Mohammad (s) and Islam inherently disliked such practices from the very beginning, their widespread nature meant that an immediate, outright prohibition was not yet divinely ordained for the common Muslims.

The wisdom of divine legislation unfolded gradually, preparing the community for full adherence.

The first hint of divine disapproval of alcohol appeared in Makkan *Surahs*, such as **Surah An-Nahl (16:67)**, which alluded to grapes and dates yielding both intoxicants and pure provision, subtly indicating God's preference for the latter. While this was not an outright ban, those with spiritual insight began to understand that God did not favor intoxication.

After the Muslims settled in Medina and achieved a measure of tranquility, the issue was addressed more directly. The first explicit verse concerning alcohol was revealed in **Surah Al-Baqarah (2:219)**: "**They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say, 'In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people; but their sin is greater than their benefit.'**" This verse, though highlighting the sinfulness and greater harm of alcohol, did not yet prohibit it absolutely. It acknowledged some perceived worldly benefits (like trade profits or temporary pleasure) but firmly established that the spiritual and moral detriment far outweighed them. Still, for some, this was not a clear enough command to abandon the habit entirely.

The next stage of prohibition came as a direct response to a real-life incident. One evening, during a social gathering in Medina, a group of Ansar had consumed alcohol. When the time for *Maghrib* prayer arrived, one of them, intoxicated, led the prayer. In his state, he misrecited **Surah Al-Kafirun**, saying, "**I worship that which you worship**" instead of "**I do not worship that which you worship**." This grave error, uttered during prayer, highlighted the profound danger of combining intoxication with worship. Promptly, the verse was revealed in **Surah An-Nisa (4:43)**: "**O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are in a state of intoxication until you know what you are saying.**" This command effectively mandated that Muslims abstain from alcohol a significant time

before prayer, ensuring they were fully aware and sober during their communion with God. This partial prohibition, though not a complete ban, began to restrict the consumption of alcohol significantly, as prayers are observed multiple times a day.

Despite this clear guidance, some Muslims continued to drink outside prayer times, clinging to the letter of the law rather than its spirit. Another incident soon followed, again during a social gathering where alcohol was consumed. Heated arguments erupted, escalating into physical altercations, with one man using a bone to strike another, causing injury. Such incidents of anger, loss of reason, and violence were common consequences of intoxication in pre-Islamic society. The Arabic word for wine, *Khamr*, itself derives from the root *khamara*, meaning "to veil" or "to cover," signifying how alcohol veils the intellect.

These recurring problems necessitated a final, decisive decree. Consequently, the definitive verses regarding the prohibition of alcohol and other related vices were revealed in **Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:90-91)**: "**O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone altars [to idols], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful. Satan only wants to cause animosity and hatred between you through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not then desist?**"

This powerful revelation left no room for ambiguity. Alcohol (*Khamr*), gambling (*Maysir*), sacrificial altars (*Ansāb*), and divining arrows (*Azlām*) were declared "defilement from the work of Satan." *Maysir* referred to any form of gambling where money was acquired without effort or risk, often through games of chance. *Ansāb* were upright stones or altars, not necessarily idols with form, but used for idol worship or un-Islamic sacrifices. *Azlām* were a specific form of gambling or divination using arrows

to distribute portions of sacrificed animals, often based on chance. The verses explicitly commanded complete avoidance for the believers' success, highlighting that these vices cause animosity and divert from God's remembrance and prayer.

The reaction of the Muslim community was immediate and profound. As soon as the news of the complete prohibition reached them—carried through the streets of Medina by designated reciters and memorizers of the Qur'an—Muslims throughout the city responded with unwavering obedience. History records that wine vessels and storage containers were emptied into the streets of Medina, creating streams of alcohol flowing through the alleys, a testament to their absolute submission to divine command.

A wave of concern, however, swept through the community regarding those who had died before the final prohibition, particularly the martyrs of Uhud who had consumed alcohol during their lives. People approached the Prophet (s), anxious about the fate of their deceased loved ones. In response, Allah revealed another reassuring verse in **Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:93)**: "**There is no blame upon those who have believed and done righteous deeds for what they have eaten and drunk [before its prohibition] as long as they have feared Allah and believed and done righteous deeds and then feared Allah and believed and then feared Allah and done good. And Allah loves those who do good.**" This verse brought immense solace, affirming that past actions, committed in ignorance of a future prohibition, would not count against those who had believed and acted righteously. It also underscored the importance of remembering and praying for the deceased.

Amidst these legislative changes, divine mercy was manifest in various ways. One notable incident involved a young man known for his struggle with alcohol. Despite his sincere desire to abstain, he often succumbed.

One day, while carrying a bottle of alcohol purchased from Jewish traders (who were not bound by this prohibition), he saw the Prophet (s) approaching. In his shame and fear, he instantly prayed to God, begging for a way to avoid public humiliation and promising sincere repentance. When the Prophet (s) asked what he was carrying, the young man, out of desperation, replied, "Vinegar, O Messenger of Allah!" The Prophet (s) passed without further comment. A curious companion, observing this, later questioned the young man's claim. To his astonishment, when he checked the bottle, it indeed contained vinegar. This miracle, while debated in its exact details, serves as a powerful testament to Allah's mercy, His covering of sins for the truly remorseful, and the transformative power of sincere intention and repentance.

Another incident during this period underscored the Prophet's (s) role as a divine judge and the unwavering commitment of Islam to justice. Following the Banu Nadir expulsion, an increase in wealth in Medina unfortunately led to an increase in theft. The house of Qatadah ibn Numan's uncle, a prominent *Sahabi*, was robbed by three brothers from the Banu Ubayriq tribe, who were outwardly Muslim but inwardly hypocrites. The stolen items included armor and food. The thieves, led by Tuma'a ibn Ubayriq, hid the stolen goods with a Jewish family. When confronted, their tribe, driven by tribal loyalty, defended them and, to deflect suspicion, attempted to frame an innocent Jewish man for the crime.

The case reached the Prophet (s). He listened to both sides. The representative of the Banu Ubayriq eloquently presented their defense, making the Prophet (s) inclined to believe their claims due to their apparent piety. However, before a judgment could be made, Allah revealed several verses in **Surah An-Nisa (4:105-107, 109-113)**, exposing the truth: "**Indeed, We have sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the Book with the truth so you may judge between the people by what Allah has shown you. And do not be an advocate for the traitors... And do not argue on behalf of**

those who deceive themselves. Indeed, Allah does not like whoever is a habitually sinful deceiver." These verses not only cleared the innocent Jewish man but also unequivocally declared the guilt of the Banu Ubayriq brothers, revealing their hypocrisy. The culprits, seeing their deceit exposed, fled to Mecca and eventually faced their deserved fate, both in this world and the hereafter. This incident firmly established the principle that divine justice transcends tribal loyalties and outward appearances.

During this period of consolidation, the Prophet (s) also led the **Ghazwah Dhat al-Riqa'** (Expedition of the Patches). This expedition, which occurred before the Battle of Khandaq, marked a shift in the Prophet's (s) direct involvement in military campaigns. After Banu Nadir's expulsion, he personally led many smaller and larger engagements (*Ghazwat*), whereas previously he often dispatched companions (*Saraya*). Dhat al-Riqa' was a preemptive strike against the Banu Salabah and Banu Muharib tribes in Najd, who were reportedly gathering forces to attack Medina. The name "Dhat al-Riqa'" (of the patches) is attributed either to the rough, patchy terrain, with its hills and valleys, or to the fact that the Muslim soldiers had to wrap patches of cloth around their feet due to the lack of shoes and the arduous journey.

During this expedition, a crucial innovation in Islamic worship was introduced: **Salat al-Khawf** (Prayer of Fear or Danger). While encamped, with the enemy close by, the time for prayer arrived. To ensure both spiritual duty and military vigilance, Allah revealed the procedure for *Salat al-Khawf* in **Surah An-Nisa (4:102)**. This specific prayer allowed the congregation to perform two *rak'ats* in shifts, with one portion of the army standing guard while the other prayed behind the Imam, then exchanging places. This innovative method, performed for the first time during Dhat al-Riqa', became a permanent part of Islamic jurisprudence, ensuring that even in times of extreme danger, the Muslims could fulfill their religious obligations. (It is important to note that the prayer of Imam Husayn in

Karbala, while performed in a state of fear, differed in its specifics due to the unique circumstance where the enemy's sole target was the Imam himself, leading to companions shielding him with their bodies).

These events—the gradual prohibition of alcohol, the revelation of divine justice concerning theft and false accusations, and the initiation of *Salat al-Khawf* during preemptive military action—showcased the Prophet's (s) comprehensive leadership in all aspects of life, as the Islamic state continued to mature and consolidate its moral and political foundations in Medina.

Chapter 87

The Expedition to Banu Mustaliq and the Jinn of Muraysi'

The fifth year after *Hijrah* (5 AH) saw the Prophet Mohammad (s), at approximately fifty-seven years of age, continuing to consolidate the Islamic state in Medina. The period following the Battle of Uhud, yet preceding the monumental Battle of the Ditch, was marked by persistent efforts by the Quraysh of Mecca to incite tribes against the Muslims. While the Quraysh themselves did not engage in direct confrontation with Medina for a year and a half after Uhud, they tirelessly worked to rally other Arabian tribes, fueling an atmosphere of constant apprehension and small-scale skirmishes.

One significant event during this interim was the **Badr al-Sughra** (Lesser Badr) or **Badr al-Akhirah** (Last Badr). Following their partial victory at Uhud, Abu Sufyan had challenged the Muslims to a rematch at Badr the following year. As the appointed time in the month of Dhul-Qa'dah approached, the Prophet (s) mobilized his forces and marched to Badr. Despite their prior bravado, the Quraysh, plagued by internal dissension and a lack of true resolve, hesitated. They arrived at the market of *Ma-*

jannah, a significant trading hub, but decided not to engage in combat, returning to Mecca in shame. This strategic retreat by the Quraysh, without a single sword clash, was a profound moral and psychological victory for the Muslims, affirming their steadfastness and further eroding the prestige of Mecca. The market at *Majannah*, situated near Medina and a traditional gathering place for trade and pilgrimage, thus witnessed not a battle, but a silent testament to Muslim resilience and divine support.

Shortly before this, another significant expedition, **Ghazwah Dhat al-Riqa'** (Expedition of the Rags), took place. As previously described, this was a preemptive strike against hostile tribes who were gathering to attack Medina. The name derived from the rags the Muslims tied around their feet due to the extremely rough and hot terrain. It was during this expedition that the *Salat al-Khawf* (Prayer of Fear) was first revealed, allowing Muslims to perform congregational prayers in two alternating groups, one praying while the other stood guard. A remarkable incident occurred during this expedition. While the Prophet (s) rested under a tree, a Bedouin chieftain from the enemy tribe approached him, snatching his sword and exclaiming, "Who will save you from me now, O Muhammad?" The Prophet (s) calmly replied, "Allah!" In that instant, the chieftain's hand trembled, and the sword fell. The Prophet (s) immediately seized the sword, asking, "Who will save you from me now?" Overwhelmed by this miraculous display of divine protection, the chieftain, utterly humbled, declared his faith and embraced Islam. This event underscored the Prophet's (s) unwavering reliance on Allah and the profound impact of divine intervention.

The narrative then progresses to the **Ghazwah Banu Mustaliq**, also known as **Ghazwah Muraysi'**, which occurred in the month of Sha'ban in 5 AH. Intelligence reached the Prophet (s) that Banu Mustaliq, a powerful branch of the Banu Khuza'a tribe, who enjoyed close ties with the Quraysh, were gathering their forces to attack Medina. This tribe, known for its numer-

ical strength and courage, posed a significant threat.

The Prophet (s) swiftly mobilized an army of approximately one thousand men, preparing for a preemptive strike. For the first time, a notable number of *munafiqin* (hypocrites) joined the expedition, their presence sowing discord and creating internal challenges within the Muslim ranks.

As the Muslim army advanced towards the well of Muraysi', a site belonging to the Banu Mustaliq, a profound and awe-inspiring event transpired. While the army was encamped, intelligence indicated that not only human enemies but also a contingent of *jinn* (supernatural beings) were allied with the disbelievers and preparing to ambush the Muslims. The Prophet (s) entrusted the standard to his cousin and son-in-law, Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.).

Imam Ali (a.s.) bravely advanced towards the source of the hidden threat, ordering his companions to hold their positions, as this was a unique confrontation. He faced the unseen adversaries, engaging them with his sword while reciting specific, powerful names of Allah. The earth beneath his feet shook violently, and loud screams and wails echoed through the valley as the *jinn* were struck down. Some Muslim companions who witnessed this awe-inspiring phenomenon reported seeing black, terrifying figures in the form of fierce creatures being overcome by Imam Ali's (a.s.) sword and the power of his recitations. The *jinn* were routed, and some of them later accepted Islam.

This extraordinary event at Muraysi' served as a powerful testament to Imam Ali's (a.s.) unparalleled spiritual and physical prowess, demonstrating the divine support bestowed upon him and the Prophet's (s) household. It revealed that the battles Muslims fought were not merely against human adversaries but also against unseen forces of evil. The victory at Banu Mustaliq further solidified the Muslims' authority and demoralized their enemies, showcasing the comprehensive nature of divine

aid and the Prophet's (s) proactive and divinely guided leadership.

This expedition, occurring just months before the Battle of the Ditch, further highlighted the constant threats faced by the nascent Islamic state and the multi-faceted challenges the Prophet (s) and his companions had to overcome. It also underscored the unwavering commitment of the true believers, contrasted with the subtle internal sabotage attempted by the *munafiqin*, as the Islamic community continued its journey towards establishing justice and truth.

Chapter 88

The Banu Mustaliq Expedition: Trials of Unity and Revelation of Truth

The fifth year of *Hijrah*, 5 AH, marked a pivotal period in the nascent Islamic state, distinguished by both significant military encounters and the comprehensive establishment of divine laws. This year, preceding the momentous Battle of Khandaq and the subsequent campaign against Banu Qurayza, also saw the revelation of numerous *fiqhi* injunctions, including the command for *Hijab*, intricate laws pertaining to divorce and false accusations, and the regulations for eclipse prayers. Such legislative developments signified the flourishing of Islamic governance, now sufficiently stable to receive and implement a broader range of divine statutes, unlike the earlier years in Mecca, primarily characterized by endurance and spiritual fortitude, or the initial years in Medina, dominated by defensive wars and the integration of *Muhajirun*. With the consolidation of Muslim authority and the wealth accrued from prior victories, the community had achieved a measure of stability, enabling deeper engagement with the intricacies of faith and law.

It was in this crucial year that intelligence reached the Prophet Moham-

mad (s) regarding a developing threat from the Banu Mustaliq, a branch of the Banu Khuzaymah tribe. Their chieftain, Harith, instigated by the Quraysh leaders, was reportedly gathering forces to launch an attack on Medina. In response, the Prophet (s) swiftly led an expedition, known as the Ghazwah Banu Mustaliq, also referred to as Ghazwah Muraysi' due to the battle taking place near a well by that name. As is common with many campaigns, the location near a water source was strategic, reflecting the tribal settlements of the time.

The campaign saw the participation of both sincere believers and hypocrites whose presence was often a source of internal discord. During this expedition, a notable event occurred, as mentioned in previous accounts, where Imam Ali (a.s.) engaged in a miraculous confrontation with a group of *jinn* allied with the disbelievers, emerging victorious and leading some of them to embrace Islam. This demonstrated the spiritual prowess and divine support granted to the Imam.

Upon reaching the Muraysi' well, the leader of Banu Mustaliq, Harith, was taken aback by the sudden arrival of the Muslim forces. His plan for a surprise attack on Medina was foiled. Harith fled the battlefield, but his son-in-law, Malik, and his own son bravely fought on, only to be slain by the sword of Imam Ali (a.s.). Following their demise and the loss of nine or ten other disbelievers, the Banu Mustaliq tribe lost morale and retreated en masse. The Muslims secured a decisive victory, with only one Muslim martyred, reportedly due to a misunderstanding.

The spoils of war were substantial, a testament to the strength and organization of the Muslim army. They included 200 camels, 2000 goats, 5000 sheep, and 202 women taken as captives. Among these captives was Barrah, the daughter of the fleeing chieftain Harith, whose husband had been killed by Imam Ali (a.s.) in the battle.

Upon their return to Medina, a remarkable series of events unfolded con-

cerning Barrah. According to narrations from the pure Imams, recorded by scholars like Allamah Majlisi and Allamah Tabarsi, Harith, the chieftain of Banu Mustaliq, arrived in Medina seeking the release of his daughter. He appealed to the Prophet (s), emphasizing her noble lineage and arguing that she, a chieftain's daughter, should not be treated as a common captive. The Prophet (s), in his unparalleled magnanimity, granted her freedom.

At this point, Barrah made a profound decision. She expressed her desire to embrace Islam and conveyed a dream she had experienced shortly before the Muslim arrival: a moon from Medina had entered her lap. She now understood this dream to signify her destiny with the Prophet (s). She expressed her wish to become a part of his household. The Prophet (s) accepted her proposal, and they were married. Barrah's name was subsequently changed to Juwayriyah. This blessed union had an immediate and profound impact on the Muslim community. Upon learning that Juwayriyah was now a Mother of the Believers, a spontaneous act of generosity swept through the Muslim ranks. Without any command or legal injunction, all Muslims who had taken captives from Banu Mustaliq decided to free them, reasoning that they could not possibly enslave the Prophet's (s) in-laws. This act of collective liberation resulted in the freedom of all 202 captives, marking an unprecedented release of an entire captive tribe in Islamic history. Even Aisha (r.a.) reportedly acknowledged Juwayriyah as the most blessed woman, whose marriage brought freedom to so many of her people.

However, the journey back to Medina was not without its internal challenges. During a stop near a well, a dispute arose between an *Ansari* and a *Muhajir* over water access. In the heat of the moment, each man called upon his tribal brethren, shouting, "O Ansar!" and "O Muhajirin!" respectively, evoking the old tribal affiliations of the era of *Jahiliyyah*. The Prophet (s) immediately intervened, sternly rebuking these calls. He de-

clared that such utterances were remnants of ignorance and whoever followed them had no connection to Islam. He firmly asserted that Islam had abolished all distinctions based on tribe, language, or origin, declaring all Muslims as brothers, equal descendants of Adam, with true superiority only found in *taqwa* (God-consciousness).

This incident provided fertile ground for Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the notorious leader of the hypocrites, to sow discord. Overhearing the dispute, he began to lament the *Muhajirin*'s supposed ingratitude, claiming that the *Ansar*, who had sheltered and supported them, were now being disrespected. He openly incited the *Ansar* to expel the *Muhajirin* from Medina upon their return, proclaiming, "When we return to Medina, the more honorable (meaning us, the Ansar) will surely expel the more humiliated (meaning the Muhajirin)."

A young and truthful companion, Zayd ibn Arqam, heard Abdullah ibn Ubayy's venomous speech and immediately reported it to the Prophet (s). When confronted, Abdullah ibn Ubayy vehemently denied having uttered such words, swearing by Allah to defend his lie. Zayd, though initially disheartened by the denial, was soon vindicated by divine revelation. Shortly after, the verses of *Surah al-Munafiqoon* (Chapter of the Hypocrites) were revealed, directly quoting Abdullah ibn Ubayy's words and exposing his hypocrisy. The Qur'an affirmed that "Honor belongs to Allah, and to His Messenger, and to the believers," thereby confirming Zayd's truthfulness and utterly refuting Abdullah ibn Ubayy's false oath and claims. This revelation solidified Zayd's reputation and served as a powerful indictment of the hypocrites. Despite the clear divine condemnation, Abdullah ibn Ubayy, when confronted by his own tribe, refused to seek forgiveness from the Prophet (s), displaying unyielding arrogance. His own son, a devout Muslim, even approached the Prophet (s) offering to execute his father if commanded, to prevent any other Muslim from doing it and potentially bearing animosity towards them. The Prophet

(s) however, refused, stating that he did not wish for it to be said that Muhammad killed his own companions.

In a remarkable display of strategic wisdom and leadership, to defuse the intense emotions and prevent further internal strife, the Prophet (s) ordered the army to march continuously without rest for 24 hours. The grueling, non-stop journey left everyone exhausted, effectively diverting their attention from the recent discord and allowing the heated emotions to subside. This proved to be an effective method to manage potential outbreaks of conflict among the ranks.

As the Muslim army neared Medina, a fierce, unprecedented sandstorm erupted, astonishing even the local Arabs. The Prophet (s) revealed that this storm was a sign of the death of Rifaa', another prominent hypocrite leader, whose funeral procession was taking place. Furthermore, the Prophet (s) miraculously informed them of the exact location of his lost camel, which had strayed. This incident, witnessed by all, further underscored the Prophet's (s) divine knowledge and connection to the unseen, reinforcing faith among the believers and bewildering the hypocrites who had doubted his wisdom.

The Ghazwah Banu Mustaliq, therefore, was not merely a military victory; it was a profound period of internal purification and consolidation, highlighting the dangers of tribalism and hypocrisy, and demonstrating the Prophet's (s) divine guidance and astute leadership in forging a unified community under the banner of Islam.

Chapter 89

The Slander of Ifk and the Demise of the Chief Hypocrite

The return journey from the *Ghazwah Banu Mustaliq* (Muraysi') continued to unfold with significant events that shaped the nascent Islamic society and further revealed the persistent challenges posed by internal hypocrisy. Following the incident where Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites, openly incited discord between the *Muhajirun* and *Ansar*, a tense atmosphere prevailed. His own son, who was a sincere Muslim and a staunch believer, learned of his father's vile instigation. Fearing that the Prophet (s) might order his father's execution, he presented himself before the Prophet (s), offering to personally carry out the punishment if decreed, to spare others the burden. The Prophet (s), with profound wisdom and compassion, assured the young man that no such command had been issued and that, far from punishment, he would treat Abdullah ibn Ubayy with kindness for the sake of his devout son.

Upon the caravan's arrival in Medina, as the Muslims dispersed to their homes, Abdullah ibn Ubayy's son stood guard at the entrance to their neighborhood, preventing his father from entering. He declared that his

father, who had dared to call the Prophet (s) and the *Muhajirun* 'lowly,' would not set foot in Medina until the Prophet (s) granted permission. Abdullah ibn Ubayy, accustomed to respect and leadership, was humiliated and chose to remain outside Medina, sending a message to the Prophet (s) through his companions. The Prophet (s) immediately sent word to the son, advising him not to dishonor his father, and allowed Abdullah ibn Ubayy to enter the city. This public disgrace, coupled with the previous incidents that exposed his hypocrisy, deeply affected Abdullah ibn Ubayy. He fell ill and, after a few days, passed away.

Upon receiving news of his death, the Prophet (s) displayed an extraordinary act of compassion. He sent his own shirt to be used as a shroud for Abdullah ibn Ubayy and personally attended his funeral prayer. This act surprised some companions, who questioned why the Prophet (s) would show such honor to a man who had been a perpetual enemy of Islam and its messenger. The Prophet (s) initially remained silent, but when their objections persisted, he explained that his prayer was not for Abdullah ibn Ubayy's salvation, but rather a form of divine imprecation, and a gesture of kindness towards his loyal son. This incident ultimately led to the revelation of a Qur'anic verse forbidding the Prophet (s) from ever praying for hypocrites, solidifying Abdullah ibn Ubayy's infamous place in Islamic history as the epitome of hypocrisy.

During this same return journey from the *Ghazwah Banu Mustaliq*, another significant event unfolded, known as the **Incident of the Slander** (*Hadith al-Ifk*). It concerned **Sayyidah Aishah**, one of the Prophet's (s) wives, and **Safwan ibn Mu'attal**, a companion. It was customary for the Prophet (s) to take one of his wives with him on expeditions, chosen by drawing lots to ensure fairness. On this occasion, Sayyidah Aishah accompanied him.

One night, as the caravan halted, Sayyidah Aishah left her *howdah* (a covered litter carried on a camel) for a personal need. Upon her return, she

realized she had lost her necklace. She went back to search for it, unaware that the caravan had already begun to depart. As Sayyidah Aishah was light in weight, those tasked with lifting her *howdah* onto the camel did not realize it was empty. They mounted it, and the vast caravan, comprising thousands, moved on, leaving her behind.

Safwan ibn Mu'attal, whose duty it was to trail behind the caravan to pick up any dropped items, discovered Sayyidah Aishah alone in the desert. Recognizing her, he immediately brought his camel close, dismounted, and allowed her to ride, while he walked alongside until they rejoined the caravan at the next halt.

However, this innocent incident was immediately seized upon by Abdullah ibn Ubayy. Already nursing deep resentment and a desire for sedition, he saw an opportunity to spread malicious rumors and slander against Sayyidah Aishah and Safwan. The false accusations (*ifk*) quickly spread throughout Medina, causing immense distress to the Prophet (s) and his household. Some Muslims, including the Prophet's (s) cousin **Hamnah bint Jahsh**, **Misṭaḥ ibn Uthathah**, and **Ḥassān ibn Thābit**, became unwitting or active participants in propagating this slander, either by spreading it or by passively listening without condemning it.

Sayyidah Aishah herself fell ill upon returning to Medina and remained unaware of the circulating rumors for about a month. During this period, she noticed the Prophet (s) was not as attentive as usual, which added to her distress. It was only when she went to visit her aunt and learned the full extent of the allegations from her that she was profoundly shocked. In her distress, she sought refuge in her mother's home.

The Muslim community grappled with the implications of the slander. Many were swayed by the false reports, while others, though disbelieving, remained silent, unknowingly contributing to the problem. The Prophet (s) consulted with close companions like **Usama ibn Zayd** and **Imam Ali**

(**a.s.**). He also spoke with Sayyidah Aishah's maid, who attested to her innocence and naive nature.

Finally, after a month of intense emotional turmoil, divine intervention arrived. A series of verses from **Surah An-Nur** (**Chapter 24** of the Qur'an, particularly from Ayah 11 to 26) were revealed, unequivocally refuting the slander, exonerating Sayyidah Aishah, and condemning the fabricators and disseminators of the false accusations. These verses established strict laws against *qadhf* (slanderous accusation of unchastity), stipulating that anyone who accuses chaste men or women without producing four just witnesses shall be flogged with eighty lashes, and their testimony shall never be accepted thereafter, for they are indeed *fasiqoon* (transgressors). The Qur'an also sternly admonished those believers who heard the slander and did not immediately dismiss it as a clear falsehood.

Following the revelation, the slanderers, including Hamnah bint Jahsh, Misṭaḥ ibn Uthathah, and Ḥassān ibn Thābit, were subjected to the prescribed punishment of eighty lashes. This public chastisement served as a powerful deterrent against such malicious acts. Abdullah ibn Ubayy, whose reputation was already shattered, could not endure this final public humiliation and further illness, leading to his death. This tragic end highlighted the severe consequences of his deep-seated hypocrisy and treachery.

Sayyidah Aishah, upon hearing the verses of her vindication, expressed her gratitude to Allah alone, recognizing that it was divine justice that cleared her name. This incident also solidified the Islamic principle regarding the purity of the Prophets' wives, affirming that they cannot commit such grave sins.

The period surrounding the *Ghazwah Banu Mustaliq* was indeed a crucible of challenges, testing the *Ummah's* unity and faith. As one major trial concluded, another significant event in the Prophet's (s) life was about to

unfold: his marriage to **Sayyidah Zaynab bint Jahsh**. This union, too, would be accompanied by its own set of unique circumstances and further Qur'anic revelations, dispelling misinterpretations and laying down crucial social and familial injunctions.

Chapter 90

Upholding Truth and Honoring Families: Divine Guidance and Justice in the Aftermath

The **Ghazwah Banu Mustaliq**, though outwardly a successful military campaign, unfolded as a crucible for the nascent Muslim community, revealing profound internal dynamics that would shape Islamic society for generations. Its true significance lay not merely in its military outcome, but in the weighty events that transpired during and after it, providing timeless lessons in social ethics, justice, and the nature of hypocrisy.

The relentless sedition of Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites, continued to test the Prophet's (s) sagacity. His audacious attempts to sow discord, most notably by calling for the expulsion of the *Muhajirun* from Medina and later orchestrating the slander against Sayyidah Aishah and Safwan ibn Mu'attal, underscored the persistent internal threat he posed. Yet, the Prophet (s), in his unparalleled wisdom, navigated these challenges with a blend of firmness and remarkable compassion. The divine revelation of **Surah al-Munafiqoon** (The Hypocrites) unequivo-

cally exposed Abdullah ibn Ubayy's duplicity and solidified his infamous legacy. Furthermore, a later divine decree forbade the Prophet (s) from performing funeral prayers for hypocrites, a powerful testament to their condemned status. This approach, while outwardly lenient in not resorting to direct punishment, subtly but surely undermined his influence, affirming divine justice.

The harrowing **Incident of the Slander** (*Hadith al-Ifk*), which also unfolded in the wake of the Banu Mustaliq expedition, caused immense anguish within the Prophet's (s) household and the broader Muslim community. The malicious rumors, spearheaded by Abdullah ibn Ubayy, cast a shadow over innocent reputations. For a month, the Prophet (s) and his family endured this torment. However, divine intervention brought solace and clarity through the revelation of verses in **Surah An-Nur**, unequivocally exonerating Sayyidah Aishah and condemning the slanderers. The Qur'an established stringent deterrents against false accusations, emphasizing the grave sinfulness of slander and demanding irrefutable proof from accusers. This divine decree served to safeguard the honor of individuals and families within the nascent Islamic society, promoting truthfulness and accountability.

A related, profound mechanism for truth-seeking in cases of severe accusations of adultery without witnesses was also revealed: the process of **Mula'anah** or mutual imprecation. In such a scenario, where a husband accuses his wife but lacks four witnesses, or vice versa, the matter is resolved through a solemn exchange of oaths. The accuser must swear five times, invoking Allah's curse upon himself if he is lying. The accused then has the right to clear her name by also swearing five times, invoking Allah's wrath upon herself if the accusation is true. This divine process underscores the gravity of such accusations, placing the burden of truth and the ultimate judgment before Allah, thereby preserving honor and ensuring a pathway to resolution in the absence of conventional evidence.

It serves as a powerful reminder of the sacredness of trust and the severity of false claims in the eyes of God.

The aftermath of the Banu Mustaliq campaign also laid the groundwork for important social reforms regarding the treatment of captives and the institution of slavery. While the Prophet (s) himself set an unparalleled example by marrying Juwayriyah bint al-Harith, the chief of Banu Mustaliq, and subsequently leading the entire tribe to freedom, comprehensive guidelines were established for the humane treatment of all captives. Specifically, the practice emerged where female captives who bore children to their masters were to be granted freedom upon the master's death, ensuring the dignified status of both mother and child. These progressive rulings reflected Islam's continuous trajectory towards the eventual abolition of slavery and emphasized compassion and justice in all social interactions.

As Islam's influence grew, particularly after the subsequent **Truce of Hudaybiyyah** (to be covered in later chapters), various tribes began sending delegations (*wufood*) to Medina to embrace Islam and learn from the Prophet (s). Among these was the **Wafd of Abd al-Qays**. The Prophet (s) received them with warmth and provided them with invaluable guidance. He advised them on fundamental principles of faith, including four crucial acts of worship and four prohibitions related to their way of life. Notably, in reinforcing the prohibition of alcohol, he advised them to abstain from storing it in certain types of vessels that might encourage its consumption, further cementing the absolute ban on intoxicants and promoting a life of spiritual purity. This meticulous guidance demonstrated the Prophet's (s) comprehensive approach to instructing new converts, ensuring not only their belief but also their practical adherence to Islamic principles.

Throughout these profound events, the Prophet (s) consistently empha-

sized the critical importance of verifying information. The Qur'anic directive in **Surah al-Hujurat, Ayah 6—"O you who have believed, if a disobedient one comes to you with any news, verify it, lest you harm people out of ignorance and then regret what you have done."**—became a cornerstone of Muslim social ethics. This principle, underscored by the *Hadith al-Ifk* incident, taught the community to guard against rumor and baseless accusations, fostering a society founded on truth and justice.

The life of the Prophet (s) and his companions was replete with trials, yet their unwavering faith and the divine guidance they received transformed these challenges into profound lessons for humanity. Three types of great calamities, often testing individuals to their core, were alluded to: the loss of a beloved child, the ruin of one's home, and the malicious gossip that causes widespread distress. In the face of such profound tribulations, the steadfastness of figures like Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.), who endured unimaginable hardship and loss, stands as an eternal beacon of resilience and unwavering submission to Allah's will. Her life, though marked by immense suffering, perfectly embodied the spirit of fortitude and devotion, inspiring believers across generations to find strength in faith amidst life's greatest trials.

Chapter 91

Divine Decrees and Profound Transformations: The Year of Enduring Trials and a Mother's Farewell

The fifth year of *Hijrah*, 5 AH, marked a profoundly significant period in the life of Prophet Mohammad (s) and the nascent Islamic state. By this time, eighteen years had passed since the declaration of his prophethood, and the Prophet (s) was in his fifty-eighth year. This year was especially crucial for the establishment of the Islamic legal framework, witnessing the revelation of numerous injunctions that would shape the *Shari'ah* until the Day of Judgment. Among these were twelve paramount rulings, twelve pillars of Islamic law, which permanently defined what is *halal* (permissible) and *haram* (forbidden) for all time.

As previously discussed, this pivotal year saw the complete and definitive prohibition of alcohol and gambling, the formalization of *Tayammum* (dry ablution) as an alternative when water is unavailable for purification, and the detailed instruction for *Salat al-Khawf* (Prayer of Fear) to be performed during times of conflict. These rulings underscored Islam's practical and

comprehensive approach to daily life and spiritual obligations, even in the most challenging circumstances.

The year 5 AH also brought forth further significant divine decrees, including the institution of *Salat al-Ayat* (the Prayer of Signs). This unique prayer, distinct from the daily ritual prayers, becomes obligatory upon specific celestial or natural phenomena. Initially, its observance was commanded during solar and lunar eclipses. A remarkable event in Rajab of 5 AH further expanded its scope: an earthquake struck Medina, a region not typically prone to such tremors. The tremor caused widespread alarm, prompting the inhabitants to rush to the Prophet (s) for guidance. In response, he (s) declared, **"Indeed, Allah desires that you seek His forgiveness."** This divine pronouncement established that *Salat al-Ayat* is also to be performed during earthquakes, serving as a reminder for people to engage in *tawbah* (repentance and seeking forgiveness), a concept that extends beyond mere regret for sins to encompass a broader turning towards Allah and seeking His pleasure. It was emphasized that while daily prayers might be performed in two units (*rak'ahs*), the *Salat al-Ayat* is a specific instruction to turn to Allah in humility and repentance during such events, with its *qadha* (make-up) remaining obligatory if missed.

Building upon the earlier revelations regarding slander and false accusations—a topic profoundly addressed after the **Incident of the Slander** (*Hadith al-Ifk*)—the fifth year of *Hijrah* reinforced the grave prohibition of accusing chaste women of adultery without valid evidence. This was a severe crime, a *Kabirah Dhunub* (major sin), demanding four witnesses to substantiate such claims, failing which the accuser would face stringent penalties.

Another critical social reform introduced in 5 AH addressed the pre-Islamic practice of *dhihar*. In the era of *jahiliyya*, if a husband declared his wife to be "like his mother's back" or "like his mother," it was considered a

form of permanent divorce, rendering the wife forbidden to him forever and leaving her in a state of limbo, unable to remarry or return to her husband. This oppressive custom devastated families. A poignant incident involving a companion, Khawla bint Tha'labah, brought this issue to the Prophet (s). Her elderly husband, in a fit of anger, pronounced *dhihar* upon her. Distraught, Khawla appealed to the Prophet (s), who initially expressed that he had no divine command regarding it. However, soon thereafter, **Surah Al-Mujadilah** (58:1-4) was revealed, explicitly addressing and condemning *dhihar*. The Qur'an clarified that *dhihar* does not constitute a divorce but makes the wife forbidden until the husband performs a specified expiation (*kaffarah*): freeing a slave, or if that is not possible, fasting for sixty consecutive days, or if that is also not possible, feeding sixty poor people. This ruling dismantled a harmful *jahili* practice, offering a just resolution while emphasizing accountability for reckless words.

Perhaps the most transformative social reform revealed in 5 AH, however, revolved around the deeply ingrained Arab custom of adoption. In *jahiliyya*, an adopted child was treated precisely like a biological child, inheriting from the adoptive parents and forbidden in marriage to those who would be considered biological relatives. Islam acknowledged the noble act of caring for and fostering a child but fundamentally altered the legal implications of adoption, particularly concerning inheritance and marital relationships. The prime example of this was the case of Zayd ibn Harithah (r.a.).

Zayd, a young boy from a noble lineage, had been captured by enemies and sold as a slave in the market of Okaz. The Prophet Mohammad (s), touched by his dignified appearance, purchased him. Later, Zayd's father, Harithah, learned of his son's whereabouts in Mecca and came to retrieve him. In a remarkable demonstration of devotion and love for the Prophet (s), Zayd refused to return with his biological father, declaring

his desire to remain with Prophet Mohammad (s). The Prophet (s), in turn, declared Zayd free and, out of affection, would refer to him as his "son" or *mawla* (freed slave and close companion). This was a social designation of immense love, not a legal adoption that created blood ties in the Islamic sense.

As Zayd matured, the Prophet (s) sought to arrange his marriage, recognizing the importance of marriage in a young person's life to prevent them from falling into sin. The Prophet (s) proposed that Zayd marry Zaynab bint Jahsh (r.a.), who was his own cousin and a woman of noble lineage from the Banu Hashim. Initially, Zaynab and her brother Abdullah ibn Jahsh hesitated and expressed reluctance, as Zayd had been a slave. This hesitation stemmed from the deeply ingrained aristocratic tribal prejudices of *jahiliyya*, which prioritized lineage and status above all else.

In response to this reluctance, a profound and unequivocal divine revelation came down: **"It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should have any choice in their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error."** (**Qur'an 33:36**). Upon hearing this verse, Sayyidah Zaynab (r.a.) and her brother immediately submitted to the divine command, recognizing the absolute authority of Allah and His Messenger (s) in all matters. The marriage of Zayd and Zaynab thus took place, embodying the principle that piety and submission to Allah supersede lineage and social status.

However, despite their submission, Zayd and Zaynab's marriage faced challenges. Some historians suggest that Zaynab's noble lineage and pride in her *Hashimite* ancestry, combined with Zayd's former status as a slave, led to internal discord. Zayd eventually came to the Prophet (s) wishing to divorce Zaynab. The Prophet (s) initially advised him, saying,

"Fear Allah and keep your wife," discouraging the divorce. This advice is recorded in the **Holy Qur'an** itself (**Qur'an 33:37**), which states that the Prophet (s) concealed something within himself that Allah was to disclose, fearing the people more than Allah. This refers to the divine pre-knowledge that Zayd and Zaynab's marriage would not last and that a greater divine purpose was at play.

Eventually, Zayd divorced Zaynab. It was then that a second divine command was revealed to the Prophet (s): he was to marry Zaynab himself. This command was of immense significance, designed to definitively abolish the *jahili* custom that treated an adopted son as a biological son, particularly concerning marriage to his former wife. In pre-Islamic Arabia, it was considered incestuous for a man to marry the divorced wife of his adopted son. By marrying Zaynab, the Prophet (s) was commanded to dismantle this deeply ingrained social taboo, demonstrating that adoption creates no legal impediment to marriage. This act, though difficult for the Prophet (s) due to potential public scrutiny, was a divine imperative to establish a crucial legal and social precedent for the *Ummah*, affirming that relationships are defined by blood or marital ties, not by adoptive customs.

Amidst these profound social and legal transformations, the Prophet (s) also experienced a deeply personal loss in 5 AH: the passing of his beloved aunt and the mother of Imam Ali (a.s.), Fatima bint Asad (a.s.). Fatima bint Asad was more than an aunt to Prophet Mohammad (s); she was like a mother, having cared for him with immense love and tenderness after the demise of his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib. The Prophet (s) loved her dearly and openly expressed his profound grief at her passing, saying, "Today my mother has passed away."

The Prophet's (s) actions during her burial highlighted her immense status and his boundless affection. He (s) personally participated in her

ghusl (ritual washing), clothed her in his own shirt, and, astonishingly, entered her grave to lie in it briefly, explaining that he did so to ease the pressure and darkness of the grave for her. This act was a unique expression of his intercession. As her body was lowered into the grave, the Prophet (s) himself positioned her and then imparted a profound instruction, asking her to declare her *walī* (guardian) and *Imam* when questioned by the angels of the grave. He instructed her to state, "My son, Ali," thereby publicly declaring and affirming the *wilayah* of Imam Ali (a.s.) even at the moment of burial. This moment underscored the continuous emphasis on Imam Ali's (a.s.) divinely ordained position throughout the Prophet's (s) life.

The sacred narratives also offer reflections on the nature of marital harmony and the importance of humility within the family unit. When Sayyidah Fatima Zahra (a.s.) entered the household of Fatima bint Asad (a.s.) as Imam Ali's (a.s.) bride, she was the **Sayyidatun Nisa' al-Alamin** (Leader of the Women of all Worlds), holding supreme spiritual and moral authority. Yet, Imam Ali (a.s.) addressed his mother, Fatima bint Asad (a.s.), with immense respect, saying, "Mother, Fatima (Zahra) has come to assist you with the household chores." This simple statement beautifully encapsulates the Islamic ideal of a harmonious marital relationship, where the daughter-in-law, even one of the highest spiritual stature, willingly takes on responsibilities and is seen as a helper, fostering an environment of mutual respect and cooperation rather than hierarchy or conflict.

The discourse then turned to the profound suffering and eventual passing of Sayyidah Fatima Zahra (a.s.) herself, though this occurred chronologically much later (in 11 AH). Her example serves as a potent reminder of the fragility of human life, even for the most revered figures, and the constant need for devotion (*amal*) and piety (*taqwa*). In her final days, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) was so weakened from her afflictions that she could no

longer stand to perform her obligatory prayers, performing them sitting on her bed. A week before her martyrdom, she saw her beloved father, Prophet Mohammad (s), and her mother, Sayyidah Khadijah (a.s.), in a dream, confirming her imminent departure from this world.

Despite her extreme physical weakness, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) spent her last hours meticulously preparing for her departure: cleaning her home, washing the clothes of her children, Imam Hassan (a.s.) and Imam Hussein (a.s.), and preparing for her final moments. When Imam Ali (a.s.) returned home from the mosque after the morning prayer, he was astonished by her strength, knowing her condition. Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) explained that she was making these preparations because she feared leaving her children unattended after her passing. She then recounted her dream, confirming that her father and mother had come to take her home.

Imam Ali (a.s.) then went to look for Hassan and Hussein (a.s.), who were accustomed to spending their mornings at their grandfather's grave. Upon their return, they asked Sayyidah Fiddah (r.a.) about their mother's whereabouts. Fiddah, in deep sorrow, directed them to their mother's chamber. When they entered, they found their mother lying still, covered by a sheet. Imam Hassan (a.s.) tried to rouse her by shaking her feet, but there was no response. Imam Hussein (a.s.) moved to her head, removed the sheet, and cradled her. He called out, "Mother, Mother," twice, but still, there was no reply. His heart-wrenching lament, "Mother, your Hussein is calling you, and you are not answering him!" was the final sorrowful cry that broke the heart of his pure mother.

This profoundly tragic episode, though occurring years after the events of 5 AH, is presented as a culmination of the Prophet's (s) household's trials and a powerful lesson in resilience, devotion, and the impermanence of this world. It underscores the profound sacrifices of the *Ahlulbayt* and reminds all believers of the absolute necessity of righteous deeds (*amal*)

and unwavering piety (*taqwā*) in preparing for the ultimate journey, emphasizing that even the greatest figures feared the grave and the Day of Judgment, urging us to reflect on our own spiritual preparedness.

Chapter 92

Societal Redefinitions and the Miraculous Advent of Imam Ali (a.s.)

The fifth year of *Hijrah* continued to be a period of profound transformations and divine legislations, confronting and dismantling deeply entrenched *jahiliyya* customs. Among the most challenging was the abolition of the pre-Islamic practice of adoption, which treated adopted children as biological offspring for matters of marriage and inheritance. As previously narrated, this divine decree was powerfully exemplified by the marriage of Zayd ibn Harithah (r.a.) and Zaynab bint Jahsh (r.a.), their subsequent divorce, and the Prophet Mohammad's (s) marriage to Zaynab (r.a.). This specific union, divinely commanded through **Qur'an 33:36-37**, was met with significant societal resistance and gossip.

Islam's fundamental declaration from its very inception was for believers to enter into it "completely" (**Qur'an 2:208**), signifying that no aspect of one's life—be it personal, familial, or societal—is outside the purview of divine guidance. Unlike other faiths that might restrict religious practice to certain days or rituals, Islam demands a comprehensive commitment. This comprehensive approach often necessitated challenging established

customs, a task far more arduous than prescribing new rituals like prayers or fasting. Changing ingrained social norms was akin to demolishing an old, illicit structure before building anew, a far greater undertaking than merely constructing on vacant land. The Prophet (s) faced considerable difficulty in altering these societal habits, and the incident of Zaynab's marriage stands as a prime example. While the Prophet (s) faced little resistance in encouraging prayer, fasting, or *jihad*, dismantling the *jahiliyya* concept of adopted sonship, where a divorced wife of an adopted son was considered as one's own daughter-in-law, stirred immense controversy. So significant was this matter that **Surah al-Ahzab, Ayah 37** specifically addressed it, revealing that the Prophet (s) himself harbored reservations about public reaction but was commanded by Allah to proceed, lest he fear human judgment over Divine decree. This verse served as a clear declaration that Allah and His Messenger have ultimate authority, and once a matter is decided, believers have no room for personal preference or traditional adherence.

Following the marriage of the Prophet (s) to Zaynab (r.a.), her *walimah* (wedding feast) was held. This occasion became another turning point for the Muslim community, leading to a crucial divine legislation regarding social etiquette and *hijab*. During the feast, some guests lingered unnecessarily, engaging in prolonged conversation after the meal, which caused discomfort to the Prophet (s). While not explicitly forbidden, this behavior was a breach of decorum in the Prophet's (s) household. The Prophet (s), in his noble character, did not directly ask them to leave. It was at this juncture that Allah revealed **Qur'an 33:53**: **"O you who have believed, do not enter the houses of the Prophet unless permission is given to you for a meal, without waiting for its preparation. But when you are invited, then enter; and when you have eaten, disperse without seeking to remain for conversation. Indeed, that [behavior] was troubling the Prophet, and he would be shy of [dismissing] you, but Allah**

is not shy of the truth. And when you ask [his wives] for anything, ask them from behind a partition. That is purer for your hearts and their hearts. And it is not [lawful] for you to harm the Messenger of Allah or to marry his wives after him, ever. Indeed, that in the sight of Allah is a grave [matter].” This verse established stringent rules of etiquette for visiting the Prophet's (s) household, emphasizing respect, privacy, and the concept of *hijab* (veil/partition) for interaction with his wives. It highlighted that even for the most revered individuals like the Prophet's (s) wives, who were considered *Ummul Mo'mineen* (Mothers of the Believers), strict adherence to *hijab* and dignified interaction was essential to maintain purity of hearts for both parties. This divine instruction underscored Islam's emphasis on *adab* (etiquette) and the importance of preserving moral boundaries in society.

While the life of the Prophet (s) continued to unfold with such pivotal events, this narrative now pauses its strict chronological progression to commemorate a momentous event in Islamic history, observed annually on the 13th of Rajab: the sacred birth of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.). This departure from immediate sequence is to properly honor the profound significance of this unique occurrence.

Long before the advent of Islam, the Ka'bah in Mecca, the sacred House of Allah, was subjected to transformations. Years before the Prophet's (s) birth, approximately 30 years prior to the year of the Elephant, the Ka'bah caught fire. The Quraysh decided to rebuild it, seeing it as an opportunity to enhance their prestige. They collected funds, but a serpent, a guardian of the Ka'bah's sanctity, appeared, preventing anyone from approaching the construction. Abu Talib, the revered uncle of the Prophet (s) and a man of immense wisdom and piety, stepped forward. He declared that only pure, lawful funds should be used for the Ka'bah's reconstruction. He identified a portion of the collected wealth as *haram* (unlawful), deeming it unacceptable for Allah's House. Upon his instruction, the impure

funds were removed. The serpent then vanished, allowing the reconstruction to proceed. Abu Talib himself laid the very first stone of the purified Ka'bah's foundation, a momentous act symbolizing his unparalleled connection to the sacred House and his unwavering commitment to divine principles even before the formal revelation of Islam.

This purified Ka'bah was destined to witness a miraculous birth. On the 13th of Rajab, Fatima bint Asad (a.s.), the noble wife of Abu Talib and mother of Imam Ali (a.s.), felt the pangs of labor. She was a woman of immense piety, who had nurtured the Prophet (s) from a young age, earning his profound love and respect, to the extent that he often referred to her as his mother. As her labor intensified, she approached the Ka'bah, invoking Allah's mercy and seeking refuge in His sacred House. She prayed, declaring her faith in Allah, His prophets, and His revealed books, reaffirming her steadfast adherence to the path of her ancestor, Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), who had built the Ka'bah. She sought help by the sanctity of the Ka'bah, by the one who built it (Ibrahim), and by the child in her womb who conversed with her and brought solace.

To the astonishment of eyewitnesses, including Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (a.s.), a wall of the Ka'bah miraculously split open, and Fatima bint Asad (a.s.) stepped inside. The wall then sealed behind her. She remained within the sacred precincts for three days, during which she was divinely sustained and attended by heavenly maidens. The entire city of Mecca was in awe, with people continuously gathering around the Ka'bah, trying to open its locked doors, but to no avail. For three days, no one could enter or exit the Ka'bah. The incident became the sole topic of discussion in Mecca's alleys and markets, baffling its inhabitants.

On the third day, the 16th of Rajab, as the sun began to rise, the same wall of the Ka'bah split open once more, and Fatima bint Asad (a.s.) emerged, cradling her newborn son, Imam Ali (a.s.). As she stepped out, a divine

voice from within the Ka'bah addressed her: **"O Fatima! You have given birth to a son whom I have named Ali, after My own name, Al-Ali (The Exalted). This child will be the first to break the idols in My House and will be the first to believe in My Messenger, Mohammad, and confirm him."** This was a direct divine naming and a prophetic declaration of Ali's (a.s.) future role.

Abu Talib (a.s.), overjoyed, took his newborn son into his arms. It was customary in *Jahiliyya* for newborns to be taken to certain mountains or caves to be blessed or tested. Abu Talib, accompanied by the Prophet (s), took Ali (a.s.) to a nearby mountain. There, a serpent appeared. In a miraculous demonstration of his divine status, the infant Ali (a.s.) interacted with the serpent, and in a profound symbolic gesture, split it into two. This extraordinary event was understood to signify Ali's (a.s.) future role as *Qasim al-Jannah wan-Nar*, the Divider of Paradise and Hell, highlighting his ultimate authority in determining the fate of souls based on their love and adherence to him and the Divine path.

This unique birth of Imam Ali (a.s.) within the Ka'bah, a distinction shared by no other human being, stands as a testament to his unparalleled spiritual station and his pivotal role in the unfolding of divine history, a role already ordained before his advent into this world.

Chapter 93

Consolidating Shari'ah: Divine Etiquette, Perpetual Charity, and the Gathering Storm of Ahzab

The fifth year of *Hijrah* (5 AH) unfolded as a period of profound transformation and escalating challenges for the nascent Muslim community in Medina. Nestled between the trying aftermath of Uhud and the monumental confrontation of Khandaq, these months were marked by a flurry of legislative decrees and continuous military readiness, all while the Prophet (s) meticulously laid the foundational stones of Islamic society.

The earlier chapters touched upon the divine marriage of the Prophet (s) to Zaynab bint Jahsh (r.a.), an event that transcended personal unions to become a pivotal legislative act. This marriage, uniquely acknowledged by the **Holy Qur'an** (unlike any other marriage of the Prophet, save for that to Sayyidah Khadijah (a.s.), whose mention also appears in the Qur'an), was a direct divine command designed to dismantle the deeply ingrained *jahiliyya* custom of treating adopted children as biological offspring, particularly in matters of marriage and inheritance. While

divinely mandated, this union initially stirred considerable controversy among the hypocrites and even some nascent believers, who struggled to comprehend its profound implications for societal norms. The Qur'an, however, swiftly responded with clear revelations, affirming the Prophet's (s) obedience to **Allah's** decree and clarifying the wisdom behind it. It underscored that the Prophet (s) was merely fulfilling **Allah's** will, demonstrating that while he might show humility or shyness, **Allah** would not shy away from establishing truth for the benefit of humanity.

This transformative marriage of Zaynab (r.a.) became the precursor to two significant social injunctions that further refined the fabric of Muslim society. The first pertained to the etiquette of interaction within the Prophet's (s) household and, by extension, for all Muslims. This involved the revelation of **Ayat al-Hijab** (**Qur'an 33:53**), which mandated that believers, when addressing the Prophet's wives, should do so from behind a screen (*hijab*), emphasizing the purity of hearts that such a practice fosters. This *ayah* also laid down crucial principles of social conduct: not loitering after being invited to a meal, not imposing on the host's time, and respecting privacy. The divine instruction implicitly critiqued prevailing *jahiliyya* norms where boundaries were often blurred, and even certain contemporary societal habits that disregard privacy and impose on others' time. The Qur'anic injunction emphasized that a believer's conduct must always align with **Allah's** path, prioritizing divine will over personal preferences or cultural habits. It highlighted that genuine respect and purity of intent are manifested through adherence to these outward forms of etiquette, preventing misunderstandings and safeguarding spiritual integrity.

Building upon this, a more comprehensive directive concerning *hijab* for all Muslim women was revealed shortly thereafter (**Qur'an 33:59**). Historically, Arab women already wore some form of head covering and outer garments due to the climate and cultural modesty. However, fol-

lowing the *Ghazwah Banu Mustaliq* and the subsequent Incident of Slander (*Hadith al-Ifk*), the hypocrites in Medina escalated their harassment of Muslim women, particularly when they went out for necessities, as private indoor sanitation was not common. This harassment, which often involved pretexts of mistaking Muslim women for non-Muslims or enslaved women, caused considerable distress, prompting complaints to the Prophet (s), notably from Sayyidah Sawdah (r.a.). In response, **Allah** revealed the *ayah* instructing Muslim women to draw their *jalabib* (outer cloaks) closely around them when they ventured outside. This command served a dual purpose: to distinguish them clearly as Muslim women and to protect them from the harassment of malevolent individuals. This marked the establishment of the complete *hijab* in Islam, emphasizing the covering of the entire body, and for many interpretations, including the face, to ensure their safety and dignity.

In this intense period, the Prophet (s) continued to exemplify the practical application of Islamic principles. An incident occurred when the Prophet (s) was seen walking at night with Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.a.) near the outskirts of Medina. Two Muslims passed by quickly, and the Prophet (s) called out to them, clarifying that the woman with him was his wife, Safiyyah. He then explained, "Satan flows through the human being like blood." This powerful statement served as a profound lesson for his companions and for all believers: one must not create situations that allow Satan to sow doubt or suspicion, even when one's intentions are pure. This incident underscored the importance of not just inner piety but also outward conduct that preempts misunderstanding and safeguards one's reputation and the integrity of the community.

This teaching resonated deeply, particularly in the context of *Sadaqah Jariyah*, or perpetual charity. A woman approached the Prophet (s), seeking guidance on behalf of her mother who had passed away suddenly without making a will. The Prophet (s) confirmed that performing charity on

her behalf would benefit her in the afterlife. When asked what the best form of charity was, the Prophet (s) advised digging a well, emphasizing that providing water was a continuous act of goodness that would accrue rewards as long as people benefited from it. This guidance led to many companions establishing *waqf* (endowments) for public benefit, such as Uthman ibn Affan (r.a.) purchasing the Well of Rumah. Such acts, though simple, carry immense spiritual weight, highlighting that one's legacy of good deeds continues beyond their lifetime.

Despite the constant threat of external enemies and the internal challenges of consolidating the nascent Islamic state, the fifth year of *Hijrah* was also a period of extensive legislative development. Beyond the matters of *hijab* and adoption, numerous other divine rulings were revealed or reinforced: **Salat al-Khawf** (Prayer of Fear) for times of conflict, **Salat al-Ayat** (Prayer of Signs) for natural phenomena, strict prohibitions against false accusations (*qadhf*), and the abolition of *dhihar* with its prescribed *kaffarah*. Even as battles like Dhat al-Riqa' and Banu Mustaliq raged, **Allah** continued to refine the *Shari'ah*, ensuring that every aspect of life, from worship to social interactions, was governed by divine principles. The Prophet's (s) numerous marriages during this period, often to widows of martyrs, were not merely personal acts but also compassionate responses to the societal challenges and provided further opportunities for divine legislation to be revealed. This era, therefore, vividly demonstrated how Islamic law evolved in real-time, addressing both immediate needs and laying down eternal principles, even amidst the most trying circumstances.

As the fifth year of *Hijrah* drew to a close, a storm of unprecedented magnitude was gathering on the horizon. The Quraysh, still seething from their defeats at Badr and Uhud, had been meticulously planning a decisive, all-out assault on Medina for nearly two years. This time, they sought to consolidate a grand coalition to crush Islam once and for all.

Their principal allies in this nefarious scheme were the Jews of Khaybar, who had been expelled from Medina and felt threatened by the growing Muslim power. Led by their prominent chiefs—Hayy ibn Akhtab, Sallam ibn Mishkam, and Abu Rafi'—these Jewish leaders journeyed to Mecca. There, they shamelessly prostrated before the idols of the Quraysh, praising their idolatry over the monotheism of Islam, and promising their full support to incite the Meccans against the Prophet (s). Though initially hesitant due to their previous failures, the Quraysh were swayed by the Jews' zealous instigation and pledges of financial backing.

From Mecca, the Jewish delegation proceeded to the powerful Ghatafan tribe, offering them half of Khaybar's precious date harvest in exchange for their participation in the war. The promise of such vast material wealth proved irresistible, and the Ghatafan readily agreed to join the alliance. The coalition rapidly swelled, drawing in various other tribes and confederates until an colossal army of 10,000 fighters stood poised to march on Medina. This was an army of unprecedented scale, far outnumbering Medina's Muslim population, presenting the most formidable threat Islam had yet faced.

The ominous news of this impending invasion swiftly reached Medina. The Prophet (s), recognizing the gravity of the situation, immediately convened a *shura* (consultation) with his companions, seeking their counsel on how to confront this overwhelming force. The stage was set for one of the most pivotal battles in Islamic history.

Chapter 94

The Trench of Steadfastness: Foreshadowing Victories and Divine Bounty

The fifth year of *Hijrah* ushered in a period of intense challenges and profound divine interventions. While the Prophet (s) and his companions prepared for the greatest military confrontation yet, the atmosphere was imbued with spiritual significance, particularly with the arrival of the 27th of Rajab. This blessed night holds immense importance, recognized both as *Shab-e-Mab'ath*, commemorating the commencement of Prophet Mohammad's (s) divine mission, and *Shab-e-Mi'raj*, the Night Journey and Ascension. Though the details of *Mi'raj* have been extensively discussed in earlier accounts, its profound wisdom and prophetic insights became particularly salient as the nascent Islamic state faced existential threats.

The *Mi'raj*, a miraculous journey undertaken by the Prophet (s), served as a vital preparation for the impending *Hijrah* to Medina and the establishment of the Islamic government. It was a journey fraught with symbolic

encounters, each carrying a profound lesson for the Prophet (s) and his *Ummah*. As the Prophet (s) embarked on the swift journey atop *Buraq*, he encountered various calls: from the right, a voice identified as Judaism; from the left, Christianity. A beautiful woman, adorned with all earthly delights, also attempted to engage him. Furthermore, a terrifying sound, revealed to be the terrifying echo of a stone cast into the depths of Hell seven decades prior, assailed him. Each time, the Prophet (s), with his boundless wisdom and absolute focus, ignored these distractions. Later, he was informed that had he engaged with these temptations, even for a moment, a third of his *Ummah* would have succumbed to Judaism, Christianity, or the allure of worldly desires, respectively. This underscored the immense responsibility of a divine leader, whose slightest inclination, whether positive or negative, could ripple through generations and fundamentally shape the destiny of his followers. His resolute rejection protected his *Ummah* from these grave pitfalls.

The sacred journey continued, with the Prophet (s) making stops at pivotal historical and spiritual sites. He was shown the verdant groves of Medina, the future abode of the Islamic state and his final resting place, a poignant foreshadowing of the *Hijrah*. He then visited Masjid Quba, the site of the first mosque in Islam, and Mount Tur, where Prophet Musa (a.s.) had witnessed a divine manifestation that caused him to faint. His journey also took him to Bayt al-Lahm, the revered birthplace of Prophet Isa (a.s.). Finally, he arrived at *Bayt al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem), where he led all the preceding prophets in prayer, a testament to his supreme status as the Seal of Prophets. During this part of the journey, he was presented with three vessels: one of wine, one of water, and one of milk. The Prophet (s) chose milk, symbolizing his selection of the pure, natural path of Islam over the intoxicating distractions or mere mundane existence.

The ascension through the heavens followed, where Prophet Moham-

mad (s) beheld wondrous signs of Allah's creation, encountering various prophets and angels, and witnessing the *Bayt al-Ma'mur*, the heavenly prototype of the Ka'bah. He saw the rivers of Paradise, including the spring of *Kawthar* flowing from *Bayt al-Ma'mur*. His ascent culminated at *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary, a point beyond which even the Archangel Jibreel (a.s.) could not pass. From this sublime station, Prophet Mohammad (s) received direct divine communications and invaluable gifts for his *Ummah*. Among these were a profound sermon known as the *Khutbah-e-Mi'raj*, outlining the conditions of the End Times; the blessed supplication from the end of *Surah Al-Baqarah* (**2:286**), a prayer of forgiveness and protection; the divine command for the *Hijrah* to Medina; and a comprehensive set of **fourteen commandments** from *Surah Bani Isra'il* (**17:23-27**), emphasizing *Tawhid* (Oneness of God), honoring parents, avoiding extravagance, shunning illicit relations, caring for orphans, fulfilling covenants, dealing justly in weights and measures, avoiding arrogance, and abstaining from killing children out of fear of poverty. The swiftness of the *Mi'raj*, completing such an expansive journey in a fraction of a night, served as a powerful sign of Allah's boundless power. Upon his return, the believers understood that the time for *Hijrah* was nigh, a divinely ordained command that would soon demand great sacrifice.

As the Muslims braced for the *Hijrah*, they also faced the imminent threat of the Battle of Khandaq, also known as the Battle of *Ahzab* (Confederates). This was the largest and most formidable coalition ever assembled against the young Islamic state. The primary instigators were the exiled Jewish tribes from Medina, Banu Nadir and others, who, after their expulsion, traveled to Mecca. They leveraged their wealth and influence to incite the Quraysh, who had twice suffered humiliating defeats at Badr and Uhud, into forming a massive alliance. The Jewish leaders traveled across Arabia, convincing various powerful tribes like the Ghatafan, through

promises of wealth and strategic advantage, to join the offensive. Crucially, they falsely assured the Quraysh that Banu Qurayza, the third major Jewish tribe still residing in Medina, would betray the Muslims and attack them from within. This promise was the primary factor that emboldened the Quraysh to commit a force of over 10,000 strong.

Thanks to the Prophet's (s) sophisticated intelligence network, Muslims received early warning of this impending assault. Prophet Mohammad (s) immediately convened a *shura* (consultation) with his companions to devise a defensive strategy. After listening to various proposals, he accepted the unique suggestion of Salman al-Farsi (r.a.), who was deeply knowledgeable in Persian military tactics. Salman (r.a.) proposed digging a deep, wide trench (*khandaq*) around the vulnerable open side of Medina. Medina was naturally protected on two sides by impassable lava fields and on a third by dense palm groves. The only open side, where a large army could attack, was designated for the trench.

The Prophet (s) meticulously surveyed the area, marking sections for groups of ten men, with each group responsible for digging a twenty-cubit length of the trench. Despite the severe scarcity of food and the onset of famine in Medina, exacerbated by the challenging conditions of the trench digging, the Muslims embarked on this monumental task with unparalleled zeal. Many were fasting, and the physical exertion was immense. The Prophet (s) himself participated in the digging, inspiring everyone by his personal involvement. The collective spirit was reminiscent of the construction of Masjid an-Nabawi, where figures like Ammar ibn Yasir (r.a.) had displayed extraordinary dedication, leading to the Prophet's (s) famous prophecy that "A rebellious group will kill Ammar," confirming his future martyrdom and the nature of his adversaries.

Among those who displayed exceptional dedication was Salman al-Farsi (r.a.). Despite his advanced age, estimated around 250 years at that time,

Salman (r.a.) worked tirelessly, his prior experience with trench warfare in Persia making him an invaluable engineer and guide. He often accomplished the work of ten men, surpassing the efforts of the younger companions. His zeal and expertise became a point of contention between the *Muhajirun* (immigrants from Mecca) and the *Ansar* (native Medinans), with each group proudly claiming Salman (r.a.) as one of their own. The dispute reached the Prophet (s), who, with profound wisdom, settled the matter by declaring, "**Salman is from us, the *Ahlul Bayt***." This declaration elevated Salman (r.a.) to an unprecedented spiritual status, signifying his deep spiritual kinship and purity, thereby ending the debate and confirming his unique position.

During the arduous digging, the Muslims encountered an insurmountable obstacle: a massive, unyielding rock that resisted all efforts to break it. Salman (r.a.) reported the issue to the Prophet (s), whom he found resting, with two stones tied to his stomach to alleviate the pangs of extreme hunger. Upon seeing the unyielding rock, the Prophet (s) called for water to perform *wudu*. After cleansing himself, he poured the water from his mouth onto the rock. Then, taking the pickaxe, he struck the rock three times, each strike breaking off a third of the stone and emitting a brilliant flash of light.

With each flash, the Prophet (s) delivered a momentous prophecy: 1. With the first flash, he saw the palaces of Rome, the greatest superpower of the time, signifying their future conquest by the Muslims. 2. With the second flash, he saw the palaces of Persia and Madain, the second great superpower, foretelling their fall to Islam. 3. With the third flash, he saw the palaces of Yemen and Sana'a, a major trade hub, indicating their eventual submission to Islamic rule.

These astonishing prophecies, delivered in the midst of extreme hardship and imminent danger, served as a powerful morale booster and a testa-

ment to the ultimate victory of Islam. However, these glad tidings were met with mockery by some hypocrites within the Muslim ranks, who scoffed, "How can we conquer Rome and Persia when we cannot even safely go to the restroom, fearing the enemy?" In immediate response to their cynicism and mockery of his prophetic vision, Allah revealed a powerful verse from the Qur'an (**3:26-27**): **"Say, 'O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty from whom You will. You honor whom You will and You humble whom You will. In Your Hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent.'"** This divine affirmation underscored Allah's absolute control over all dominion, honor, and humility, serving as a direct rebuke to the hypocrites and solidifying the believers' conviction in the Prophet's (s) truthfulness and Allah's promise.

Another extraordinary miracle unfolded during the trench digging, demonstrating Allah's boundless provision. Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari (r.a.), witnessing the Prophet's (s) intense hunger, discreetly invited him for a small meal, consisting of a single small goat and three *kilograms* of flour. To Jabir's astonishment, the Prophet (s) accepted the invitation, but then proceeded to invite *all three thousand* Muslims working on the trench to join them. Overwhelmed by the sheer number of guests for such meager provisions, Jabir (r.a.) rushed home to his wife, expressing his dilemma. With unwavering faith, his wife reassured him, stating that since the Prophet (s) was aware of their limited provisions and still invited everyone, the burden of providing was now on Allah and His Messenger, not on them.

Upon arriving at Jabir's home, the Prophet (s) went to the kitchen. He instructed them to bring the cooked goat meat in a pot and the freshly baked bread from the oven, with a crucial command: "Never empty the pot, and never take all the bread." He blessed the food, and then, one by one, groups of ten men were called to eat. Each group ate their fill, yet the food in the pot and the bread in the oven miraculously remained

plentiful. This miraculous provision continued, feeding all three thousand hungry Muslims, and astonishingly, the remaining food lasted for the entire duration of the Battle of Khandaq. Jabir (r.a.) later recounted that only after all the companions had eaten, and he and the Prophet (s) sat down to eat the remaining portion, did the meat eventually run out. He also mentioned that when he had initially brought the goat's foreleg for the Prophet (s), he questioned how many legs a goat had, and at that moment, the supply of meat began to diminish, implying that the miracle's scope was tied to their unquestioning faith. The bread and gravy, however, continued to suffice for the duration of the entire battle. This miracle, widely narrated, further cemented the companions' faith in the Prophet's (s) divine support and Allah's infinite power.

With the trench nearing completion and the coalition army approaching, the stage was set for the pivotal Battle of Khandaq, a conflict that would test the resolve of the Muslim *Ummah* and once again demonstrate the triumph of faith over overwhelming odds.

Chapter 95

The Siege's Turning Point: Betrayal and the Duel of Faith

As the formidable coalition of 10,000 enemy warriors, comprising the Quraysh, Ghatafan, and other allied tribes, settled menacingly outside Medina, the defensive trench, a monumental feat of Muslim labor and divine assistance, stood as the city's primary barrier. The Prophet Muhammad (s) and his companions had toiled tirelessly, displaying unparalleled *iman* and determination, even in the face of severe hunger. This period of intense trial brought forth profound lessons and highlighted the ethical principles central to Islam. It was during these challenging days that the Prophet (s) reminded his companions of a crucial truth: the fragrance of Paradise is forbidden to three types of individuals—those who do not give gifts to their relatives, those who are disobedient to their parents, and those who remind others of their good deeds, thereby nullifying the virtue of their actions. This emphasis on compassion, respect, and sincerity underscored the spiritual fortitude required amidst physical hardship.

The grave threat to Medina, however, was not solely external. A more

insidious danger emerged from within, initiated by the treacherous actions of the exiled Jewish tribes. **Hayy ibn Akhtab**, the chieftain of Banu Nadir, who had previously been expelled from Medina and now resided in Khaybar, played a pivotal role in inciting the Quraysh against the Muslims. Knowing that the direct assault on Medina would be arduous, he sought to create a second front from within the city itself. His target was **Banu Qurayza**, the last remaining major Jewish tribe in Medina, who held a long-standing treaty of alliance with the Muslims.

Under the cloak of night, Hayy ibn Akhtab approached the fortified settlement of Banu Qurayza. He sought out their leader, **Ka'b ibn Asad**, who was highly respected for his wisdom and integrity. Initially, Ka'b refused to open his gate, recognizing Hayy's desperate attempt to drag his people into conflict. He emphatically told Hayy that he had always found Prophet Muhammad (s) to be a truthful and honorable man, utterly dependable in his covenants. Ka'b asserted that the treaty between Banu Qurayza and the Muslims was sacred and based on mutual trust, and he saw no reason to betray it.

Undeterred, Hayy ibn Akhtab employed every manipulative tactic at his disposal. He painted a grim picture for Ka'b, claiming that Muhammad (s) and his followers had no chance against the overwhelming force of the invading coalition, and that they would find no refuge on Earth if they remained allied with him. He promised vast spoils and security if Banu Qurayza allied with the Quraysh and Ghatafan, urging Ka'b to seize the opportunity. Hayy cunningly played on their tribal pride and their interpretations of prophecy. He contended that the final prophet was prophesied to come from *Banu Israel*, not *Banu Ismail* (from whom Prophet Muhammad descended), thereby implying that the Prophet's claim was false and that their loyalty to him was misplaced. He accused the Prophet (s) of sorcery for gaining followers. Through persistent flattery, instigation, and deceitful promises of worldly gain and future glory,

Hayy slowly wore down Ka'b's resolve. Despite Ka'b's initial steadfastness, Hayy's insidious machinations eventually succeeded. Ka'b ibn Asad, swayed by fear, greed, and cunning sophistry, made the catastrophic decision to break the treaty with the Prophet (s), effectively opening a new, terrifying front for the Muslims.

This betrayal sent shockwaves through the Muslim ranks. The situation became dire, with the enemy forces arrayed outside the trench and now the real threat of an attack from within the city walls by Banu Qurayza. The Qur'an describes the profound distress experienced by the Muslims during this period: **"When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when eyes swerved and hearts reached the throats, and you entertained various thoughts about Allah."** (**Qur'an 33:10**) and **"There were the believers tested, and shaken with a mighty shaking."** (**Qur'an 33:11**). In this moment of intense psychological pressure, the hypocrites among the Muslims revealed their true colors, saying: **"Allah and His Messenger did not promise us but delusion!"** (**Qur'an 33:12**). They sought excuses to abandon the battle, claiming their homes were vulnerable or openly expressing a desire to flee: **"And when a faction of them said, 'O people of Yathrib, there is no place for you to stand [in battle], so return.' And a party of them asked permission of the Prophet, saying, 'Indeed, our houses are exposed,' while they were not exposed. They only intended escape."** (**Qur'an 33:13**).

The Prophet (s), demonstrating his unwavering wisdom and leadership, did not react impulsively. Upon receiving news of Banu Qurayza's potential betrayal, he sent two of his most trusted and respected companions, **Sa'd ibn Mu'adh** (leader of the Aws tribe) and **Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah** (leader of the Khazraj tribe), to ascertain the truth. He instructed them to use a subtle code word, "*Adhal wal-Qarah*" (names of two tribes who had previously betrayed Muslims and killed their envoys), if the news proved true. This precaution was to prevent the immediate demoraliza-

tion of the Muslim army, already facing an overwhelming external foe. When the two Sa'ds returned, they conveyed the grim reality using the code word, confirming the betrayal and the insolence of Banu Qurayza's chief. Despite the gravity of the situation, the Prophet (s) immediately proclaimed, "**Allahu Akbar!**" (Allah is the Greatest!) and gave glad tidings of victory, instilling hope and resolve in his anxious companions.

Amidst these multifaceted challenges, a timeless spiritual lesson was often recounted, underscoring the insidious nature of temptation and the psychological warfare waged by enemies. This narrative drew from the story of **Prophet Nuh (a.s.)** and the ark. It was said that when the great flood began, Prophet Nuh (a.s.) waited at the ark's entrance, ensuring that pairs of every creature entered. He was in a state of anger and impatience, waiting for a particular animal that was delayed. It was at this moment that Satan approached, seeking entry. Prophet Nuh (a.s.), consumed by his momentary anger, permitted Satan to enter. Once inside, Satan offered Nuh (a.s.) three pieces of advice, the first and most crucial being: "Beware of anger, for it is my primary tool to mislead believers. When I see a believer who cannot be swayed by other means, I ignite anger within them, and through it, I achieve my aim." This ancient wisdom served as a potent reminder for the Muslims at Khandaq: just as Hayy ibn Akhtab attempted to provoke anger and fear in Ka'b ibn Asad to achieve his nefarious goals, Satan persistently uses anger as a gateway to human weakness and deviation. The Prophet's (s) calm demeanor and divine reassurance were crucial in countering such psychological attacks, both from overt enemies and the whispers of Shaytan.

With the threat from Banu Qurayza confirmed, the Muslim leadership pondered their next move. Some suggested negotiating with the Ghatafan tribe, offering them a portion of Medina's date harvest to induce them to abandon the coalition. The Prophet (s) consulted with Sa'd ibn Mu'adh and Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah. Both adamantly rejected the proposal. Sa'd ibn

Mu'adh famously asked, "O Messenger of Allah, is this a divine command or a suggestion from you?" When the Prophet (s) clarified it was a suggestion for their benefit, Sa'd declared, "We have never given our dates except as gifts or in exchange for purchase. Now, after Allah has honored us with Islam, should we give them our wealth merely for fear? By Allah, we shall only give them our swords!" The Prophet (s) appreciated their unwavering faith and agreed, dismissing the proposal, affirming that their strength lay in their reliance on Allah alone.

The siege dragged on, with skirmishes occurring daily, but no decisive engagement. The trench proved an impenetrable barrier for the massive confederate army. However, one day, the formidable **Amr ibn Abd Wadd**, a renowned Qurayshi warrior, notorious for his strength and bravery, found a narrow point where the trench was less wide. With a few companions, he leapt across, his thundering voice echoing across the battlefield as he challenged the Muslims to single combat. He taunted them, mocking their fortifications and their faith, crying, "Is there no one among you who will come forth to duel?"

The Muslims, despite their numbers, hesitated. Amr was a legendary fighter, a veritable force of nature, and his reputation struck fear into many hearts. But from the Muslim ranks, a lone figure immediately stepped forward: **Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)**. Each time Amr repeated his challenge, Ali (a.s.) would volunteer. The Prophet (s) would initially hold him back, hoping another would come forward, but as the silence persisted, he finally granted Ali (a.s.) permission. As Ali (a.s.) prepared to face Amr, the Prophet (s) uttered words of immense spiritual weight: "**Today, faith in its entirety is confronting disbelief in its entirety.**" He supplicated for Ali (a.s.), placing his helmet on Ali's (a.s.) head and fastening his sword to his waist. It is narrated that even Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra (a.s.), watching from a distance, was filled with anxiety, for she knew the immense risk. The Prophet (s) had even told her, "If Ali returns

defeated, no one will truly worship Allah." This highlighted the pivotal nature of this duel, seeing Ali's (a.s.) victory as intrinsically linked to the very survival of Islam.

Ali (a.s.) approached Amr, engaging him in conversation first, attempting to persuade him to accept Islam or withdraw. Amr, arrogant and confident, refused both. The duel commenced. It was a clash of titans, but also a profound spiritual confrontation. Ali (a.s.), with his unparalleled skill and divine strength, found an opening. In a decisive moment, he struck Amr's leg, causing him to fall. As Amr struggled to rise, Ali (a.s.) delivered the final, fatal blow. It is narrated that Ali (a.s.) paused before delivering the final strike when Amr spat on his face. Ali (a.s.) stepped back, waited for his anger to subside, ensuring his action was solely for the sake of Allah, not personal vengeance. When he struck, he cried out, "**Allahu Akbar!**"

The fall of Amr ibn Abd Wadd sent a powerful message through both armies. The confederates were stunned into disbelief, their champion vanquished. The Muslims rejoiced, their morale soaring. The Prophet Muhammad (s), recognizing the profound significance of Ali's (a.s.) victory, declared, "**No act of worship is greater than Ali's (a.s.) strike against Amr.**" This single duel not only eliminated a major threat but also shattered the confidence of the confederate army, marking a crucial turning point in the Battle of Khandaq.

Chapter 96

The Khandaq Ordeal: Resilience, Heroism, and the Decisive Duel

The fifth year of *Hijrah*, specifically the months of Shawwal or Dhul-Qa'dah (historians vary on the exact timing), brought with it an ordeal unlike any the nascent Muslim community had faced before. The Battle of Khandaq, or the War of the Confederates (*Ghazwah al-Ahzab*), plunged the Muslims into what proved to be the most arduous and distressing conflict in the history of early Islam. Umm Salamah (r.a.), a respected wife of the Prophet (s), bore witness to the severity of these days, testifying that never before had she experienced a campaign as harsh or anxiety-inducing as Khandaq, despite having accompanied the Prophet (s) in many *ghazawat* including Khaybar, Hunayn, and the Conquest of Mecca.

The opening verses of *Surah al-Ahzab* vividly depict the state of the believers: eyes swerving, hearts leaping to their throats, and thoughts harboring ill-suspicions against Allah. The *Qur'an* itself narrates the details of the unprecedented tribulations, a rare occurrence as it typically refrains from extensive detailing of battle specifics. This was indeed the ultimate test for the believers, a time when the digging of the trench itself pre-

sented an immense challenge, followed by the incessant vigil required to guard it day and night, lest the enemy exploit any moment of Muslim negligence.

Adding to the external siege was an internal crisis. Medina's date harvest, crucial for sustenance, had been ruined by untimely cold, exacerbating the already dire food shortages. It was in these desperate circumstances that the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza, despite their treaty with the Prophet (s), succumbed to incitement. Having been swayed by the insidious machinations of Hayy ibn Akhtab, they conspired to betray the Muslims from within. The Prophet (s) received intelligence of their treachery but did not rush to judgment. Instead, he dispatched trusted companions to verify the news, using coded messages to prevent demoralization among the ranks. Upon confirmation, the Prophet (s) immediately declared "**Allahu Akbar!**" and delivered glad tidings of eventual victory, even amidst the deepening crisis.

The situation became perilous as the Quraysh, unable to breach the trench, dispatched spies to Banu Qurayza, urging them to attack the Muslims from the rear. It was believed that Medina was largely defenseless, inhabited mostly by women, children, and those unfit for battle. A group of ten Jewish youths, acting as spies, crept into Medina. They approached a fortified area where the Prophet's (s) family and close companions' families, including *Hassan ibn Thabit* (who was ill and unable to fight), were sheltered.

As these spies attempted to scale the wall to gain an unobstructed view of the fortress, **Sayyidah Safiyah bint Abd al-Muttalib (r.a.)**, the Prophet's (s) aunt and sister of *Hamza* (*r.a.*), witnessed their approach. Realizing the grave danger if their vulnerability were discovered, she turned to *Hassan ibn Thabit*, urging him to act. Hassan, however, regretfully explained his inability to fight due to his illness. In a moment of unparal-

leled courage and resolve, Sayyidah Safiyah (r.a.), who had never raised a hand against anyone, even an animal, stepped forward. As one of the Jewish youths successfully scaled the wall and looked into the fortress, she struck him decisively with a tent pole or a piece of iron, splitting his head. The spy fell back into the fortress.

Safiyah (r.a.) then approached Hassan (r.a.) again, asking him to sever the spy's head and cast it outside to terrify the other Jews. Hassan (r.a.) again expressed his inability due to illness. Without hesitation, Sayyidah Safiyah (r.a.) performed the gruesome task herself, severing the head and throwing it over the wall amongst the remaining Jewish spies. This astonishing act, unexpected from a woman, made the Jewish spies believe that the fortress housed not just women but a hidden army of men, leading them to report a false assessment to their leader, Ka'b ibn Asad, thereby deterring a direct attack from within. The Prophet (s) later acknowledged Sayyidah Safiyah's (r.a.) bravery by allocating her a full share of the spoils from Banu Qurayza, just as a male warrior would receive.

To further disorient the confederates, the Prophet (s) employed a brilliant psychological tactic. Receiving intelligence that the Quraysh were considering sending two thousand troops to aid Banu Qurayza, the Prophet (s) strategically sent small groups of Muslims, only 500 in total (300 led by Zayd ibn Harithah and 200 by Salamah ibn Aslam), into Medina from different directions. He instructed them to enter silently but then shout powerful *takbirs* (Allahu Akbar!) with such fervor that the Jews would mistake them for a massive reinforcement of thousands. This deception caused immense fear and confusion among Banu Qurayza and the confederates, making them hesitant to proceed with their attack and buying crucial time for the Muslims.

While internal treachery was quelled and strategic confusion sown, the

main external threat remained. The formidable warrior **Amr ibn Abd Wadd**, a veteran of Badr and Uhud, who had sworn not to anoint himself until he had taken revenge from the Muslims, had crossed the trench with a few companions, including Nawfal ibn Abdillah. He arrogantly challenged the Muslims to single combat. Fear gripped many, and silence fell over the Muslim ranks as Amr continued to taunt them, questioning their claims of Paradise and calling them cowards. He repeatedly challenged, "**Is there any combatant? Is there any challenger?**" until his voice grew hoarse.

Three times, the Prophet (s) asked, "Who will confront him?" And three times, amidst the silence of others, **Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)** stood up, declaring, "**I am ready, O Messenger of Allah!**" Each time, the Prophet (s) initially restrained Ali (a.s.), perhaps to give others a chance or to highlight Ali's (a.s.) unique courage. But when no one else volunteered, the Prophet (s) finally gave Ali (a.s.) permission, saying, "O Ali, this is Amr ibn Abd Wadd." Ali (a.s.) responded, "**And I am Ali ibn Abi Talib!**"

The Prophet (s) then prepared Ali (a.s.) himself, an act of profound significance. He bestowed upon him his own sword, **Dhul-Fiqar**, and placed his own turban on Ali's (a.s.) head, an symbolic gesture of succession and leadership. As Ali (a.s.) departed, the Prophet (s) raised his hands in supplication, uttering a prayer that echoed the depth of his reliance on Allah and his recognition of Ali's (a.s.) singular importance: "**O Allah! You took Ubaydah from me on the Day of Badr, and Hamza on the Day of Uhud. Do not leave me alone; and You are the best of inheritors.**" This prayer implicitly linked Ali (a.s.) to the legacy of prophethood, portraying him as its divinely appointed successor.

Ali (a.s.) approached Amr, who mockingly asked his name. Upon hearing Ali's (a.s.) name, Amr expressed reluctance to shed the blood of a

noble Quraishi youth, proposing that Ali (a.s.) return so he wouldn't have to kill him. Ali (a.s.) calmly reminded Amr of his own boast that if confronted with three options, he would accept one: convert to Islam, return peacefully, or fight. Ali (a.s.) then offered him the first two options. Amr disdainfully rejected conversion, and refused to return, as it would bring him eternal shame from Arab women and poets. He chose combat, mocking Ali's (a.s.) youth and seemingly naive offers.

The duel commenced with a ferocity that shook the battlefield. Amr, known for his strength, charged Ali (a.s.), striking with his sword. Ali (a.s.) masterfully parried the blow, his shield taking the impact. The clash was intense, shrouded in dust, making it impossible for onlookers to discern the events. Then, from the cloud of dust, a resounding cry of "**Allahu Akbar!**" was heard. It was Ali's (a.s.) triumphant cry. The blow had shattered Amr's confidence and struck him down, decisively ending the challenge.

The impact of Amr's defeat was immediate and overwhelming. His companions, including Hubayrah and Ikrima, fled in disarray, some even abandoning their horses and leaping over the trench in terror. Nawfal ibn Abdillah, another of Amr's companions, fell into the trench. When the Muslims offered to retrieve his body for ransom, he defiantly declared, "**If you are going to kill me, do it now, do not try to buy me!**" and continued to fight until he was slain by Ali (a.s.).

When Ali (a.s.) returned, the Prophet (s) uttered one of his most profound statements, words that resonate through history: "**A single blow from Ali on the Day of Khandaq is superior to the worship of all humans and *jinn* until the Day of Judgment.**" This declaration underscored the immense spiritual weight and strategic importance of Ali's (a.s.) victory, which saved Islam from certain annihilation and bolstered the morale of the Muslims.

The Prophet (s) then approached Amr's fallen body, ensuring that it was not mutilated, upholding the dignity of the deceased, even an enemy. He contrasted this with the mutilation of *Hamza's* (*r.a.*) body at Uhud, demonstrating the superior moral standards of Islam. This act of compassion extended to all the fallen enemies whose bodies were given back for burial without ransom if requested, a stark contrast to pre-Islamic practices.

Ali's (a.s.) victory at Khandaq, the decisive strike, not only shattered the morale of the confederate armies but also sowed discord among them, leading to their eventual retreat. It was a triumph not just of martial prowess, but of unyielding faith and strategic genius, confirming the Prophet's (s) foresight and Allah's divine aid. The battle of Khandaq, marked by immense hardship and culminating in this monumental duel, proved to be a turning point, safeguarding the nascent Islamic state and affirming the eternal truth of its message.

Chapter 97

The Divine Intervention and the Rout of the Confederates

The siege of Medina had stretched for twenty-five grueling days, testing the resolve of the Muslims to their limits. Amidst the relentless pressure from the formidable confederate armies and the internal treachery of Banu Qurayza, the divine intervention that brought the Battle of Khandaq to a miraculous close was a testament to Allah's boundless power and His support for His Messenger. As the Qur'an itself declares in **Surah Al-Ahzab**, **"O you who have believed, remember the favor of Allah upon you when armies came against you; but We sent upon them a wind and armies you did not see. And Allah is Seeing of what you do."** (**Qur'an 33:9**)

Following the defeat of Amr ibn Abd Wadd by Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), the morale of the confederate armies, particularly the Quraysh, was severely shaken. Their greatest champion had fallen, and their pride was shattered. Yet, they lingered for another fifteen days, their leaders, like Abu Sufyan, grappling with the shame of defeat and the challenge of retreating without further ignominy. They sought a plausible excuse

to withdraw their vast army, one that would preserve their dignity and prevent a rebellion among their own ranks.

In this critical juncture, Allah's strategic wisdom manifested through a subtle yet powerful intervention. A notable figure named Na'im ibn Mas'ud, a chief of the Ghatafan tribe, secretly embraced Islam. Recognizing the dire situation of the Muslims, he approached the Prophet (s) and offered his services. The Prophet (s) instructed him to sow discord among the confederates, using his prior relationships with both the Quraysh and Banu Qurayza.

Na'im (r.a.) first went to Banu Qurayza, reminding them of the potential abandonment by the Quraysh once the siege concluded. He cunningly advised them to demand hostages from the Quraysh leaders as a guarantee before participating in any final assault. He then visited the Quraysh and their confederates, warning them that Banu Qurayza intended to betray them by demanding hostages whom they would then hand over to the Muslims as a peace offering. This brilliant strategy ignited deep mistrust between the allies, preventing any coordinated attack and leaving both sides suspicious of the other. The confederate alliance, already fragile, began to unravel from within.

While Na'im (r.a.) executed this psychological warfare, the Prophet (s) himself was engaged in fervent supplication. For three consecutive days—Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday—he ascended a small hill near the trench (later known as Masjid al-Fath), fasting throughout the day and spending the entire nights in intense prayer and *dhikr*. His heart poured out to Allah, invoking divine assistance against the overwhelming forces of disbelief.

As the night of Thursday (the eve of Friday) commenced, following these days of spiritual exertion, the divine response began. A fierce, biting cold wind, laden with pebbles and dust, swept through the confederate

camps. This was not an ordinary desert storm. It was a manifestation of the "armies you did not see" mentioned in the Qur'an. Tents were torn from their moorings, fires extinguished, cooking pots overturned, and provisions scattered. Panic erupted among the enemy soldiers as their animals broke free and fled in disarray, adding to the chaos. The unseen angels, sent by Allah, struck fear and disarray into their hearts.

Amidst this supernatural tempest, the Prophet (s) called out, asking for a volunteer to venture into the enemy camp and bring back intelligence. Despite the extreme cold and the terrifying conditions, the Muslims remained hesitant. The Prophet (s) repeated his call, promising Paradise and companionship with Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), and finally, being his (s) own neighbor in Paradise. At this, Huzaifa ibn al-Yaman (r.a.), though weak from hunger and cold, bravely stepped forward.

As Huzaifa (r.a.) descended into the treacherous expanse between the Muslim and confederate lines, a miraculous warmth enveloped him. The biting cold that afflicted others vanished for him, allowing him to move with comfort and clarity. He stealthily entered the enemy camp, witnessing the utter pandemonium. He saw Abu Sufyan, the leader of the Quraysh, delivering a desperate speech to his bewildered troops, attributing their plight to Muhammad's (s) "magic" and the intervention of "heavenly armies." Abu Sufyan then ordered a hasty retreat, emphasizing the need to leave immediately. Huzaifa (r.a.), seeing Abu Sufyan so vulnerable, felt the urge to strike him down, but the Prophet's (s) earlier instruction to merely gather intelligence and refrain from combat restrained him.

The sight of the Quraysh chieftain blaming their defeat on unseen forces rather than on military strategy resonated with the superstitious Arab mindset. It provided a convenient excuse for their humiliating retreat. The confederate armies, utterly demoralized and devastated by the unyielding storm, rapidly dispersed, each tribe and chieftain scrambling for

their own survival.

Huzaifa (r.a.) swiftly returned to the Prophet's (s) tent, reporting the complete rout of the enemy. The Prophet (s) immediately prostrated in *sajdah shukr*, offering profound gratitude to Allah. As the Prophet (s) rested, Jibra'il (a.s.) appeared to him, still clad in his battle attire, conveying Allah's command: "O Messenger of Allah, you have laid down your arms, but we, the angels, have not yet laid down ours. Rise and proceed to Banu Qurayza!"

Without returning to his own home, the Prophet (s) went directly to the house of his beloved daughter, Sayyidah Fatima Zahra (a.s.), to cleanse his weapons. While there, Jibra'il (a.s.) arrived once more, reinforcing the divine directive to move immediately against Banu Qurayza, emphasizing that the angels were still prepared for battle. This immediate and decisive command underscored the grave treachery of Banu Qurayza and signaled the next crucial phase for the nascent Islamic state.

During the Battle of Khandaq, a prominent companion, Sa'd ibn Mu'adh (r.a.), sustained a severe injury to his *akhal* vein in his arm from an arrow. The Prophet (s) showed immense compassion, having Sa'd (r.a.) brought to his own tent and cared for. He even lay Sa'd (r.a.) on his own bed while he (s) slept on the ground. The Prophet (s) personally cauterized Sa'd's (r.a.) wound to stop the bleeding, a testament to his profound care for his companions. Sa'd (r.a.) was also tended to by Rufaydah al-Aslamiyyah (r.a.), one of the pioneering Muslim women in nursing. This grave injury would later lead to Sa'd's (r.a.) eventual martyrdom, adding him to the list of valiant Muslims who sacrificed their lives in the defense of Islam.

The Battle of Khandaq, a pivotal moment in Islamic history, concluded with the miraculous defeat of the confederate forces, solidifying the Muslims' position in Medina and demonstrating the unwavering divine support for Prophet Muhammad (s) and his followers.

Chapter 98

The Divine Judgment: The Siege and Fall of Banu Qurayza

The dust had barely settled from the climactic Battle of Khandaq when a new, immediate, and divinely ordained command arrived. While the Muslims were still in their battle gear, recuperating from the harrowing siege, Jibra'il (a.s.) appeared before the Prophet Mohammad (s) to deliver Allah's explicit instruction: "Proceed at once against Banu Qurayza!" The message was clear and urgent, leaving no room for delay. The treacherous actions of Banu Qurayza, who had allied with the confederates and endangered the nascent Muslim state during Khandaq, now demanded a swift and decisive response.

Without hesitation, the Prophet (s) gave the order to his companions: "None of you should pray *Asr* except at Banu Qurayza's forts!" This directive, seemingly minor, held profound significance, testing the obedience and readiness of the believers. Some companions, understanding the spirit of the command, prayed *Asr* on the way, reasoning that the Prophet (s) intended haste, not a literal location for prayer. Others, adhering to the literal wording, waited until they reached Banu Qurayza's

stronghold, performing their prayers there, even if it meant delaying *Asr* until after sunset. Both groups were affirmed by the Prophet (s), demonstrating the importance of both the spirit and the letter of his commands.

The Muslim army, though weary, immediately mobilized. They marched toward the fortified settlements of Banu Qurayza, located on the outskirts of Medina. The siege began, stretching for several days and nights. Confined within their strongholds, the Banu Qurayza soon realized the gravity of their situation. Their hope for external help had vanished with the retreat of the confederate armies. As their provisions dwindled and their morale plummeted, they sought to negotiate, appealing to their former allies among the *Ansar*.

In their desperation, they requested that Abu Lubabah ibn Abd al-Mundhir (r.a.), a prominent companion from the *Ansar* who had previous ties and alliances with Banu Qurayza, be sent to them. They hoped he would mediate or at least advise them on their course of action. When Abu Lubabah (r.a.) arrived at their forts, the Banu Qurayza women and children wept, a sight that deeply moved him. The men of the tribe asked him directly, "O Abu Lubabah, do you think we should surrender to the judgment of Mohammad?" In response, Abu Lubabah (r.a.), overwhelmed by emotion and by the gravity of their imminent doom, subtly pointed to his throat, indicating that their fate, if they surrendered, would be execution.

Immediately after this act, Abu Lubabah (r.a.) was struck by profound regret. He realized that by his gesture, he had betrayed the trust of Allah and His Messenger (s). Consumed by remorse, he did not return to the Prophet (s) or the army. Instead, he made his way to *Masjid an-Nabawi* in Medina and, without consulting anyone, tied himself to one of its pillars, vowing not to release himself until Allah accepted his repentance. For several days, he remained in this state of self-imposed punishment, fasting and praying, a testament to the profound spiritual consciousness

of the companions and the sacred nature of the Prophet's (s) trust.

During this period, a divine revelation descended upon the Prophet (s) concerning Abu Lubabah's (r.a.) action. Allah revealed in **Surah Al-Anfal**, **Qur'an 8:27**: **"O you who have believed, do not betray Allah and the Messenger or betray your trusts while you know [the consequence]."** This verse served as a grave warning against any form of treachery or breach of trust, highlighting the severe spiritual implications. Despite the gravity of his mistake, Abu Lubabah's (r.a.) sincere repentance was ultimately accepted by Allah. Days later, the Prophet (s) himself, after receiving divine confirmation of Abu Lubabah's (r.a.) forgiveness, went to the mosque and personally untied him from the pillar. This act underscored the Prophet's (s) compassion and the immense value of sincere repentance in Islam.

The siege of Banu Qurayza continued until they finally surrendered, agreeing to accept the judgment of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh (r.a.), their former ally, rather than the Prophet (s), hoping for a lenient outcome. Sa'd ibn Mu'adh (r.a.), the chieftain of the Aws tribe, had been severely wounded during the Battle of Khandaq, with an arrow severing a major artery in his arm. He was brought to the Prophet's (s) tent-hospital in Medina, where he received constant care. Upon being summoned to judge Banu Qurayza, Sa'd (r.a.), weakened but resolute, was brought to their forts on a donkey. As he approached, both the Muslims and Banu Qurayza urged him towards leniency, but Sa'd (r.a.) remained firm, seeking only divine justice. He prayed to Allah, asking for one last chance to deliver a judgment that would satisfy Him before his death.

After listening to the arguments, Sa'd (r.a.) delivered his verdict: "I rule that the fighting men shall be put to death, the women and children taken captive, and their possessions divided among the Muslims." This was a severe judgment, but it was in accordance with the customary laws of war

at that time for tribes that had committed such grave treachery. Upon hearing Sa'd's (r.a.) judgment, the Prophet (s) immediately declared, "**You have judged them with the judgment of Allah from above the seven heavens.**"

The judgment was swiftly implemented. The men of Banu Qurayza, who had plotted against the Muslims and betrayed their covenant, were led to the market square of Medina, where trenches had been dug, and executed. Their women and children were taken as captives, and their vast wealth was distributed among the Muslims, particularly aiding the *Muhajirun* who had little. During the siege, one Banu Qurayza woman, whose husband had been killed, threw a millstone from the fort walls, killing a Muslim warrior. She too was subsequently executed for this act of violence. The remnants of the Banu Qurayza, who were not involved in the treachery or converted to Islam, were spared. This decisive action brought an end to the Jewish threat within Medina, solidifying the security of the nascent Islamic state and establishing a clear precedent for dealing with betrayal.

With the fall of Banu Qurayza, the major military engagements of the 5th year after Hijrah came to a close. The Muslims had endured the terrifying siege of Khandaq and then, with divine guidance, eliminated the internal threat, demonstrating the strength of their faith, the wisdom of their leadership, and the ultimate justice of Allah.

Chapter 99

The Treachery Unveiled: The Judgment of Banu Qurayza

The dust of the Battle of the Confederates had barely settled when divine command descended upon the Messenger of Allah (s). As Allah Almighty declares in His Glorious Book, **"O you who have believed, remember the favor of Allah upon you when armies came to [attack] you, but We sent upon them a wind and armies you did not see. And ever is Allah, of what you do, Seeing."** (**Qur'an 33:9**) This verse profoundly articulated the miraculous dispersion of the formidable coalition, leaving the nascent Muslim community victorious, but not without wounds. Sa'd ibn Mu'adh (r.a.) lay severely injured, a testament to the heavy price of defending faith and community.

However, there was no respite for the Prophet (s) or his companions. The very next instruction from Jibra'il (a.s.) was clear and urgent: proceed immediately against Banu Qurayza. This Jewish tribe, dwelling within the very heart of Medina, had engaged in the most egregious act of treachery during the siege of *Khandaq*, openly conspiring with the attacking confederates against the Muslims despite their solemn covenant. Their

betrayal had placed Medina in dire peril, threatening the very existence of the fledgling Islamic state.

The Prophet (s) commanded his army to move without delay, even instructing them to perform the *Asr* prayer only upon reaching the Banu Qurayza forts, a test of absolute obedience that the companions, in their varied interpretations, successfully fulfilled. Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) was sent ahead with the standard, an advance guard to ascertain the situation. As he neared their fortifications, the audacity of Banu Qurayza became apparent; their insolence and verbal abuse, hurled from behind their walls, further affirmed the depth of their animosity. When the Prophet (s) himself arrived and saw their defiant posture and heard their disparaging remarks, he too experienced their open enmity.

The history of Banu Qurayza was intertwined with Medina's complex social fabric. They were one of the three major Jewish tribes, alongside Banu Qaynuqa' and Banu Nadir, each with their own agreements with the Medinan *Aws* and *Khazraj* tribes. Banu Qurayza, believed to be descendants of Shu'ayb, held a position subservient to Banu Nadir, who traced their lineage to Prophet Harun (a.s.) and were considered of nobler descent within the Jewish community. An existing agreement between these tribes dictated that if a man from Banu Nadir was killed, his blood money was equal to two men from Banu Qurayza, a disparity that the Prophet (s) had earlier abolished, establishing equality in blood money among all covenanted tribes.

Their betrayal during *Khandaq* was not an isolated incident. It was the culmination of deep-seated resentment and a calculated risk instigated by Huyayy ibn Akhtab, the chief of Banu Nadir, who had himself been expelled from Medina for treachery. Huyayy, ever eager to see the demise of the Muslims, had come to Banu Qurayza's forts, convincing their leader, Ka'b ibn Asad, to break the treaty. Ka'b ibn Asad had initially resisted, re-

minding Huyayy of Prophet Mohammad's (s) trustworthiness, but Huyayy swore a solemn oath to stand with them until the very end, ultimately swaying Ka'b to open the gates of treachery.

Prior to *Khandaq*, the Prophet (s) had even offered Banu Qurayza a five-year extension to their existing treaty, a gesture of goodwill. However, they had arrogantly refused, demanding a completely new agreement, thereby showing their true intentions even then. The transcript recounts an illuminating incident: a prominent Jewish scholar from Syria, well-versed in prophecies, had visited Medina *before* the Battle of *Khandaq*. Recognizing the Prophet Mohammad (s) through the signs foretold in their scriptures – red eyes, the Seal of Prophethood on his shoulder, his unparalleled courage with a sword, and his unstoppable resolve – he had urged Banu Qurayza to acknowledge him. He warned them against opposing this final Prophet, stating that Allah would ensure his victory wherever he went. Some among them were initially moved, but the tribal leaders ultimately rejected his counsel, prioritizing their ancestral customs over truth.

The siege of Banu Qurayza lasted between six to eight days. Confined within their strongholds, their supplies dwindling, the realization of their desperate situation began to set in. They sent emissaries to the Prophet (s), first seeking to leave Medina with their wealth, then with just their lives, abandoning their possessions. Both requests were denied. Finally, in a desperate attempt to find a more lenient outcome, they proposed that their fate be determined by **Sa'd ibn Mu'adh (r.a.)**, the respected chief of the *Aws* tribe, with whom Banu Qurayza had a long-standing alliance before Islam. The Prophet (s) consented to their request.

Sa'd (r.a.), who was severely wounded in *Khandaq* with a major vein in his arm severed, was brought to the Banu Qurayza stronghold on a donkey. His tribesmen, the *Aws*, appealed to him on the way, urging him to

show mercy and leniency towards their old allies, reminding him of the *Khazraj's* previous intercession for Banu Qaynuqa'. But Sa'd (r.a.), unwavering in his commitment to justice, declared that he would not be swayed by anyone's pleas, neither by fear nor by tribal loyalty. He asked both the Muslims and Banu Qurayza if they would accept his judgment, and both parties assented.

With Allah as his witness, Sa'd (r.a.) then pronounced his verdict: all adult male combatants of Banu Qurayza were to be executed, their women and children enslaved, and their property distributed among the Muslims. This judgment, the transcript emphasizes, was not Sa'd's personal decree but was rooted in the very laws found in their own sacred texts, the Torah (Deuteronomy 20:10-14), which prescribed similar fates for hostile, unyielding enemies during sieges. Upon hearing Sa'd's verdict, the Prophet (s) proclaimed, "**Indeed, you have judged with the judgment of Allah from above the Seven Heavens.**"

The judgment was carried out with solemnity. Trenches were dug near *Jabal Tal Baqi'*, adjacent to the *Baqi'* cemetery. The adult male combatants of Banu Qurayza were brought forth in groups and executed. Their women and children were taken as captives, and their vast wealth—arms, armor, goods, and land—became spoils of war, significantly bolstering the Muslim community's resources.

In the midst of this stern justice, there were notable exceptions that highlighted the Prophet's (s) adherence to principles of fairness. One Jewish man, Zir, was spared at the intercession of Thabit ibn Qays (r.a.). Zir had previously protected Thabit (r.a.) during a pre-Islamic battle, and Thabit (r.a.) reminded the Prophet (s) of this act of kindness. The Prophet (s) accepted the plea, illustrating that even in the face of grave treachery, past good deeds and acts of humanity were recognized. Conversely, a Jewish woman was executed for the specific crime of murdering a Mus-

lim fighter during the siege by dropping a grinding stone on his head from the fortress wall. Her specific act of violence, rather than a blanket judgment, led to her individual punishment.

The decisive action against Banu Qurayza, though severe, was a necessary measure to consolidate the security of Medina and send a clear message about the consequences of profound treachery against the nascent Islamic state. It secured the Muslim community from internal threats and eliminated a source of constant conspiracy, thereby allowing the Muslims to focus on their mission without the constant fear of betrayal from within their own city. This event underscored the Prophet's (s) commitment to justice, even when it was stern, contrasting sharply with the general clemency he later displayed at the Conquest of Mecca, thereby showing that his actions were always guided by divine principles and the prevailing circumstances of justice and order. Sa'd ibn Mu'adh (r.a.), having fulfilled his momentous duty, succumbed to his wounds shortly thereafter, achieving martyrdom.

Chapter 100

Sa'd ibn Mu'adh: The Trembling Throne, the Pressure of the Grave, and Enduring Lessons

The fifth year after the *Hijrah* was drawing to a close, a year laden with pivotal events in the nascent history of Islam. Following the triumphant conclusion of the Battle of Khandaq and the subsequent decisive action against Banu Qurayza, Medina was poised for a period of relative calm. However, even in victory, the Muslim community was to face a profound loss that would evoke memories of the heartbreak suffered after the Battle of Uhud with the martyrdom of Hamza (r.a.). This profound sorrow was occasioned by the passing of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh (r.a.), a towering figure among the *Ansar* whose life and death underscored critical principles of faith and conduct.

Sa'd ibn Mu'adh's journey into Islam marked a significant turning point for Medina. Before the Prophet's (s) migration, he had sent Mus'ab ibn Umayr (r.a.) as his envoy to Medina to propagate the message of Islam. Mus'ab (r.a.), known for his gentle demeanor and profound understand-

ing of the Qur'an, was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the Islamic state. At that time, Sa'd ibn Mu'adh (r.a.) and Usayd ibn Hudayr (r.a.) were two prominent leaders of the Aws tribe. Usayd (r.a.), initially approaching Mus'ab with anger and a spear, was disarmed not by force but by Mus'ab's serene recitation of Qur'anic verses. His heart instantly softened, and he embraced Islam.

Recognizing Sa'd's immense influence, Usayd (r.a.) urged Mus'ab to meet him, stating that if Sa'd converted, the entire tribe would follow. When Sa'd (r.a.) arrived, similarly filled with indignation, Mus'ab (r.a.) calmly invited him to listen. As Mus'ab recited the divine words, Sa'd's (r.a.) heart too yielded. Without hesitation, he asked what he needed to do to accept Islam. He was told to perform a ritual bath (*ghusl*) and recite the declaration of faith. Overwhelmed by the truth, Sa'd (r.a.) did not even return home but plunged into a nearby well to purify himself, demonstrating an extraordinary zeal to embrace the truth without delay. Upon emerging, he recited the *Kalima* (declaration of faith) and became a Muslim. His conversion was so impactful that before nightfall, his entire sub-tribe, Banu Abd al-Ash'hal, had followed suit, a testament to his unparalleled authority and spiritual integrity.

Sa'd's (r.a.) commitment to Islam was unwavering. Even before the *Hijrah*, during a visit to Mecca, he had boldly confronted Abu Jahl, the arch-enemy of Islam, in the Ka'bah courtyard. As a guest of Umayyah ibn Khalaf (who later died at Badr), Sa'd (r.a.) had declared to Abu Jahl that if Quraysh continued their persecution, Medina would cut off their vital trade route to Syria. This courageous stance showcased his fierce loyalty to the nascent Muslim community.

During the Battle of Khandaq, Sa'd (r.a.) demonstrated immense bravery. It was during this fierce siege that he sustained a grievous injury, struck by an arrow from Hibban ibn 'Arqa that pierced his arm, leaving a major

wound. The Prophet (s) was deeply distressed by Sa'd's injury and even cursed the assailant, praying that Allah would burn him in the Fire of Hell.

Sa'd (r.a.) was moved to a tent in the courtyard of Masjid an-Nabawi for treatment. The Prophet (s), demonstrating his profound affection and care, personally cauterized Sa'd's wound with a heated iron. For some time, Sa'd (r.a.) appeared to be recovering, but the wound soon reopened, gushing blood profusely. As his life ebbed away, the Prophet (s) hurried to his side, cradling Sa'd's (r.a.) head in his lap. Sa'd (r.a.), sensing the Prophet's (s) presence, respectfully attempted to lift his head, feeling unworthy of such honor. His final question to the Prophet (s) was, "O Messenger of Allah, have I fulfilled my duty to Islam?" The Prophet (s) reassured him, confirming his unwavering commitment. Shortly after, Sa'd (r.a.) breathed his last.

The events surrounding Sa'd's (r.a.) funeral were extraordinary, marked by divine manifestations that underscored his lofty status. As soon as the Prophet (s) received news of Sa'd's (r.a.) passing, he immediately rose, rushed out of his house barefoot and without his cloak, and proceeded to Sa'd's (r.a.) home. He personally oversaw the ritual washing and shrouding of Sa'd's (r.a.) body, giving instructions to the companions.

When it was time for the funeral prayer, the companions noticed the Prophet (s) standing on the tips of his toes, with his heels lifted from the ground. Upon being asked the reason, he explained that an uncountable multitude of angels had descended from the heavens to participate in Sa'd's (r.a.) funeral prayer, leaving no space for him to stand normally on the ground. He also recited seventy thousand *Takbirat* (Allah u Akbar), explaining that for every thousand angels who descended, he recited one *Takbir* so they could all join the prayer. These were angels who had never descended to Earth before, a testament to Sa'd's (r.a.) immense spiritual

standing.

As Sa'd's (r.a.) body was carried to Jannat al-Baqi for burial, some hypocrites commented on how light the bier felt, implying that Islam had weakened Sa'd (r.a.). The Prophet (s) quickly dispelled their malicious insinuation, explaining that the bier felt light because it was being carried by angels, a sign of Sa'd's (r.a.) exalted position in the eyes of Allah.

The Prophet (s) personally descended into Sa'd's (r.a.) grave. Upon sealing the grave with stones and earth, he mentioned that despite Sa'd's (r.a.) immense virtues, he was subjected to the *fishar al-qabr* (pressure of the grave). When asked by the companions why such a great companion would experience this, the Prophet (s) revealed a profound lesson: Sa'd (r.a.) was known for his occasional harshness towards his family, particularly his wife. This revelation was not to diminish Sa'd's (r.a.) stature but to underscore the paramount importance of compassionate treatment towards one's family, especially one's spouse. The Prophet (s) also stated that the **Arsh-e-Ilahi** (Throne of Allah) trembled at Sa'd's passing, another testament to his extraordinary status.

In his pronouncements concerning Sa'd (r.a.), the Prophet (s) highlighted several virtues, providing enduring lessons for the Muslim *Ummah*. He praised Sa'd (r.a.) for never doubting any *Hadith* (saying) of the Prophet (s), emphasizing the equal importance of divine revelation through the Qur'an and the Prophet's (s) teachings. He also lauded Sa'd's (r.a.) unwavering focus during prayer, never allowing his thoughts to stray. Furthermore, Sa'd (r.a.) constantly remembered death and the questioning by the angels *Munkar* and *Nakir* in the grave, reflecting a profound awareness of accountability.

The Prophet (s) also praised Sa'd's (r.a.) commitment to *Amr bi'l-Ma'ruf wa Nahy ani'l-Munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil) and his willingness to express anger for the sake of Allah, the Prophet (s), and Ali

(a.s.), distinguishing it from worldly anger which is forbidden.

Perhaps the most significant lesson drawn from Sa'd's (r.a.) passing, as revealed through the *fishar al-qabr*, was the critical importance of marital harmony and kindness within the family. The Prophet's (s) statement, "**The best among you is the one who is best to his family**," encapsulates this teaching. It stresses that outward piety and heroic deeds are incomplete without compassionate and just treatment of those closest to us.

The Prophet (s) also emphasized the importance of performing every task with perfection, even those seemingly mundane or impermanent, as exemplified by his meticulousness in preparing Sa'd's (r.a.) grave, knowing that the body would eventually return to dust.

The profound lessons emanating from Sa'd ibn Mu'adh's (r.a.) life and death continue to guide Muslims. His unwavering faith, his immediate acceptance of truth, his courage in defending Islam, and the subtle yet crucial lesson regarding domestic conduct, all combine to present him as an exemplary figure. His passing solidified the principles of internal purity and external justice within the burgeoning Islamic society. The story of Rehanah Khatoon (r.a.), whose narrative would further elaborate on aspects of women's rights and family life, remained for a future time, yet the groundwork for these discussions was laid by the profound and miraculous events surrounding Sa'd ibn Mu'adh (r.a.).

Chapter 101

Upholding Order and Justice: Post-Khandaq Challenges

With the decisive conclusion of the Battle of Khandaq and the swift, rigorous judgment against Banu Qurayza, the nascent Islamic state in Medina entered a new phase of stability. The combined might of the Meccan confederacy had been shattered, and the last significant Jewish stronghold within Medina had been dismantled, removing two major existential threats. This period, encompassing the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth year after the *Hijrah*, allowed for the consolidation of Muslim authority, though smaller, persistent challenges continued to emerge from the surrounding tribes and from the remnants of Meccan hostility. The Prophet Mohammad (s) responded to these varied threats with a profound balance of justice, mercy, and strategic foresight, guided by divine wisdom.

One notable event from this transitional period involved **Rayhana bint Zayd**, a woman from Banu Nadir who had married into Banu Qurayza. After the Banu Qurayza men were punished, Rayhana, originally from the Banu Nadir tribe which had been exiled earlier, found herself with-

out family in Medina. She subsequently embraced Islam. The Prophet (s) then married her, and she was initially accommodated in a house belonging to the Banu Najjar clan, following the Prophet's (s) customary practice before a separate dwelling could be prepared for his wives.

The revelation of **Ayat al-Hijab** (the verse of the veil) had already established the compulsory nature of *hijab* for Muslim women. For Rayhana, who had spent her entire life in a Jewish environment where the concept of *hijab* was alien, this immediate transition proved challenging. Despite her newfound faith and her status as a wife of the Prophet (s), she found adhering to the strictures of *hijab* immensely difficult. Her discomfort eventually led her to request a divorce from the Prophet (s), which he granted, honoring her choice and autonomy, even though divorce is generally considered a right of the husband in Islam. However, soon after the divorce, Rayhana deeply regretted her decision. Recognizing the profound spiritual and social benefits of being part of the Prophet's (s) blessed household, she returned to him, shedding tears of remorse. The Prophet (s), in his boundless compassion, took her back, either remarrying her or resuming their marriage, as accounts vary. Rayhana remained his wife and lived a life adhering to the divine commands until her passing. She was the last of the Prophet's (s) wives to die during his lifetime, her demise occurring shortly after his farewell *Hajj* and just before his own passing in the 6th year after *Hijrah*. This incident underscored the paramount importance of the divine command of *hijab* in the eyes of the Prophet (s), even to the extent of allowing a divorce rather than compromising on a divine injunction.

The defeat at Khandaq did not extinguish the Meccan leaders' animosity towards the Prophet (s). Instead, they shifted tactics from open warfare to covert operations. Abu Sufyan, a prominent Meccan chieftain, publicly offered a handsome reward for anyone who could assassinate Prophet Mohammad (s). An opportunistic Arab man, hearing of the reward, ac-

cepted the mission and journeyed to Medina with the intent to kill the Prophet (s).

Upon arriving in Medina, the assassin located the Prophet (s) in the mosque of Banu Abd al-Ashhal (the tribe of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh). The Prophet (s), with his divine insight, immediately recognized the man's hostile intentions, even before he could act. He instructed his companion Usayd ibn Hudayr to closely observe the newcomer. The man, attempting to confirm the Prophet's (s) identity, approached directly, asking for "the son of Abd al-Ashhal." As he advanced rapidly, Usayd, sensing the imminent danger, leaped forward, intercepted him, and dragged him out of the mosque. A search revealed a hidden dagger, confirming his murderous plot. The Prophet (s) ordered Usayd to imprison the man for a day, allowing a cool and unbiased judgment to be made, free from immediate emotional reaction. The following day, when the assassin was brought before him, the Prophet (s), displaying his characteristic mercy, astonishingly *freed* him. The man, having spent 24 hours contemplating his fate and expecting death, was deeply moved by this unexpected act of forgiveness and immediately embraced Islam, choosing to remain in Medina.

However, the Prophet (s)'s forgiveness of the assassin did not extend to ignoring the instigator of the plot. Recognizing the need to deter future such attempts and to instill fear in those who sought to harm the Muslim community, the Prophet (s) dispatched **Amr ibn Umayyah al-Damari**, a resourceful and swift companion, along with another Muslim, on a covert mission to Mecca. This *sariyyah* (expedition without the Prophet's direct leadership) was not intended to launch an attack but to deliver a clear message of Muslim strength and retaliatory capability. Upon reaching Mecca, Amr ibn Umayyah and his companion caused a diversion, making their presence known to sow unease among the Meccan leadership. During their mission, Amr encountered a Meccan who was publicly

slandering the Prophet (s). Adhering to the Islamic ruling against blasphemy when one has the power to act, Amr killed him. After successfully demonstrating that the Muslims could indeed reach Mecca and retaliate, Amr ibn Umayyah returned to Medina, having fulfilled his objective of instilling fear and deterring further assassination attempts. This incident, while demonstrating the Prophet's (s) individual mercy, also highlighted the principle of reciprocal justice and deterrence against hostile forces.

Another grave incident occurred when a group of eight men from the **Uraynah tribe** came to Medina, claiming to embrace Islam. However, they soon fell ill due to the Medinan climate. The Prophet (s), in his compassion, advised them to drink camel milk and urine, a common remedy of the time, from the designated pasture where the Prophet's (s) camels were kept under the care of his slave, Yasar. These men, however, harbored ill intentions. They brutally murdered Yasar, mutilating his eyes, and then stole the Prophet's (s) camels, fleeing with them.

Upon learning of this heinous crime, the Prophet (s) immediately dispatched a group of companions, led by Kurz ibn Jabir al-Fihri, to pursue the criminals. They were swiftly apprehended. The Prophet (s) then ordered a severe punishment for their crimes, which combined banditry, murder, and mutilation. Their hands and feet were amputated from alternate sides, and their eyes were gouged out, as they had done to Yasar, before they were left to perish. This stern retribution was directly in accordance with divine legislation, specifically **Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 33**: **"Indeed, the penalty for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive upon earth [to cause] corruption is none but that they be killed or crucified or that their hands and feet be cut off from opposite sides or that they be exiled from the land. That is for them a disgrace in this world; and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment."** And **Verse 45**: **"And We ordained for them therein a life for a life, and an eye for an eye, and a nose for a nose, and an ear for an ear,**

and a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds is retribution." This event firmly established that while Islam champions mercy, it does not shy away from administering severe justice for crimes that threaten the fabric of society and public security, illustrating that justice and deterrence are integral components of the Islamic legal system.

The security of the Prophet's (s) grazing animals was again tested during this period. One day, while the Prophet (s) was in Medina, his companion Abu Salamah, who was out hunting, witnessed a raid on the Prophet's (s) camels in a grazing area near the Saq-Ma'an pass. The raiders brutally killed some of the animals and martyred a relative of Abu Dharr (or Abu Dharr's son). Abu Salamah immediately cried out for help, and his shouts reached the Prophet (s). Without hesitation, the Prophet (s) mobilized a contingent of Muslims to pursue the attackers. Abu Salamah, along with a small group, immediately gave chase, pressing the raiders so hard that they abandoned some of the stolen camels. The main Muslim force arrived shortly after, but the raiders, in their flight, managed to reach the territory of a powerful allied tribe of the Meccans.

At this point, the Prophet (s), despite having the capability to pursue them, made a strategic decision not to enter the territory of that powerful tribe. This was not due to fear, but out of political wisdom, recognizing that a direct engagement with that tribe at that moment would be counterproductive and could escalate into a larger, unnecessary conflict. He prioritized the broader strategic interests of the Islamic state over immediate retribution. The Prophet (s) thereby demonstrated that even in the face of aggression, the leader of the Muslims must exercise prudence and choose the most opportune moment for engagement, balancing valor with wisdom.

During the pursuit, a Muslim woman who had been captured by the raiders was freed. As she returned to Medina, she made a *nazr* (vow) to

sacrifice the camel that had carried her safely back. Upon learning of her vow, the Prophet (s) smiled, noting the unusual nature of her promise: to sacrifice the very animal that had provided her with safety. He then clarified the Islamic principles regarding vows: First, a vow must not be made for a sinful act. Sacrificing an innocent animal that had performed a good deed would fall into this category. Second, a vow must pertain to one's own property or action. This camel was not hers. Third, a vow to commit a futile or absurd act is invalid. The Prophet (s) explicitly stated that vows involving sinful acts or those not related to one's own possessions are invalid and should not be fulfilled. This incident provided a crucial teaching moment, delineating the correct Islamic understanding of vows and emphasizing personal responsibility and adherence to divine commands.

These incidents, though varied in nature, collectively highlighted the Prophet's (s) strategic acumen and his unwavering commitment to divine justice. Whether extending mercy to a misguided assailant, meting out severe punishment for egregious crimes against society, or exercising strategic patience in military affairs, his actions were always guided by the overarching principles of Islam and the long-term well-being of the Muslim community.

Chapter 102

Beyond the Trench: Securing the Realm and Expanding Influence

With the formidable coalition of the Battle of Khandaq decisively defeated, a palpable shift occurred in the strategic landscape of the burgeoning Islamic state in Medina. The sheer scale of the enemy's alliance, numbering ten thousand strong, had been broken, and the Meccan pagans, the primary architects of hostility against Islam, had lost their decisive strength. This victory allowed the Prophet Muhammad (s) to pivot from defensive large-scale engagements to a more proactive strategy of consolidating the nascent state's security and addressing lingering threats from smaller, often treacherous, elements within and around the Arabian Peninsula.

It is important to acknowledge that the precise chronology of events during this period, encompassing the fifth and sixth years after the *Hijrah*, presents some debate among historians. Certain significant incidents, including the *Ghazwah Banu Mustaliq* and the momentous revelations of *Surah an-Nur* and *Surah al-Ahzab* concerning *hijab*, are placed by different scholars either before or after the Battle of Khandaq, or before or after the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. While our narrative has previously followed one

sequence, the broader consensus indicates that many key events related to securing Medina and expanding Islam's influence unfolded in the immediate aftermath of Khandaq. The general understanding is that the strategic focus shifted towards neutralizing persistent, localized dangers and establishing a stable environment for the growing Muslim community.

Following Khandaq, the Prophet (s) turned his attention to remaining hostile Jewish elements who continued to incite trouble and pose a security risk from their scattered strongholds. Among these were two particularly notorious figures: Salam ibn Abi al-Huqayq, also known as Abu Rafi', and Usayr ibn Rizam.

Salam ibn Abi al-Huqayq was a prominent Jewish leader who had actively conspired against the Muslims. He had been a key instigator of the confederate forces in the Battle of Khandaq and harbored immense malice towards the Prophet (s) and Islam. To neutralize this enduring threat, the Prophet (s) dispatched a small group of *Ansar* led by Abdullah ibn Atik. These brave young men, skilled in stealth, infiltrated Abu Rafi's heavily guarded abode under the cloak of night. Abdullah ibn Atik, using cunning and courage, gained access to the inner chambers, located the chieftain, and struck him down. During his escape, Abdullah tragically broke his leg while attempting to descend from the fortress wall. Upon his return to Medina, in a profound display of divine *Barakah*, the Prophet (s) touched his injured leg, which instantly healed, leaving no trace of pain or weakness for the rest of his life.

Soon after, attention turned to Usayr ibn Rizam, another influential Jewish leader who had stepped into a position of considerable authority following the demise of Abu Rafi'. He was based in Khaybar and continued to pose a threat. The Prophet (s) again sent a small delegation to him. This time, instead of an assassination, the strategy was one of diplomacy

and subterfuge. The Muslim envoys approached Usayr, inviting him to Medina under the pretext that the Prophet (s) wished to grant him leadership over certain Jewish tribes. Usayr, perhaps swayed by ambition or a misjudgment of the Muslims' intentions, agreed to travel to Medina with the delegation. However, on the journey, an altercation arose, and Usayr ibn Rizam was neutralized, removing another significant source of Jewish intrigue and antagonism against the nascent Islamic state. These two actions profoundly weakened Jewish resistance around Medina, effectively cornering their remaining power within the formidable fortress of Khaybar, which would be addressed in due course.

Meanwhile, the profound defeat at Khandaq had left the pagan leadership in Mecca in a state of deep despair and fear. Their grand ambition of annihilating Islam had failed spectacularly. Recognizing their inability to directly confront the Muslims on the battlefield, some Meccan leaders began to explore desperate alternatives. One prominent Meccan, in particular, contemplated fleeing the Arabian Peninsula altogether, seeking refuge and alliances in distant lands. He journeyed to Abyssinia (*Habasha*) with valuable gifts, intending to secure his future or forge new anti-Islamic pacts with the *Najashi*, the benevolent Christian ruler.

However, a remarkable convergence of divine plan unfolded. Unknown to the Meccan emissary, the Prophet Muhammad (s) had, some time prior, dispatched his esteemed companion, Umar ibn Umayyah al-Damari, to Abyssinia. This mission had a dual purpose, once again demonstrating the Prophet's (s) far-reaching vision and unwavering concern for his followers. Firstly, Umar ibn Umayyah was entrusted with a sacred task: to deliver a marriage proposal from the Prophet (s) to Umm Habibah, the daughter of Abu Sufyan. Umm Habibah was among the early *Muhajirun* who had sought refuge in Abyssinia before the *Hijrah* to Medina. Her husband, Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh, a cousin of the Prophet (s) and a brother of Zaynab bint Jahsh (r.a.), had tragically apostatized to Chris-

tianity in Abyssinia, leaving Umm Habibah in a vulnerable and isolated position. The Prophet's (s) proposal was a profound act of compassion and protection for a distressed Muslim woman in a foreign land. The *Najashi*, upon receiving the Prophet's (s) letter and understanding his noble intent, acted as Umm Habibah's guardian and conducted the marriage ceremony and *walimah* on behalf of the Prophet (s), celebrating this blessed union with the Muslim refugees.

Secondly, Umar ibn Umayyah's mission aimed to assess the condition of the remaining Muslims in Abyssinia and prepare for their eventual return to Medina, a process that would culminate years later. It was during this very period that the Meccan emissary, seeking an audience with the *Najashi*, encountered Umar ibn Umayyah leaving the royal court. The Meccan recognized the Prophet's (s) envoy, a figure he knew to be an implacable foe who had undertaken audacious missions against Meccan interests. Incensed, the Meccan emissary, during his own audience with the *Najashi*, attempted to malign Umar ibn Umayyah, urging the king to apprehend and execute him. However, the *Najashi*, with deep reverence and conviction, responded with thunderous indignation. He physically struck the Meccan, asserting his unwavering belief in Prophet Muhammad (s) as a true Messenger of God, receiving the same divine revelations as Prophet Moses (a.s.). This powerful endorsement from a Christian king, who had witnessed the Muslims' integrity and faith, utterly shattered the Meccan's hopes. Realizing the futility of his mission and the extent of Islam's reach and influence, even in distant lands, the Meccan returned to his people in despair, his dreams of forging new alliances against Islam thoroughly dashed.

In parallel with these external engagements, divine guidance continued to refine the social fabric of the Muslim community in Medina. During this period, or shortly thereafter according to some accounts, *Surah al-Ahzab* delivered crucial legislation concerning divorce before consumma-

tion (*rukhsati*). In pre-Islamic Arabia, and sometimes even in early Islam, men could exploit women by marrying them, divorcing them before consummation, and then revoking the divorce, effectively holding them in perpetual limbo—neither married nor free, and often without rights to sustenance or *mahr*. The new revelation clarified that if a woman was divorced before consummation, she was not required to observe the *iddah* (waiting period) but was still entitled to half of her *mahr*. This divine command was a profound protection for women, preventing their exploitation and ensuring their freedom and financial rights, underscoring Islam's unwavering commitment to justice and dignity for all, especially the vulnerable.

The shift in strategic focus following Khandaq was also evident in the sheer number of military expeditions undertaken by the Muslims. While earlier years saw fewer, larger battles, the sixth and seventh years after *Hijrah* witnessed an unprecedented frequency of smaller detachments being dispatched. In the sixth year alone, there were eighteen such expeditions, and in the seventh year, nineteen. These were not major confrontations like Badr or Uhud but rather strategic operations to pacify hostile tribes, secure trade routes, and extend the influence of the Islamic state across the Arabian Peninsula. This demonstrates the Prophet's (s) meticulous attention to the security and stability of his *Ummah*, addressing myriad localized threats while simultaneously nurturing the spiritual and social development of his community.

Indeed, throughout these challenging times, the Prophet's (s) profound compassion (*rahmah*) and wisdom (*hikmah*) remained constant. Whether dealing with external enemies, distant Muslim communities, or internal social issues, his approach was always rooted in justice, foresight, and an unparalleled concern for the welfare of all, including the most vulnerable. Even in the heat of military engagements, he would issue specific instructions, such as not harming children, exemplifying the boundless

mercy that characterized his blessed mission.

Chapter 103

The Year of Small Expeditions: Generosity and Divine Providence

The period immediately following the Battle of Khandaq, stretching for a full year until the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah in Dhu al-Qa'dah 6 AH, marked a crucial strategic shift in the Prophet's □ approach to consolidating the nascent Islamic state. This year transitioned the Muslim community from a largely defensive posture to one of proactive engagement and strategic pacification. While the great confederacy had been repelled, hostile elements among the Meccans and the Jews in Khaybar continued to incite smaller tribes surrounding Medina, posing a lingering threat. The Prophet □ understood that the time had come to address these fragmented challenges, securing the periphery of Medina and paving the way for Islam's eventual expansion beyond the Arabian Peninsula.

Indeed, history records that nearly half of all expeditions undertaken during the Prophet's □ lifetime occurred within these two years (5 AH to 7 AH). Before this, the Muslim community, often under siege, could rarely dispatch more than six to eight expeditions annually. However, in this pivotal year, the Islamic forces ventured forth on seventeen or eighteen

separate occasions, a testament to the Prophet's □ methodical planning and foresight. These operations were not large-scale wars but calculated strikes by smaller contingents, typically fifty, one hundred, or two hundred men, sometimes up to three hundred, aimed at neutralizing specific threats and impressing upon the hostile tribes the growing strength of Medina.

Among these numerous expeditions, several stand out for their historical significance and the profound lessons they imparted. Many were led by Zayd ibn Harithah (r.a.), the Prophet's □ adopted son, highlighting his trusted leadership.

One such expedition targeted a tribe associated with a notorious woman named *Umm Qirfah*. She was infamous for her immense wealth and her relentless efforts to incite tribes against the Muslims. Historical accounts describe her household as constantly guarded by fifty swordsmen, including twelve of her own sons, indicating her formidable influence and willingness to engage in conflict. This campaign successfully neutralized her threat, removing a significant source of intrigue against Medina.

Another historically rich event unfolded during Zayd ibn Harithah's (r.a.) sixth expedition. During a raid on a Qurayshi caravan, the Muslims captured Sayyidah Zaynab's (r.a.) husband, Abul Aas ibn Rabi'. Sayyidah Zaynab (r.a.), who was still in Mecca, sent a precious necklace as ransom for her husband. This necklace held profound sentimental value, as it was a wedding gift from her esteemed aunt, Sayyidah Khadijah (r.a.). When the Prophet's □ eyes fell upon the necklace, tears welled up, evoking vivid memories of his beloved and loyal wife. The Muslims, witnessing his □ emotion and out of deep reverence for Sayyidah Khadijah (r.a.) and her immense sacrifices for Islam, immediately expressed their desire to release Abul Aas without ransom and return the necklace. The Prophet □ agreed. Upon his return to Mecca, Abul Aas meticulously fulfilled all

his commercial trusts, returning every item and every coin to its rightful owner. Only then, standing before the Ka'bah, did he publicly declare his *Shahadah*, testifying to his belief in Islam, and subsequently migrated to Medina. This incident underscored a fundamental Islamic principle: the absolute importance of fulfilling trusts (*amanat*), even with those who are not Muslim. It served as a powerful example of integrity and justice, reinforcing the moral code of Islam in the eyes of friends and foes alike, and further highlighting the shifting balance of power in Mecca.

Another pivotal expedition was *Sariyyah Sayf al-Bahr* (the Expedition of the Sea Coast), led by Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah (r.a.) with a contingent of three hundred Muslims. Their mission was to deter a potential attack from a Qurayshi-allied tribe on the Red Sea coast. The expedition prolonged for a month, and provisions dwindled, bringing the companions to the brink of starvation, forcing them to eat thorny shrubs. In this desperate hour, divine providence manifested spectacularly. An unprecedentedly enormous marine creature, described as a whale, was miraculously washed ashore. Its sheer size was astonishing; its rib cage was so vast that Qays ibn Sa'd (r.a.), the tallest man in the contingent, could pass under its arching bone without stooping, and thirteen men could comfortably sit in its eye socket. This miraculous bounty sustained the entire three-hundred-man contingent for a month, providing them with ample meat, fat, and even ambergris. When they returned to Medina, they were not only healthy but had even gained weight, a testament to Allah's **subhanahu wa ta'ala** boundless mercy and support for His servants in times of hardship. This event profoundly reinforced the believers' faith in divine sustenance and the limitless power of Allah **subhanahu wa ta'ala**.

The Prophet's □ teachings and actions during this period also heavily emphasized the virtue of generosity (*sakhawat*) and condemned miserliness (*bukhl*). In one striking instance, five captured Quraysh prisoners, all from the same tribe, were brought before the Prophet □ after an

expedition. Four of them were executed for their crimes against Muslims. However, when the fifth man, a notably wealthy and famously generous individual, was brought forward, the Prophet ,□ after receiving a divine revelation, ordered his release. This astonished the companions, who questioned why this man, who had committed the same offenses as the executed four, was pardoned. The Prophet □ explained that while his crime warranted death, Allah **subhanahu wa ta'ala** overlooks grave errors for the truly generous. He □ declared that **sakhawat** is the **sunnah** of the Prophets and Imams, a path that brings one closer to divine mercy. This was starkly contrasted with another incident where a martyr, despite giving his life for Islam, was reportedly delayed in entering Paradise due to his miserliness. This profound lesson underscored that while acts of physical bravery are crucial, spiritual and moral virtues like generosity hold immense weight in the sight of Allah **subhanahu wa ta'ala**.

The exemplary generosity of Qays ibn Sa'd ibn Ubadah (r.a.), a prominent *Ansari* leader and son of the renowned Sa'd ibn Ubadah (r.a.), was also highlighted. His family was legendary for their *sakhawat* in Medina. During the *Sayf al-Bahr* expedition, when provisions ran critically low, Qays ibn Sa'd (r.a.), though also facing hardship, offered to purchase dates from his companions (who were hoarding them) at an incredibly exorbitant price, ensuring that the starving army was fed. When a companion expressed surprise, questioning how he could make such a generous offer while having no money, Qays ibn Sa'd (r.a.) retorted that his father, known for his generosity, would even provide camels for pedestrians and feed the hungry from his own table. He demonstrated that true generosity is not about the recipient's need but about the giver's status and nobility. This attitude was succinctly captured in the Prophetic teaching: a gift or act of charity should reflect the giver's capacity, not just the recipient's immediate need.

Amidst these military and moral lessons, Medina faced another crisis:

a severe drought. The land became parched, and crops withered. The Prophet □ responded by commanding the Muslims to give *sadaqah* (charity) on the first day, emphasizing that it opens the doors to divine mercy. On the second day, he □ led the special **Salat al-Istisqa** (Prayer for Rain). Muslims, including women and children (though children were kept separate from women), gathered barefoot outside Medina in a place that later became known as Masjid al-Ghamamah. With hands raised to the sky, they wept and pleaded for Allah's **subhanahu wa ta'ala** mercy. As the Prophet □ supplicated, the heavens opened, and abundant rain poured down, bringing relief and hope. On the third day, the Prophet □ addressed the community, reminding them of the divine blessing. He □ warned against attributing the rain to stellar movements or natural phenomena, stating that those who did so were in essence denying Allah's **subhanahu wa ta'ala** direct power and blessings. This teaching solidified the understanding that all blessings come directly from Allah **subhanahu wa ta'ala**, and attributing them to other causes is a form of **kufr** (disbelief) in its essence.

Finally, the period also saw a diplomatic success that highlighted the Prophet's □ wisdom and the power of generosity. The tribe of Banu Ashja'ah, though not openly hostile, began to fear the burgeoning Muslim power. They retreated into the mountains near Medina, causing concern among the Muslims who suspected a hostile intent. However, the Prophet ,□ always seeking understanding before confrontation, dispatched a delegation of four experienced *Ansar* to ascertain their true intentions. Crucially, before the delegation set out, the Prophet □ sent a large quantity of dates as a gift to the Banu Ashja'ah. He □ taught that **"gifts and generosity foster love and remove misunderstandings."** This act of kindness, preceding any negotiation, effectively dispelled the tribe's fears. The delegation conveyed the message that Muslims would not initiate aggression but would respond if attacked. Reassured by the gift and the message, Banu

Ashja'ah returned to their lands, avoiding conflict and further cementing Medina's security. This incident vividly demonstrated the Prophet's □ strategic use of diplomacy, compassion, and the profound psychological impact of generosity in defusing tension and fostering peace.

These numerous, often small, expeditions and the accompanying moral and spiritual lessons were pivotal in consolidating the Islamic state's security. They cleared the immediate threats around Medina, established Muslim authority, and instilled a sense of awe and respect among the surrounding tribes. More importantly, they continually reinforced the core values of Islam—generosity, integrity, reliance on divine providence, and compassionate leadership—preparing the *Ummah* for the grander challenges and triumphs that lay ahead, particularly the upcoming Treaty of Hudaybiyyah and the subsequent expansion of Islam beyond the Arabian Peninsula. The teachings on generosity also linked to the profound sacrifices of the Prophet's family, including the selflessness of Imam Husayn (a.s.) at Karbala, where he exemplified the ultimate generosity of sacrificing his beloved son, Ali Akbar, a pain no father should bear.

Chapter 104

The Pilgrimage of Peace: A Divine Vision and the Road to Hudaybiyyah

With the formidable coalition defeated at Khandaq, and Jewish strongholds consolidated into Khaybar, the Islamic state entered a new phase, marking a profound strategic shift from defensive warfare to proactive consolidation and expansion of influence. This period, particularly the sixth year of *Hijrah*, would witness the unfolding of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah – a pivotal event brimming with timeless lessons on leadership, patience, and divine wisdom. As the Muslim community navigated the complexities of hostile adversaries who sought to inflame passions and entrap believers, the intricate narrative of Hudaybiyyah offered a guiding light, demonstrating how faith and steadfastness could overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

The initial period following Khandaq saw the Prophet (s) dispatching numerous small expeditions to pacify the tribes surrounding Medina, many of whom had been incited by Meccan and Jewish intrigues. These missions, already detailed, were characterized not by brute force but by a compassionate and strategic approach aimed at forging alliances or neu-

tralizing threats with minimal conflict. It was during this atmosphere of growing stability that an extraordinary event transpired, laying the groundwork for the most significant shift in the Prophet's (s) foreign policy.

One morning in the month of Shawwal, 6 AH, the Prophet (s) entered the mosque and gathered the Muslims. He shared a powerful dream: he saw himself and his companions entering **Masjid al-Haram** in Mecca, performing the rituals of *Umrah*, their heads shaved or hair shortened, in complete security. This dream, a divine vision, resonated deeply with the *Muhajirun*, who had yearned for their homeland and the sacred **Ka'bah** for years. It ignited an immense surge of enthusiasm and a longing to return to their beloved city of worship.

This dream was not merely a personal vision; it was a divine promise, later enshrined in the **Qur'an al-Kareem**: **"Indeed, Allah has fulfilled the vision for His Messenger in truth. You will surely enter al-Masjid al-Haram, if Allah wills, in security, with your heads shaved and [hair] shortened, not fearing [anyone]."** (**Surah al-Fath, 48:27**). The declaration of this dream, and the Prophet's (s) immediate preparations to embark on *Umrah*, marked a profound shift from a war-footing to a spiritual pilgrimage.

The journey to Hudaybiyyah would also reveal several crucial Islamic principles. Foremost among them was the concept of "manifest victory" (*Fath-e-Mubeen*). While battles like Badr, Uhud, and Khandaq, despite their immense significance, were not termed *Fath-e-Mubeen* in the Qur'an, this peace treaty, where no sword was drawn, would be. This underscored that true victory was not solely measured by military triumph but by spiritual and strategic gains, and by the establishment of peace and the proclamation of Allah's oneness. Furthermore, the events at Hudaybiyyah would highlight the paramount importance of the divinely guided

leadership of the Prophet (s), whose decisions, even when differing from the collective opinion of his companions, were ultimately proven to be the most prudent and aligned with Allah's will. The precision and significance of every word in agreements, particularly the *lafz* (wording) of treaties, would also emerge as a crucial lesson.

With spiritual fervor and a sense of destiny, a company of approximately 1400 Muslims (some accounts say 1300 to 1800) set out from Medina. Their intention was clearly peaceful, a pilgrimage, not a military campaign. The Prophet (s) took meticulous steps to ensure this. They stopped at Dhul Hulayfah, about six miles from Medina (today known as Bi'r Ali or Masjid Shajarah), a designated *miqat* for pilgrims from Medina. There, they performed ritual *ghusl* and donned the white, unstitched garments of *ihram*, symbolizing their sacred intent and detachment from worldly concerns.

The outward appearance of the procession was designed to confirm their peaceful purpose. No weapons were carried beyond sheathed swords, as was customary for travelers in Arabia. Crucially, the sacrificial animals—camels—were marked to indicate their ritual purpose. Their humps were slit, a little blood smeared on them, and old sandals were tied around their necks. These visible signs clearly communicated that the animals were destined for sacrifice at the **Ka'bah**, not for use in battle, leaving no doubt about the caravan's peaceful intention.

News of the approaching Muslim caravan, despite its peaceful appearance, reached Mecca. The Quraysh, still reeling from their defeat at Khandaq and fearing a loss of prestige, sent a force of 200 cavalry, led by Khalid ibn al-Walid (who had not yet embraced Islam), to intercept them. This posed a direct threat to the peaceful pilgrimage.

In response, the Prophet (s) demonstrated extraordinary strategic wisdom. Instead of confronting Khalid's force, he chose an arduous, indirect

route through rugged mountain passes. This diversion, while preserving the peaceful mission, caused immense hardship for the Muslims, who suffered from severe hunger and thirst. It was during this arduous trek that Allah (s.w.t.) subjected them to a unique test.

As they ascended a difficult mountain, the Prophet (s) invoked the analogy of *Bab al-Hittah* (the gate of forgiveness), reminding his companions of the Banu Isra'il's command to enter a city gate humbly, seeking repentance. This comparison emphasized the need for absolute humility and obedience in the face of divine command and seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Upon crossing this formidable terrain, they arrived at a well called Hudaybiyyah, which contained very little water. The Prophet (s), through a miracle, blessed the well, causing it to overflow with abundant, sweet water, providing relief to the parched caravan.

However, the divine tests continued. As the Muslims, in their state of *ihram* (which prohibits hunting), rested near the well, a remarkable phenomenon occurred. Wild animals, including deer, approached their camp fearlessly, even entering their tents, seemingly offering themselves as an easy meal. This was a profound test of their obedience to Allah's command, especially given their extreme hunger. It was a direct manifestation of the Qur'anic verse: **"Indeed, Allah will test you with something of game which your hands and spears can reach, that Allah may make evident who fears Him unseen. And whoever transgresses after that - for him will be a painful punishment."** (**Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:94**). Despite their dire need, the Muslims steadfastly resisted the temptation to hunt, demonstrating immense *taqwa* and submission to Allah's will.

Finally, the Prophet's (s) camel, **Qaswa**, came to a halt. It knelt down and refused to move forward, despite attempts to rouse it. The Prophet (s) declared that the camel was held by the same divine power that prevented Abraha's elephant from advancing on the Ka'bah. This was a clear sign

that they had reached their designated stopping point. They had arrived just outside the sacred boundaries of the *Haram*, about 23 kilometers from Mecca. Here, outside the inviolable sanctuary where all life and even vegetation are protected, the Islamic army, determined to pursue peace, set up camp, poised for the events that would follow.

Chapter 105

The Manifest Victory of Hudaybiyyah: Miracles and Diplomatic Foresight

The stage was now set at Hudaybiyyah, a place approximately twenty-three kilometers from Mecca. The Qur'an would later refer to the events that unfolded here as a "manifest victory" (*Fath-e-Mubeen*), a designation truly remarkable given that it was a peace treaty, not a battlefield conquest. Indeed, from the perspective of the **Ahlul Bayt**, particularly from the narration of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.), it is affirmed that throughout the entire life of the Messenger of Allah (s) and the history of Islam, no event was more blessed or brought greater benefit than the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. It was this event that ultimately paved the way for Islam's most rapid and widespread expansion.

The journey to Hudaybiyyah had been undertaken with meticulous preparation, clearly signaling peaceful intentions. The Prophet (s) led approximately 1400 companions, all adorned in *ihram*, the pilgrim's attire, and accompanied by sacrificial animals, clearly marked to signify their dedication to the **Ka'bah**. Their only weapons were sheathed swords, carried purely for self-defense, not offense—a tradition in Arab culture signifying

readiness for the journey rather than combat. This entire spectacle conveyed a singular message to any observer: this was not an army marching for war or aggression, but a group devoutly proceeding for worship and pilgrimage.

For six years since the *Hijrah*, the Muslims had been unable to visit the **Masjid al-Haram** or perform *Umrah* or *Hajj*. The Prophet (s) had performed *Umrah* in his early Meccan life and would do so again in 7 AH (the *Umrat al-Qada'*) and 8 AH (during the conquest of Mecca), performing his only *Hajj* in 10 AH. The decision to undertake this journey in the month of *Dhul Qa'dah* was highly significant. *Dhul Qa'dah* is one of the four sacred months in the Arab calendar, recognized long before Islam, during which all forms of warfare were forbidden, and safe passage for pilgrims to Mecca was guaranteed. By choosing this month, the Prophet (s) underscored the peaceful and religious nature of their mission, aligning with pre-Islamic Arab customs. Yet, despite these clear signs, Quraysh, blinded by their animosity towards Islam, chose to defy their own centuries-old traditions and prevent the Muslims from entering Mecca.

Upon reaching Hudaybiyyah, the Muslim encampment faced severe trials. The prolonged, unexpected halt led to a dire shortage of both food and water. The *Sahaba* endured extreme hunger and thirst. In a profound test of faith and obedience, wild game, which was lawful to eat in normal circumstances, fearlessly roamed around and even entered their tents. This presented an intense temptation for the *ihram*-clad Muslims, for whom hunting was strictly forbidden. This period of hardship was a divine trial, reinforcing their steadfastness and trust in Allah's promise: **"Verily, with hardship comes ease"** (*Inna ma'al usri yusra*).

In response to the desperate thirst, the Prophet (s) called for all available water vessels. Placing his blessed hands into one such container, a mirac-

ulous gush of water sprang forth from between his fingers. This water flowed so abundantly that all 1400 companions were able to drink their fill, quench their thirst, and replenish their water supplies, a clear sign of divine intervention and *barakah*. Similarly, when hunger became unbearable, the Prophet (s) commanded that a leather tablecloth be spread. The companions brought forth the meager scraps of food they possessed—a few dates, a piece of bread—and laid them upon it. The Prophet (s) then placed his blessed hands over the food, and it miraculously multiplied, feeding all 1400 Muslims and even allowing them to pack provisions for their future journey. This not only alleviated their suffering but also filled them with profound conviction, affirming the unwavering support of Allah (SWT) for His Prophet (s) and His steadfast servants.

As the Muslims remained encamped, Quraysh began sending envoys to ascertain their intentions. The first delegation arrived from Banu Khuza'ah, a tribe with deep-rooted, ancient ties to Banu Hashim, the Prophet's (s) clan. Their chief, Budayl ibn Warqa', conveyed the Muslims' peaceful intentions to Quraysh, but his report was dismissed as an act of favoritism.

Next, Quraysh dispatched Al-Hulays ibn Alqamah, the revered chief of Al-Ahābīsh, a confederation of tribes allied with Mecca. Al-Hulays was known for his strong principles and respect for sacred traditions. When he witnessed the Muslims in their *ihram* and saw their sacrificial animals, clearly marked and prepared for the **Ka'bah**, he immediately understood their sincere intent. He returned to Quraysh, boiling with indignation, and fiercely rebuked them for attempting to obstruct pilgrims from the **Ka'bah**, calling their action a violation of sacred customs. He threatened to withdraw his tribe's support if Quraysh persisted in their aggression. His powerful protest created significant internal pressure on the Quraysh leadership, forcing them to re-evaluate their stance.

Finally, Quraysh sent Urwah ibn Mas'ud al-Thaqafi, a highly respected

and influential leader from Ta'if, whom they themselves considered a man of such stature that they questioned why the Qur'an was not revealed to him instead of an "orphan" from Mecca, a reference to the Prophet (s). Urwah came primarily to mediate a family dispute, not specifically the Hudaybiyyah situation. Observing the Muslims, Urwah was deeply impressed by the profound reverence and absolute devotion of the companions towards the Prophet (s). He noted how they would not let a drop of his ablution water fall to the ground, how they clung to his beard during conversation, and how his every word was met with unwavering obedience and respect. During his conversation with the Prophet (s), Urwah, out of habit or perhaps to assert dominance in an Arab manner, repeatedly touched the Prophet's (s) blessed beard. Mughirah ibn Shu'bah, a companion and Urwah's nephew, sternly pushed his hand away, admonishing him to keep his hands off the Prophet (s). Urwah, taken aback by this bold act, later returned to Quraysh. He delivered a powerful testimony, recounting his observations and warning them against opposing the Prophet (s). He declared that he had visited the courts of the Roman and Persian emperors, but had never witnessed such profound loyalty, love, and respect from followers for their leader as he had seen among the companions of Muhammad (s). He advised Quraysh that any attempt to confront the Prophet (s) would inevitably lead to their ruin.

These diplomatic exchanges, combined with the divine miracles that sustained the Muslims through their trials, served as powerful demonstrations of the Prophet's (s) truthfulness and the divine support he received. They not only strengthened the resolve of the Muslims but also began to chip away at the hardened stance of Quraysh, paving the way for the monumental treaty that would soon follow.

Chapter 106

The Treaty of Hudaybiyyah: A Triumph of Strategic Patience

The arduous journey to Hudaybiyyah had culminated in an encampment that bore witness to extraordinary divine miracles, solidifying the faith of the 1400 Muslims accompanying the Prophet (s). Yet, the greatest trials were still ahead, not on a battlefield, but in the realm of diplomacy and spiritual resilience. The very essence of the events at Hudaybiyyah resonates deeply with the divine wisdom encapsulated in **Surah al-Baqarah**, **Ayat 216**: **"Perhaps you dislike a thing which is good for you and like a thing which is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not."** This profound truth, a universal principle of faith, would manifest itself conspicuously in the unfolding drama at Hudaybiyyah, transforming what appeared to be a humbling setback into a monumental victory.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) would later declare that no event in the Prophet's (s) blessed life carried greater glory and blessing for Islam than *Hudaybiyyah*. This is further underscored by the entirety of **Surah al-Fath**, revealed soon after, which unequivocally declares *Hudaybiyyah* a "manifest victory" (**Fathan Mubeena**). The *Surah* not only promises the Muslims

great success, including the spoils of war from Khaybar, but also guarantees their peaceful entry into the **Ka'bah** in the following year. It also unveils a critical, hidden reason for the Prophet's (s) emphasis on peace: the presence of innocent Muslim men and women in Mecca who, if war had erupted, would have been inadvertently harmed. The Prophet (s) would never compromise their safety, prioritizing their lives above immediate confrontation.

The strategic genius of the Prophet (s) during this period was remarkable. When Urwah ibn Mas'ud, the esteemed envoy from Ta'if, arrived to negotiate, the Prophet (s) chose to present him with a powerful visual demonstration rather than just verbal arguments. He instructed his companions to perform *wudhu* and *Salat* (prayers) publicly. This was not an act of *riya* (showing off), but a deliberate and impactful diplomatic display to showcase the Muslims' profound devotion, unity, and unwavering obedience to their leader. Urwah, who had witnessed the courts of the greatest emperors, returned to Quraysh astonished by the companions' reverence for the Prophet (s), describing how they would not let a drop of his *wudhu* water fall to the ground, eagerly catching it as a blessing. This public act profoundly impressed Urwah and conveyed a message of unparalleled solidarity and spiritual strength.

As negotiations progressed, Quraysh remained unyielding. The Prophet (s) sought to open lines of communication by sending his own envoy, Khirash ibn Umayyah al-Khuza'i, a member of the Banu Khuza'ah tribe, which was historically allied with Banu Hashim. Khirash was dispatched on the Prophet's (s) special camel, **Qaswa**, a clear symbol of his peaceful intent. However, Quraysh, in a flagrant violation of diplomatic norms, attacked Khirash, slaughtered his camel, and nearly killed him. He was only saved by the timely intervention of Al-Aḥābīsh, a tribal confederacy allied with Quraysh, who had already warned them against obstructing pilgrims.

Following this outrage, the Prophet (s) considered sending Umar ibn al-Khattab as his next envoy. However, Umar, recognizing his own lack of strong tribal support in Mecca that could guarantee his safety, humbly suggested Uthman ibn Affan, whose extensive family ties with Banu Umayyah offered greater protection. Uthman (r.a.) was sent and was received by Aban ibn Sa'id al-Umawi, who offered him personal protection. Uthman (r.a.) conveyed the Prophet's (s) message, emphasizing the Muslims' intent to perform *Umrah* peacefully. Days passed without Uthman's (r.a.) return, leading to widespread rumors among the Muslims that he had been killed by Quraysh.

The news of Uthman's (r.a.) supposed martyrdom plunged the Muslim camp into deep sorrow and resolve. In this critical moment, the Prophet (s) gathered all 1400 companions under a large tree and took a solemn oath from them, known as *Bay'at al-Ridwan* (the Pledge of Good Pleasure). The pledge was simple yet profound: no one would flee from death, affirming their readiness to fight to the last if necessary. This pledge of absolute loyalty and unwavering commitment was immediately affirmed by Allah (SWT) through the revelation of **Surah al-Fath, Ayat 18**: **"Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you under the tree..."** This divine affirmation elevated the status of those who participated and highlighted the immense significance of this pledge.

Soon after, Uthman (r.a.) returned, dispelling the rumors of his demise. He reported that Quraysh was unwilling to allow the Muslims to enter Mecca that year. Their primary reasons were two-fold: an oath they had sworn not to let Muslims enter, and their deep-seated fear of losing prestige among other Arab tribes if they appeared to have submitted to the Muslims by allowing them to perform *Umrah*.

The stage was then set for the arrival of Quraysh's chief negotiator, Suhayl

ibn Amr, renowned as "the orator of the Arabs" for his eloquence, sharp intellect, and unyielding nature. Upon seeing him approach, the Prophet (s), with his divine insight, took Suhayl's name (which means "easy" or "smooth" in Arabic) as a positive omen, remarking, "Suhayl has come; our affair has become easy." This prophetic insight provided a calming assurance to the distressed companions, who were anticipating a harsh encounter.

The negotiations commenced, leading to the drafting of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. The terms presented by Suhayl were undeniably harsh and appeared deeply humiliating to many of the companions, yet the Prophet (s) accepted them with a strategic vision that transcended the immediate perception of loss. The six main conditions of the treaty were:

1. **Return this year**: The Muslims were to return to Medina this year and could perform *Umrah* next year, but only for three days.
2. **No weapons**: During their *Umrah* next year, they could not carry weapons, except for a sheathed traveler's sword, which had to remain hidden in their scabbards upon entering Mecca.
3. **Refugees**: Any Meccan who came to Medina as a Muslim without their guardian's permission would be returned to Mecca. However, anyone from Medina who came to Mecca would not be returned to Medina.
4. **Ten-year truce**: A ten-year period of non-aggression and peace would be established between the two parties.
5. **Tribal Alliances**: Arab tribes were free to ally with either Quraysh or the Muslims.
6. **Religious Freedom in Mecca**: Muslims residing in Mecca would not face any obstruction in practicing their faith, and their lives, property, and honor would be respected. This crucial sixth condition, often overlooked in historical accounts, was a significant victory for Islam, ensuring the safety of vulnerable Muslims trapped in Mecca.

The drafting of the treaty presented immediate challenges. When Ali (a.s.) began to write "Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim," Suhayl objected, stating, "We do not know al-Rahman or al-Rahim. Write only 'Bismika Allahumma' (In Your Name, O Allah), as we used to write." Despite the companions' shock and outrage at this perceived insult to Allah's names, the Prophet (s) instructed Ali (a.s.) to comply. The Prophet (s) understood that this was a dispute over wording, not principle, and that a believer should avoid needless verbal contention when the core meaning is preserved.

A similar dispute arose when Ali (a.s.) wrote "Muhammad Rasulullah" (Muhammad, Messenger of Allah). Suhayl again objected, arguing, "If we acknowledged you as the Messenger of Allah, we would not have fought you. Write only 'Muhammad ibn Abdullah' (Muhammad, son of Abdullah)." Once more, the Prophet (s) instructed Ali (a.s.) to erase "Rasulullah" and write "ibn Abdullah." Ali (a.s.) initially hesitated, out of profound reverence for the Prophet (s), but ultimately obeyed his master's command. The Prophet (s) explained that his prophethood was from Allah, not dependent on a written title, and that yielding on such a point was a matter of strategic diplomacy for the greater good. This moment vividly demonstrated the Prophet's (s) ultimate reliance on Allah and Ali's (a.s.) complete, unquestioning obedience, even when deeply painful.

As the treaty was about to be formally signed, a dramatic event unfolded that tested the Muslims' faith and resolve like no other. Abu Jandal, Suhayl ibn Amr's own son, appeared before them, shackled and bruised, having escaped Mecca. He appealed to the Muslims for help, showing them the marks of torture inflicted by his father for embracing Islam. The companions were visibly distressed, and the Prophet (s) himself was deeply moved.

Suhayl, however, immediately seized upon the second condition of the treaty, asserting that since the terms had already been agreed upon, Abu Jandal must be returned to Mecca. The Prophet (s) pleaded with Suhayl to make an exception for his own son, but Suhayl adamantly refused, emphasizing that if the first act of the treaty's implementation was violated, the entire agreement would be undermined. Despite the raw emotion and pleas from the Muslims, the Prophet (s), in an act of supreme self-control and commitment to the larger vision, told Abu Jandal to return to Mecca. He assured Abu Jandal that Allah would provide a way out for him and reminded him that individual sacrifice was sometimes necessary for the collective benefit of the *Ummah*.

This moment, where a Muslim who had suffered greatly for his faith was returned to his persecutors, was a profound ordeal for the companions, pushing their patience and obedience to the limits. Yet, the Prophet (s) maintained his resolve, understanding that this apparent humiliation was a necessary step towards a far greater victory, a peace that would open the doors for Islam's expansion throughout the Arabian Peninsula. The wisdom embedded in the treaty, and the Prophet's (s) unwavering commitment to its terms, would soon prove to be a "manifest victory" indeed.

Chapter 107

The Immediate Aftermath of Hudaybiyyah: Patience, Divine Affirmation, and Strategic Gains

The signing of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah left many companions deeply distressed. While they witnessed the Prophet's (s) unwavering commitment to the terms, the conditions appeared to favor Quraysh, especially the clause dictating that any Meccan Muslim fleeing to Medina must be returned, while a Medinan Muslim fleeing to Mecca would not be. The Muslims, having been denied their *Umrah* after a long, arduous journey, felt the weight of these concessions. Their frustration was palpable, a testament to their profound love and protective zeal for the Prophet (s) and the nascent Islamic state.

It was in this emotionally charged atmosphere that a poignant and deeply testing incident unfolded. As the ink on the treaty was barely dry, Abu Jandal, the son of Suhayl ibn Amr, Quraysh's chief negotiator, appeared before the Muslims. He arrived in chains, his body bearing the visible marks of torture, a testament to the brutal persecution he had endured

in Mecca after embracing Islam. His desperate pleas for refuge resonated through the assembly as he threw himself at the Prophet's (s) feet, begging to be spared from being returned to his tormentors.

Suhayl ibn Amr immediately recognized his son and, without hesitation, demanded his return, citing the newly signed treaty. Despite the overwhelming emotional appeal of Abu Jandal's plight and the companions' intense anger and sympathy, the Prophet (s) remained steadfast. He calmly acknowledged Suhayl's right according to the treaty, reiterating that the agreement was binding. He attempted to appeal to Suhayl's compassion, but Suhayl was unyielding, using his son's fate as a litmus test for the Prophet's (s) commitment to the treaty. To the profound anguish of all present, the Prophet (s) instructed Abu Jandal to return to Mecca, assuring him that Allah would provide a way out. Abu Jandal, despite his unbearable pain, displayed profound faith and obedience, accepting the Prophet's (s) decision and returning with his father. This moment underscored the immense individual sacrifice required for the *Ummah's* greater good and the Prophet's (s) commitment to upholding covenants, even at great personal and emotional cost.

Following this, the Prophet (s) commanded the companions to shave their heads and sacrifice their animals, signifying the conclusion of their *Umrah*, albeit an incomplete one. However, the companions, still gripped by sorrow and the perceived setback, hesitated. Their usual immediate obedience was, for a moment, clouded by their deep disappointment. The Prophet (s) repeated his command thrice, but they remained unresponsive. Deeply pained by their reluctance, he retired to his tent.

Inside, his beloved wife, **Umm Salamah (r.a.)**, witnessing his distress, offered a piece of profound advice. She suggested that he should not speak to them further but instead perform the acts himself. "O Prophet of Allah," she advised, "go out and do not speak a word to anyone until you

have slaughtered your animal and shaved your head." The Prophet (s) emerged, silently proceeded to sacrifice his camel, and then had his head shaved. Upon witnessing this, the companions, shamed by their momentary lapse and spurred by his example, rushed to follow suit, shaving their heads and slaughtering their animals. Such was the deep impact of his example and their unwavering loyalty.

The act of shaving (***halq***) versus clipping (***taqsir***) one's hair during *Umrah* or *Hajj* carries symbolic significance. While *halq* generally entails greater reward, in the context of Hudaybiyyah, it became a clear indicator of unreserved faith and obedience. Those who fully shaved their heads demonstrated absolute submission, while those who only clipped their hair might have harbored some lingering doubts or reluctance. The Prophet (s) invoked Allah's blessings three times upon those who shaved their heads, and once upon those who clipped, highlighting the superior virtue of complete submission in that particular circumstance.

Upon their return journey to Medina, a profound divine affirmation descended upon the Prophet (s) and his companions. While they were still in the wilderness, **Surah Al-Fath (Chapter 48)** was revealed. Its opening verses declared: **"Indeed, We have granted you a manifest victory."** (***Inna Fatahna Laka Fathan Mubina***). This revelation startled the companions, who had viewed the treaty as a defeat, not a victory. Yet, the **Qur'an** unequivocally proclaimed it a "manifest victory," a testament to the long-term strategic and spiritual gains hidden beneath the seemingly unfavorable terms. This verse became a beacon of hope and understanding, confirming the Prophet's (s) divine foresight.

After a mere twenty days of rest in Medina, the Prophet (s) prepared his forces for the campaign against **Khaybar**, demonstrating the immediate strategic advantages gained from the Hudaybiyyah truce.

During this period, another pivotal incident occurred that further clari-

fled the treaty's terms. Umm Kulthum bint Uqbah, a believing woman, fled Mecca and sought refuge in Medina. Her two brothers, Waleed and Ammarah, arrived in Medina demanding her return, citing the Hudaybiyyah treaty. The Prophet (s) refused, explaining that the treaty specifically mentioned the return of "men" (***mu'min***) who fled Mecca, not "women" (***mu'minah***). This interpretation was divinely confirmed by the revelation of **Surah Al-Mumtahanah (Chapter 60), Verse 10**: **"O you who have believed, when the believing women come to you as emigrants, examine them. Allah is most knowing as to their faith. And if you ascertain that they are believers, then do not return them to the disbelievers. They are not lawful [wives] for them, nor are the disbelievers lawful [husbands] for them."** This verse emphatically prohibited the return of believing women, demonstrating Allah's protection for the oppressed and the nuanced application of divine law even within treaty obligations.

The Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, initially perceived as a loss, soon revealed its profound strategic advantages:

1. **Freedom of Worship in Mecca:** For the first time, Muslims remaining in Mecca could openly practice their faith and perform their rituals without persecution. This was a significant step towards normalizing Islam within its birthplace.
2. **Increased Interaction and *Da'wah*:** The ten-year truce fostered unprecedented interaction between Muslims and pagans. Previously, Meccans viewed Muslims as enemies and sorcerers. Now, with free movement, Meccans observed the Muslims' upright character, honesty, piety, and peaceful conduct. This direct exposure to the virtues of Islam led to many conversions, spreading the message of Allah through the power of example.
3. **End of Isolation and New Alliances:** The treaty's clause allowing tribes to ally with either party broke Quraysh's long-standing monopoly over alliances. Many tribes, like Banu Khuza'ah, who had historical

ties to the Prophet's (s) clan, now openly allied with the Muslims, significantly increasing their strength and influence.

4. **Opportunity for International *Da'wah*:** With the cessation of hostilities with Quraysh, the Prophet (s) gained the stability to expand his diplomatic and missionary efforts beyond the Arabian Peninsula. He dispatched envoys with letters inviting the rulers of Persia, Rome, and Abyssinia to embrace Islam, laying the groundwork for future global expansion.
5. **Neutralization of Jewish Threat:** The treaty effectively isolated the formidable Jewish stronghold of Khaybar, preventing Quraysh from forming an alliance with them against the Muslims. This allowed the Prophet (s) to concentrate his military efforts solely on Khaybar, ultimately leading to its conquest.
6. **Abrogation of the "Return Clause" by Quraysh Themselves:** The most difficult clause of the treaty—the return of Meccan converts—ironically backfired on Quraysh. A pivotal incident involved Abu Basir, another Muslim convert who, upon being returned to Mecca by the Prophet (s) in adherence to the treaty, escaped and killed his Meccan escort. He refused to return to Mecca and established a new settlement near the Red Sea, a strategic location on Quraysh's trade route to Syria. Other persecuted Meccan Muslims, including Abu Jandal, soon joined him, forming a formidable group of about 300 determined men who began intercepting Quraysh's caravans. This disrupted Quraysh's vital trade, plunging them into severe economic distress. Unable to confront this new threat, Quraysh eventually appealed to the Prophet (s) to abrogate the controversial clause, requesting him to take Abu Basir and his companions to Medina. This turn of events was a clear demonstration of the treaty's hidden wisdom, as the Muslims had gained control over a crucial trade route without military action and had successfully integrated the persecuted converts into their state.

The Treaty of Hudaybiyyah thus stood as a momentous turning point, not merely a truce but a strategic masterpiece that paved the way for future conquests and the widespread acceptance of Islam, beginning with the imminent campaign against Khaybar and the future fulfillment of the *Umrah* a year later, known as ***Umrat al-Qada'*** (The Fulfilled *Umrah*).

Chapter 108

The Compensatory *Umrah*: A Triumphant Return to the Sacred House

The events of the 7th year of *Hijrah* unfolded with profound significance, marking the culmination of a divine promise made during the challenging days of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. A full year had passed since the Muslims, poised to perform *Umrah* in Mecca, were prevented from entering the Sacred City. That poignant moment of unfulfilled yearning was met with the revelation of **Surah al-Fath**, which declared Hudaybiyyah a "manifest victory" and contained a promise that would soon manifest: **"Laqad sadaqallahu rasulahu al-ru'ya bi al-haqqi la tadkhulunna al-Masjid al-Harama in shaa Allahu aminin muhalliqina ru'usakum wa muqassirina la takhafuna fa'alima ma lam ta'lamu faja'ala min duni dhalika fathan qariba"** ("Certainly, Allah has fulfilled the vision for His Messenger in truth. You will surely enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, in security, with your heads shaved or shortened, not fearing. He knew what you did not know and has appointed besides that a near victory."). This divine assurance of entering Mecca in peace, shaving heads, and performing rituals without fear was now to be realized.

As the month of *Dhul Qa'dah* of the 7th year of *Hijrah* arrived—the same month in which the Hudaybiyyah treaty was signed—the Prophet Muhammad (s) announced the time had come to perform the compensatory *Umrah*, famously known as *Umrat al-Qada*. He called upon all the companions who had joined him for the fateful journey to Hudaybiyyah the previous year, inspiring their anticipation for this long-awaited fulfillment. From the initial 1400, the expedition now swelled to approximately 2000 believers, a testament to growing Muslim strength and resolve.

The Prophet (s) led this formidable assembly out of Medina, meticulously following the ritualistic procedures of *Umrah*. At Masjid Shajarah, also known as Dhul Hulayfah, they entered the state of *ihram*, donning their white garments. They marked their sacrificial animals, indicating their peaceful intentions and their sole purpose of pilgrimage, not warfare. This outward display was crucial, as one of the terms of Hudaybiyyah was that Muslims would enter Mecca unarmed, with only sheathed swords.

However, the Prophet (s) was also a master of strategic wisdom. As they approached Marr al-Zahran, a mountainous region just eight miles outside Mecca, he strategically deployed 200 armed cavalrymen, laden with weapons and horses, concealed in the hills. The main body of the Muslim army, led by the Prophet (s) himself, proceeded towards Mecca with only sheathed swords. This tactical move served as a silent but potent message to Quraysh: while Muslims honored their agreement to enter Mecca unarmed, they were not naive or helpless. If treachery occurred, they were prepared to defend themselves. When a messenger from Quraysh arrived, protesting the presence of weapons, the Prophet (s) calmly reminded them that the agreement prohibited weapons *within Mecca*, not on the journey itself. This demonstration of preparedness, without violating the treaty, both reassured the Muslims and cautioned the Quraysh.

The entry into Mecca was a moment of profound spiritual significance. The Prophet (s) chose the *Ma'la* (upper) route, passing by the ancient Jannat al-Ma'la cemetery, where many revered figures including Sayyidah Khadijah (r.a.) and Abu Talib (r.a.) were laid to rest. As the procession advanced, the companion Abdullah ibn Rawaha (r.a.) began reciting a *rajaz* (battle-like poetry) that praised Allah and celebrated the Muslim triumph. While initially allowing it, the Prophet (s) later guided them to recite a specific *dua* (supplication) as they entered the precincts of the Ka'bah: **"La ilaha illallah, wahdahu, wa nasara 'abdahu, wa 'azza jundahu, wa hazamal ahzaba wahdahu"** ("There is no god but Allah, alone. He fulfilled His promise, and gave victory to His servant, and strengthened His forces, and defeated the confederates, all by Himself"). This special *dua* became a communal chant, emphasizing Allah's oneness, His fulfillment of promises, and His decisive victory over all enemies.

Upon reaching the Ka'bah, the Prophet (s) mounted his camel, Qaswa, and began the *tawaf* (circumambulation). This was a deliberate act of *ramal*—a brisk, almost jogging pace—for the first three circuits. The Quraysh, hiding on Jabal Abi Qubays overlooking the Ka'bah, had spread rumors that the Muslims were weak and emaciated due to the climate of Medina. The Prophet's (s) vigorous *tawaf* on his camel, with his companions also performing *ramal*, was a powerful visual refutation of these lies, showcasing their strength and vitality. This practice of *ramal* during the first three circuits of *tawaf* became a *sunnah* (prophetic tradition) for men.

Following the *tawaf*, the Prophet (s) and his companions performed *Sa'i* between the hills of Safa and Marwah. These hills, once adorned with idols, were now a sacred path for believers. During the *Sa'i*, the Prophet (s) also instructed men to perform *ramal* in a designated section, again demonstrating vigor and defying the pagan narratives. Notably, the Prophet (s) did not enter the Ka'bah itself during this *Umrah*. This was a profound decision, as the Ka'bah still housed numerous idols. The Prophet

(s) chose to prioritize the sanctity of the Ka'bah as the pure House of Allah, waiting for the day it would be cleansed of all pagan symbols before entering it.

One of the most momentous events of *Umrat al-Qada* occurred during the first *Jumu'ah* prayer held in Mecca after twenty years of persecution. For decades, Muslims had been denied open worship in their holiest city. Now, the Prophet (s) commanded the *adhan* to be called for the congregational prayer. He chose Bilal ibn Rabah (r.a.), the formerly enslaved Abyssinian, to ascend the Ka'bah and call the *adhan*. This was a deliberate and deeply symbolic choice. Bilal, with his dark skin and humble origins, represented the very antithesis of Quraysh's aristocratic pride. His powerful voice echoing from atop the Sacred House was a profound message: in Islam, piety and devotion elevate a person, not lineage or wealth. The Quraysh leaders, witnessing this from their vantage point on Jabal Abi Qubays, were filled with rage and disbelief, some reportedly wishing they were dead rather than hear Bilal's *adhan* from their sacred shrine.

During their three-day stay in Mecca, the Muslim *Muhajirun* (emigrants) were able to reunite with their relatives and revisit their homes, many of which had been abandoned. The Quraysh had expected the Muslims to plunder their deserted houses, but the Muslims maintained strict discipline, respecting private property. The Prophet (s) himself chose to stay in a simple leather tent in the market, rather than occupying a grand house, further exemplifying humility and adherence to principle.

It was during this *Umrah* that the Prophet (s) married Maymunah bint al-Harith (r.a.). She was a noble woman from a respected family, related to the Prophet (s) through his aunt. This was the Prophet's (s) last marriage, undertaken in Mecca. After the *nikah* (marriage contract), the Prophet (s) wished to hold a *walimah* (wedding feast) and spend an additional night

in Mecca for the consummation of the marriage. He sent a request to the Quraysh, but they rigidly refused, citing the three-day limit stipulated in the Hudaybiyyah treaty. Upholding the agreement, the Prophet (s) and his companions promptly departed from Mecca at the end of the third day. The wedding feast and consummation took place outside the city, at a place called Sarif, where Sayyidah Maymunah (r.a.) later passed away and was buried.

As the Muslims were leaving Mecca, a poignant incident unfolded involving a young girl, Umamah (or Ammarah), the orphaned daughter of the Prophet's (s) martyred uncle, Hamza (r.a.). She ran out to meet the Muslims, clutching at Imam Ali (a.s.) or the Prophet (s), pleading to be taken to Medina. Immediately, a dispute arose over her guardianship. Imam Ali (a.s.) claimed her as his paternal cousin, the daughter of his uncle. Ja'far ibn Abi Talib (r.a.) argued his right, explaining that Hamza's wife was his sister-in-law, making the girl his niece, and his own wife was the girl's maternal aunt. Zayd ibn Harithah (r.a.), whom the Prophet (s) had declared Hamza's brother in faith, also put forward his claim. The Prophet (s) ultimately ruled in favor of Ja'far (r.a.), declaring, "The aunt is in the position of the mother." This noble contention for the care of an orphan, particularly a girl, served as a powerful contrast to the pre-Islamic practice of female infanticide, common among the Quraysh, as described in the Qur'an: **"Wa idha bushshira ahaduhum bi al-untha zalla wajhuhu muswaddan wa huwa kazim"** (**Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 58**, "And when one of them is given good tidings of a female, his face remains darkened, and he is filled with internal grief") and **"Wa idha al-maw'udatu su'ilat, bi ayyi dhanbin qutilat"** (**Surah At-Takwir, Ayat 8-9**, "And when the female infant buried alive is asked, for what sin she was killed"). This demonstrated Islam's profound respect and protection for women and orphans, challenging the very core of pagan Arabian values.

The *Umrat al-Qada* stood as a monumental testament to Allah's promises,

the Prophet's (s) unwavering patience, and the strategic brilliance of Islamic leadership. It transformed a seemingly unfavorable treaty into a true victory, opening Mecca for peaceful Muslim presence and laying the groundwork for greater triumphs. It showcased the strength, discipline, and profound spiritual commitment of the Muslim community, leaving an indelible impression on the hearts of many Meccans. This journey of triumph and transformation, however, was also a subtle foreshadowing of the enduring path of sacrifice. Just as the Prophet's (s) family and close companions endured immense hardship and sacrifice for the establishment of Islam, so too would future generations bear the weight of challenges. The trials of the faithful would continue, epitomized by the profound suffering of the Prophet's (s) own daughter, Sayyidah Fatimah (s.a.), a testament to the fact that the path of divine truth often demands the ultimate sacrifice from those dearest to God. Her future words, "Calamities have poured upon me such that if they had poured upon days, they would have turned into nights," would echo the unending devotion and sacrifice intrinsic to the message of Islam.

Chapter 109

The Strategic Imperative of Khaybar: A Legacy of Enmity and Deception

The year seven after the *Hijrah* continued to unfold with events that would decisively shape the nascent Islamic state. Following the successful compensatory *Umrah* and the strategic gains of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, the stage was now set for a confrontation with a deeply rooted and persistent threat: the Jewish community in Khaybar. This pivotal expedition, *Ghazwah Khaybar*, marked a significant turning point, one whose intricate background and strategic necessity illuminate the profound wisdom of the Prophet Mohammad (s).

Many minor engagements and skirmishes occurred during this period, but for the purpose of this comprehensive biography, only those with significant thematic or historical impact are detailed. Just as with the Battle of Khandaq, which we previously discussed, the context of Khaybar is critical. Historically, some events, such as the assassinations of Jewish leaders Salam and Usayram, are subject to scholarly debate regarding their precise timing—whether they occurred before or after the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. Our narrative approach prioritizes presenting the earli-

est accepted chronology, later clarifying the differing views, but in this instance, a broader consensus places a detailed account of these events within the period leading up to Khaybar, following Hudaybiyyah.

At first glance, the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah might appear unusual in the Prophet's (s) life due to its seemingly disadvantageous terms. However, a deeper analysis reveals its profound strategic genius, particularly as a prelude to Khaybar. The primary objective was to dismantle the core of Jewish power and conspiracy. From the Battle of Badr to Uhud and particularly Khandaq, the Quraysh infidels consistently received financial, intelligence, and logistical support from Jewish tribes. As time progressed, Jewish machinations against Islam escalated, evolving from subtle instigation to overt alliance and direct participation. When the Jewish tribes of Banu Qaynuqa', Banu Nadir, and Banu Qurayza were expelled from Medina, they found refuge and consolidated their power in Khaybar, turning it into a formidable stronghold of anti-Islamic sentiment. For Medina to truly achieve security and for Islam to flourish, the Khaybar threat had to be neutralized.

The Prophet's (s) journey to Hudaybiyyah, which appeared to be a peaceful pilgrimage towards Mecca—a direction diametrically opposite to Khaybar—served as a masterstroke of strategic deception. While leading the Muslims on this arduous journey, the Prophet (s) fostered an atmosphere of humility and apparent vulnerability. The conditions imposed by Quraysh, which seemed to force the Muslims to retreat without performing *Umrah*, further reinforced the perception of Muslim weakness among their enemies, including the Jews of Khaybar. This calculated portrayal of a disheartened, internally divided Muslim force, as hinted by the initial distress of some companions, effectively lulled Khaybar into a false sense of security.

The divine confirmation of this strategy came with the revelation of **Surah**

al-Fath, particularly the verse **"Certainly Allah has showed the truth to His Messenger of the vision in all truth: you shall certainly enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, in security, with your heads shaved and your hair clipped, not fearing anyone."** This revelation, along with **"And Allah promises you abundant spoils that you will soon take,"** with the explicit mention of **"and for you an immediate one,"** referred to the immediate spoils of Khaybar. These verses, revealed on the journey back to Medina, after the seemingly "unfavorable" treaty, served to reassure the distraught companions and confirm the strategic wisdom of the Prophet's (s) actions. The Prophet's (s) steadfast silence and lack of detailed explanations during the initial frustration of the companions at Hudaybiyyah were part of this profound strategic plan, allowing enemies to mistakenly believe in Muslim disunity.

The historical roots of Jewish animosity towards the Prophet (s) and his lineage ran deep. Khaybar itself was not merely a Jewish stronghold but a place founded by a group of devout Jewish scholars who had migrated from Syria and Palestine centuries earlier. They had abandoned their homes and wealth, settling in the then-barren land of Medina (near the mountains of Ayir and Uhud, which they knew were signs of the final Prophet's arrival) based on prophecies in their own scriptures about the coming of the Last Prophet. Ironically, these very scholars, who had initially sought to support the awaited Prophet, built formidable fortresses in Khaybar to aid him. However, successive generations, driven by worldly power and wealth, diverted from this noble purpose and turned these very fortifications against the true Messenger of Allah when he finally arrived.

The hostility of these generations manifested repeatedly against the Prophet's (s) noble ancestors. Jewish scholars had attempted to assassinate Hashim, the Prophet's (s) great-grandfather, during his visit to Medina to marry Salma. They similarly plotted against Abdul Muttalib, the Prophet's (s)

grandfather, when he returned to Mecca. Even the Prophet's (s) father, Abdullah, faced assassination attempts by Jewish elements upon his birth, a birth whose significance they recognized through their ancient prophecies. They were delighted when Abdullah was nearly sacrificed by Abdul Muttalib due to a vow, believing it would avert the coming of the awaited Prophet. There were even attempts to poison Sayyidah Aminah, the Prophet's (s) mother. This consistent, deep-seated animosity demonstrated a long history of Jewish opposition to the lineage from which the Prophet (s) emerged.

With the expulsions of Banu Qaynuqa', Banu Nadir, and Banu Qurayza from Medina, Khaybar became the central hub for all those Jewish elements intent on subverting Islam. The very name Khaybar, derived from the Hebrew word for "fortress," attested to its heavily fortified nature, comprising seven major strongholds. After the Battle of Khandaq, the Jews of Khaybar realized that relying on Makkan support was futile. They concluded that direct confrontation with the Muslims was inevitable. This newfound resolve, coupled with their long-standing animosity, made Khaybar an immediate and pressing threat.

The Prophet (s) observed that the Jews of Khaybar, particularly their younger, more arrogant leaders, were actively seeking alliances with powerful tribes like Banu Ghatafan and Banu Fazarah to launch a decisive attack on Medina. Previously, Khaybar had witnessed the assassination of its leaders, Salam (who was particularly hostile and had incited much against the Prophet (s) in Medina) and Usayram, by Muslim operatives. To gather intelligence on these renewed plots, the Prophet (s) dispatched Abdullah ibn Rawahah (r.a.), a trusted companion, to Khaybar. Abdullah ibn Rawahah (r.a.), utilizing his previous connections and knowledge of the region, engaged Usayram in negotiations. While Usayram seemingly agreed to come to Medina, his treacherous intent was clear when he demanded that his men should be positioned strategically around each

Muslim accompanying Abdullah. This led to a skirmish in which Usayram was killed.

Another incident that underscored the urgent need to address Khaybar involved a raid by Banu Ghatafan on the Prophet's (s) camels being grazed outside Medina, resulting in the martyrdom of the herdsman, the son of Aboodah al-Ghifari. The Prophet (s) swiftly dispatched a detachment under Salamah ibn al-Akwa' (r.a.) to recover the camels, leading to a confrontation that further intensified the resolve to deal with the hostile tribes.

Upon his return to Medina, the Prophet (s) made a unique and telling declaration regarding the Khaybar expedition: only those who had participated in the *Bay'at al-Ridwan* (Pledge of Good Pleasure) at Hudaybiyyah would be permitted to join. This effectively excluded hypocrites and those whose faith was wavering, ensuring that the army for Khaybar comprised only the most sincere and devoted companions, those who had proven their unwavering trust in the Prophet's (s) wisdom even in the face of apparent adversity. This was a direct testament to the deep spiritual commitment forged at Hudaybiyyah. An exception was made for some *Muhajirun* who had recently returned from Abyssinia, who were also allowed to join and receive a share of the spoils.

The journey to Khaybar was itself a display of strategic brilliance. Khaybar was approximately a hundred miles from Medina. To maintain the element of surprise and prevent the Jewish tribes of Khaybar and Banu Ghatafan from uniting, the Prophet (s) sought a guide who knew the most obscure and indirect routes. He summoned Hurayz, a seasoned guide, to lead the army.

During the march, the Prophet (s) observed a Muslim named Amir singing *hudah* (camel-driving songs), a traditional way to encourage camels on long journeys. Amir's voice was exceptionally melodious. The Prophet

(s), upon hearing him, made a profound prayer for him, either saying, "May Allah have mercy on him" or "May Allah forgive him." The companions, knowing the Prophet's (s) prophetic insight, understood this as a sign that Amir was destined for martyrdom in the upcoming battle, an indication that filled them with a mixed sense of sorrow for his impending loss and joy for his exalted status.

As they approached Khaybar, the Prophet (s) inquired about the names of various routes and locations. He notably rejected paths whose names carried negative connotations, such as *Khawf* (fear/danger), *Shash* (trouble/anxiety), and *Hatit* (burning/destruction). Instead, he chose a route named *Marhab*, meaning "welcome" or "blessed." This selective choice underscored the Prophet's (s) emphasis on good omens and the power of positive words, reinforcing the Islamic principle of seeking blessings and good fortune even in the names of places and individuals.

This profound attention to the spiritual significance of names and places finds a poignant parallel in the sacred history of Islam. Years later, on his fateful journey to Karbala, Imam Hussain (a.s.) would inquire about the name of the land where his mount refused to move forward. Upon hearing the name "Karbala," a place whose very name resonated with sorrow and affliction, he understood it to be the destined site of his martyrdom. Just as the Prophet (s) chose a blessed path for Khaybar, Imam Hussain (a.s.), with divine knowledge, accepted the painful destiny of Karbala, embodying the ultimate sacrifice for the truth. Gathering the locals of Ghaderiya, a nearby tribe, Imam Hussain (a.s.) made a heart-wrenching request: that after his inevitable martyrdom, they would bury his unburied body and those of his companions, asking even their children to partake in this sacred duty. This final plea, rooted in the tragic foresight of Karbala, stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of sacrifice and divine guidance that defines the path of the Prophet (s) and his purified Household.

Chapter 110

Khaybar: Prophecies, Preparations, and Profound Lessons

The stage for the **Ghazwah Khaybar** in 7 AH was set not merely by strategic calculations, but by divine promise and the intricate tapestry of ancient prophecies. As the Muslims returned from the **Treaty of Hudaybiyyah**, a pact that initially seemed humiliating but proved to be a resounding triumph, Allah revealed in **Surah al-Fath** a clear foretelling of an "imminent victory" and "abundant spoils." These assurances, made to a disheartened *Ummah*, pointed directly to Khaybar—a testament to Allah's unwavering support and the Prophet's (s) far-sighted wisdom.

To fully grasp the significance of Khaybar, one must delve into the unique history of its Jewish inhabitants. Centuries before the advent of Islam, a group of sincere, monotheistic Jews migrated from Palestine and Syria to the Arabian Peninsula. Driven by profound faith, they sought the land where their holy scriptures, particularly the original *Tawrat* (Torah) of Prophet Musa (a.s.), prophesied the advent of the Last Prophet (s). Their sacred texts foretold that this Prophet (s) would establish his abode between the mountains of *Ayr* and *Uhud*, in a city where no king had ever

ruled before his arrival.

These zealous Jews, detached from worldly ambitions, were dedicated to preserving the purity of their faith and awaiting the promised messenger. They first settled in Khaybar, a fertile region resembling the green lands they had left behind in Syria and Palestine. Khaybar, aptly named for its numerous impenetrable fortresses, became their initial hub. Over time, they discovered Yathrib (later **Medina**), a city perfectly matching the prophetic descriptions in their scriptures. A covenant was then forged between the Jewish communities of Khaybar and Yathrib: they would migrate to Yathrib to be present for the Prophet's (s) arrival, to assist him, and to gather resources for his support.

Centuries passed, and the Jewish communities flourished in both Khaybar and Yathrib. Their spiritual devotion was evident in their unwavering trust in Allah. This was powerfully illustrated during an attack on Yathrib by Tubba', the formidable king of Yemen. Expecting an easy conquest of the seemingly undefended Jewish settlement, Tubba' laid siege. To his astonishment, despite the ongoing siege and dwindling provisions, the Jews continued to distribute their meager food supplies to the poor and needy outside their city walls. This extraordinary act of charity, born of an absolute conviction in Allah's promise that their city would not fall before the prophesied Prophet (s), left Tubba' speechless.

Deeply impressed by their profound faith, King Tubba' not only abandoned the siege but also instructed two prominent Arabian tribes, the Aws and the Khazraj, to remain in Yathrib. He commanded them to serve as his representatives and to pledge their loyalty and support to the Last Prophet (s) upon his arrival, even leaving a letter addressed to the Prophet (s). These very tribes would later form the core of the *Ansar*, the fervent supporters of Prophet Mohammad (s) in Medina.

However, over the generations, a tragic shift occurred. Despite the deep

sincerity and foresight of their ancestors, many of the younger generations of Jews in Khaybar and Medina gradually lost the profound spiritual connection and understanding of their elders. Failing to properly educate their children on the true essence of their scriptures and the spiritual demands of awaiting the Prophet (s), their focus drifted towards worldly gains and material wealth. While their ancestors had accumulated riches to support the awaited Prophet (s), these descendants now hoarded it for themselves. This spiritual decline transformed them from fervent believers and helpers of the Prophet (s) into his most bitter enemies, ultimately leading to their expulsion from Medina and the confrontation at Khaybar. Their ancestors had envisioned coming to Medina to aid the Prophet (s), but ironically, their descendants were expelled from Medina and sought refuge in Khaybar, aligning with its leaders against the Muslims.

The Prophet's (s) preparations for Khaybar were marked by both strategic brilliance and divine instruction. He declared that only those who had participated in the **Bay'at al-Ridwan** at Hudaybiyyah—a pledge of allegiance given under the tree, numbering 1400 sincere Muslims—would join the expedition. This exclusion ensured that the army for Khaybar consisted only of those whose faith and loyalty had been tested and affirmed by Allah.

Among the ranks were also twenty Muslim women, including **Umm Salamah (r.a.)**, the Prophet's (s) esteemed wife. These women, rather than engaging in combat, served as invaluable support, spinning wool, preparing clothes for sale to fund the expedition, and tending to the wounded and providing water during battles. Their dedication was so significant that the Prophet (s) ensured they received a share of the spoils of war alongside the male fighters.

Not all was well, however. Despite the Prophet's (s) careful selection, elements of treachery persisted. **Abdullah ibn Ubayy**, the notorious leader

of the hypocrites, who had caused discord during the **Ghazwah Banu Mustaliq**, attempted to undermine the Muslim effort. He secretly sent a letter to the leaders of Khaybar, advising them to come out of their fortified castles and fight the Muslims in the open field. His intention was to lead the Muslims into a trap and cause their defeat. Yet, in a testament to Allah's plan, this deceitful advice inadvertently benefited the Muslims, as fighting in the open was far more advantageous for them than prolonged sieges of heavily fortified castles.

As the Muslim army marched towards Khaybar, some Jews remaining in Medina, convinced of an impending Muslim defeat against Khaybar's 14,000 strong forces, began to demand immediate repayment of debts from Muslims who were part of the expedition. They believed these Muslims would perish, and their debts would be lost. An incident involving **Abdullah Abu Hudhayrah**, a companion newly converted to Islam (perhaps only a month prior), highlights this tension. A Jew from whom he had taken a loan for five *dirhams* demanded immediate repayment, mocking him and asserting he would never return from Khaybar alive. Despite Abdullah's (r.a.) limited resources, the Prophet (s) intervened, emphasizing the paramount importance of *huquq al-nas* (the rights of people). He instructed Abdullah (r.a.) to repay the debt, even if it meant selling his sole outer garment. The Prophet (s) understood that upholding justice and protecting Islam's reputation was paramount. The companion, obediently selling his garment, also added money for the needy from his meager funds, earning the Prophet's (s) blessing.

True to Allah's promise, the Muslim army returned victorious from Khaybar. And in a remarkable twist of divine justice, when the spoils of war were distributed, Abdullah Abu Hudhayrah (r.a.) received a female captive who was a close relative of the very Jew who had so callously demanded his debt. When the Jew, now humbled, offered a large sum to buy back his relative, Abdullah (r.a.) replied that if the Jew had shown

him consideration in his time of need, he might have reciprocated. This poignant encounter underscored Allah's justice, showing how worldly self-interest can blind individuals to both faith and humanity, ultimately leading to their own humiliation.

The battle also brought forth profound lessons on sincerity and the sanctity of public property. Among the martyrs in Khaybar was a relatively new Muslim, a *ghulam* (servant) of the Prophet (s). As Muslims mourned him, celebrating his martyrdom and predicting his entry into Paradise, the Prophet (s) revealed a startling truth: "His grave is filled with fire." When questioned why, the Prophet (s) explained that this *ghulam* had taken a *chadar* (cloak) from the spoils of war for his personal use *before* the proper distribution, without permission. This grave act, despite his martyrdom, incurred divine wrath, emphasizing the severe consequences of violating *huquq al-nas* or misappropriating public funds (*bayt al-mal*).

This incident served as a potent reminder for the Muslims, echoing the profound importance of fulfilling obligations, especially debts (*huquq al-nas*). This principle was further underscored by the example of **Imam Muslim ibn Aqil (a.s.)**, the cousin and envoy of Imam Hussain (a.s.), whose final will before his martyrdom in Kufa included a plea for his debts to be paid. Even in his most desperate moments, facing certain death and immense personal anguish for the impending tragedy of Imam Hussain (a.s.), Imam Muslim (a.s.) remembered his financial obligations, demonstrating that the rights of others are paramount, even for the greatest of martyrs. This timeless lesson from Khaybar and the lives of the infallible Imams stresses that no act of piety or martyrdom can absolve one of neglecting the rights of others, particularly financial ones.

The fall of Khaybar, therefore, was not merely a military conquest but a profound culmination of divine promises, the Prophet's (s) strategic genius, and invaluable lessons for the *Ummah* on faith, justice, and account-

ability. It marked a significant turning point in Islamic history, breaking the formidable Jewish power in Arabia, and its consequences continued to reverberate for centuries to come.

Chapter 111

The Dawn of Khaybar: Strategic Deception and First Forts

Following the insightful revelations of **Surah al-Fath**, which promised "abundant spoils" to the sincere believers who had participated in the **Bay'at al-Ridwan**, the stage was now set for the decisive engagement against the formidable Jewish stronghold of Khaybar. This expedition was not merely a military campaign; it was a profound testament to divine providence and the Prophet's (s) unparalleled strategic acumen, carefully engineered to neutralize the persistent threat posed by the consolidated Jewish tribes.

The Prophet (s) had issued a unique directive: only those who had pledged their loyalty under the tree at Hudaybiyyah would accompany him to Khaybar. This ensured an army of unwavering faith and commitment, a purified force ready for a divinely ordained victory. The journey itself began with a subtle yet profound act of strategic deception. Instead of taking the well-known and direct route from Medina to Khaybar, the Prophet (s) led his army on an obscure path, aiming to arrive at Khaybar under the cover of darkness and from an unexpected direction. This

element of surprise was a cornerstone of his military philosophy, consistently employed to disorient and overwhelm the enemy.

As the army proceeded, they reached a point called *Sahba*, where the Prophet (s) consulted his guide about the available routes to Khaybar. The guide mentioned several paths, each with an associated name or connotation. One path was named *Khun*, meaning "blood" or "betrayal"; another, *Shash*, implying "fragmentation" or "dispersion"; and yet another, *Hatin*, meaning "burning" or "destruction." The Prophet (s), demonstrating his spiritual insight and preference for auspicious omens, rejected these routes. Finally, a path named *Marhab*, meaning "welcome" or "blessed," was identified. Despite its arduous nature, the Prophet (s) immediately chose this route, embracing the good omen and embodying his deep trust in Allah's plan. This subtle choice underscored the spiritual dimension embedded in every aspect of his leadership.

The strategic brilliance continued as the Muslim army approached the *Raji'* crossroads. News had reached the Prophet (s) that the Banu Ghatafan, a powerful Arab tribe allied with Khaybar, were preparing to march their entire forces to join the Jewish stronghold. This alliance would have significantly bolstered Khaybar's defenses. Recognizing this imminent threat, the Prophet (s) ordered an unexpected halt at *Raji'*, just before the crossroads. This pause, appearing to be a simple encampment, was a calculated maneuver. It created a perception of uncertainty and threat for the approaching Banu Ghatafan, as they would see the Muslim army positioned in a way that could easily intercept them or even advance towards their own homes. Historical accounts suggest that a "heavenly voice" — or more pragmatically, a strategic rumor possibly spread by Muslim converts living in *taqiyyah* among Banu Ghatafan — instilled fear in their hearts. This voice warned them against abandoning their families and properties, suggesting that the Muslims might attack their undefended homes. Faced with this perceived threat, Banu Ghatafan, fearing for their

vulnerable tribes, made the pivotal decision to return to protect their lands, effectively dissolving the formidable alliance and leaving Khaybar isolated. This bloodless strategic victory demonstrated the Prophet's (s) genius in exploiting psychological warfare and intelligence.

As night fell, the Muslim army reached the immediate vicinity of Khaybar, still undetected. The Prophet (s) ordered the establishment of a small *masjid* (mosque) outside the fort walls for night prayers and rest. During this night, a chilling incident occurred. A Jewish spy, attempting to assassinate the Prophet (s) in his tent, approached him with a sword. The Prophet (s) remained calm, asking the spy, "Who can protect you from me now?" The spy, startled by the Prophet's (s) composure and divine protection, found his sword inexplicably slip from his grasp. The Prophet (s) immediately caught the sword and, with profound mercy, forgave the man, who subsequently embraced Islam. This event reinforced the divine protection afforded to the Prophet (s) and his unwavering compassion even in the face of imminent danger.

Throughout the night, the Prophet (s) remained vigilant, dispatching scouts, including Ubadah ibn Bishr, to gather intelligence. Ubadah (r.a.) soon intercepted another Khaybar spy. After securing a promise of *aman* (safety) from the Prophet (s), the spy confessed to being sent by Khaybar's leaders and revealed critical information: Khaybar was prepared with a formidable force of 14,000 fighters, with an additional 4,000 to 6,000 expected reinforcements. This intelligence allowed the Prophet (s) to adjust his strategy, sending some troops to guard the Muslim women and children who had accompanied the expedition, and ensuring the main force was prepared for the numbers they would face.

As dawn broke, the unsuspecting farmers of Khaybar opened their fort gates to attend to their fields and gardens, which were abundant. They were met with the startling sight of the Muslim army. Upon witnessing

this, the Prophet (s) uttered a profound declaration, a spontaneous invocation and a good omen: "**Allahumma kharibta Khaybar!**" (O Allah, destroy Khaybar!) This prophetic utterance signaled the impending ruin of the Jewish stronghold. The farmers, shocked and terrified, fled back into the forts, sealing the gates.

The conquest of Khaybar involved breaching numerous fortified castles. The initial engagements were fierce, and the first major fort to fall was Na'im. During its siege, a revered Muslim warrior, Mahmud ibn Maslamah, was martyred. He was struck by a millstone thrown by Kinanah, the chieftain of Banu Nadir and the husband of Safiyyah. The Muslim forces, fueled by the martyrdom of their comrade, intensified their attack, and Na'im was soon subdued.

Following the fall of Na'im, a sensitive matter arose concerning Kinanah. The Prophet (s) had been informed that Kinanah, prior to the siege, had hidden a vast treasure belonging to his tribe. When questioned, Kinanah vehemently denied knowing its location. However, a local informant (some accounts suggest a Jewish convert) revealed a possible site. When the location was investigated, the immense treasure was indeed discovered, confirming Kinanah's deceit. The Prophet (s) then handed Kinanah over to Muhammad ibn Maslamah, the brother of the recently martyred Mahmud, to exact *qisas* (retribution) for his brother's murder. This was a legal and just application of Islamic law, ensuring accountability for a deliberate act of aggression.

Among the captives was Safiyyah bint Huyayy, Kinanah's widow and the daughter of Huyayy ibn Akhtab, a former chief of Banu Nadir. The Prophet (s), recognizing her noble lineage and the strategic importance of integrating powerful families into the nascent Islamic society, offered her the choice: freedom or marriage to him. Safiyyah (r.a.) chose to embrace Islam and marry the Prophet (s). This marriage was a testament to

the Prophet's (s) compassion and his diplomatic foresight, transforming a figure of the opposing side into an honored member of his household, ultimately fostering reconciliation and stability.

As the siege continued against other formidable forts like Nathat and Shaqa, the Muslim army faced severe hardships, including dwindling rations and intense hunger. It was during this trying period that a remarkable incident unfolded, highlighting the virtues of *amanat* (trustworthiness) and sincere *iman*. An Abyssinian shepherd, Amr, who worked for a Jewish chieftain, tended his flock daily, venturing outside the fort walls. Noticing the distress and resolve of the Muslims, he approached the Prophet's (s) camp. The Prophet (s), with his characteristic openness, engaged directly with the shepherd, who expressed his desire to embrace Islam. Upon accepting Islam, the shepherd immediately asked about his sheep, recognizing them as a trust from his former master. The Prophet (s) instructed him to return them to their owners first, emphasizing that a Muslim must fulfill their trusts, even to their enemies. Miraculously, as the shepherd cast pebbles towards the sheep, they turned and ran back into the fort on their own, a clear sign of divine intervention affirming his *amanat*. This shepherd then joined the Muslim ranks, fought bravely, and was martyred shortly after, his body found in the Prophet's (s) tent with houris attending to him in Paradise, as described by the Prophet (s). This extraordinary event underscored the paramount importance of fulfilling trusts, regardless of circumstance, and the immense reward for sincere faith.

Later that same night, another Jewish spy was captured near Fort Nathat. Umar (r.a.) suggested his immediate execution, but the Prophet (s) again intervened, granting the spy *aman* in exchange for information. The spy revealed that the Jewish forces from Nathat had discreetly moved their main forces to the larger, more strategic fort of Shaqa. Acting swiftly on this intelligence, the Prophet (s) immediately shifted the entire Muslim

army from Nathat to Shaqa, executing a rapid nocturnal maneuver. This decisive tactical change, guided by divine wisdom and swift intelligence, completely thwarted the Jewish strategy. When the Jews of Shaqa woke the next morning, they were astonished to find the Muslim army arrayed directly before their strongest position, having bypassed the earlier, now undefended, fort. This unexpected shift shattered their morale and led to a rapid Muslim victory, again demonstrating that while oppressors devise plans, Allah's plan always prevails, and He is the best of planners. This strategic brilliance, reminiscent of Na'im ibn Mas'ud's role at Khandaq, showcased the Prophet's (s) unparalleled leadership, where divine aid consistently amplified human effort.

Chapter 112

The Eve of Khaybar's Conquest: A Night of Prophecy, Pain, and Divine Promise

The Muslim army, after the swift capture of *Na'im*, *Natat*, and *Shiqq*, pressed on towards the remaining fortresses of Khaybar. The enemy's strategic shift, observed and confirmed by captured spies, had seen their main forces relocating to *Shiqq* and *Nathat*, hoping to deceive the Muslims. However, the Prophet's (s) divine insight and swift tactical adjustments had consistently thwarted their plans. Now, the next formidable challenge lay before them: *Qila-e-Sa'b*.

This fourth fortress, *Qila-e-Sa'b*, was a testament to the Jewish ingenuity and resilience. Built atop a hill, it presented a significantly tougher defense than the preceding forts. The Jews had fortified it extensively, establishing it as their secondary stronghold, brimming with provisions and even housing *manjaneeq* (trebuchets), a sophisticated siege weapon not yet common in Arabia. The siege of *Sa'b* proved arduous and prolonged, pushing the Muslim forces to the brink of their supplies. Hunger gnawed at the companions, forcing them to hunt wild donkeys (*gadhay*) found in the region.

One day, as pots simmered with the meat of these wild donkeys, the Prophet (s) passed by. Observing the scene, he immediately instructed the companions to overturn the pots and discard the meat. Though the meat of wild donkeys was not strictly forbidden (*haram*), it was *makruh* (disliked) in Islam. The Prophet (s), even in the throes of a prolonged siege and acute hunger, exemplified the highest standards of *taqwa* and adherence to divine preference. This incident served as a profound lesson in prioritizing spiritual purity and moral excellence even over immediate physical need. This deep devotion to divine injunctions was not unique to the Prophet (s); centuries later, during the Battle of Siffin, when *Imam Ali* (*a.s.*) was offered water in a broken vessel during intense combat, he refused, citing that it was *makruh* to drink from such a vessel, demonstrating the same unwavering commitment to purity even in the direst circumstances.

After a protracted siege, *Qila-e-Sa'b* finally fell. This victory not only relieved the immediate pressure on the Muslim army but also yielded an unexpected strategic advantage: the captured *manjaneeq*. These sophisticated siege engines, previously unknown to the Muslims, would prove invaluable in conquering the remaining, even more formidable, fortresses.

Next, the Muslim army advanced towards the fifth fort, *Qila-e-Zubair*. This fort also presented a significant challenge, proving resistant to conventional assault. A Jewish guide, seeking safety for himself and his family, offered the Prophet (s) a vital piece of information: the fort's water supply, derived from an external canal, could be easily cut off, forcing its inhabitants to surrender. While such a tactic was permissible in warfare under certain circumstances, the Prophet (s), embodying divine compassion and patience, chose not to employ it. He preferred to rely on Allah's assistance and other means. Miraculously, and with the aid of the newly acquired *manjaneeq*, *Qila-e-Zubair* was eventually conquered, further solidifying the trust of the Muslims in Allah's boundless help.

Following the fall of *Zubair*, the sixth and seventh forts, realizing the futility of resistance, voluntarily surrendered to the Muslim forces. They sought peace and agreed to a settlement, ceding half of their wealth and possessions to the Muslims, thus ending the initial phase of the Khaybar campaign with strategic victories and minimal casualties.

With the lesser forts subdued, the stage was now set for the ultimate confrontation at *Qila-e-Qamus*. This was the largest, strongest, and most heavily fortified fortress in all of Khaybar, often simply referred to as "Khaybar" itself due to its formidable nature. It was the stronghold of the formidable Jewish champion, Marhab, a warrior renowned throughout Arabia.

The night before the final, decisive assault on *Qamus* was fraught with tension and divine foreshadowing. In the Prophet's (s) tent, a severe and debilitating headache (*dardi-e-shiqeeqa*) afflicted him, confining him to his dwelling for what some narrations suggest was a period of three, twenty, or even forty-nine days. During this time, he could not personally lead the daily assaults.

Within the Jewish stronghold, a profound and disturbing dream visited Safiyyah, the wife of Kinanah (the man who had killed Mahmud ibn Maslamah). She dreamt of a radiant full moon, known as *Badr* in Arabic, descending from the sky and resting in her lap. Upon awakening, she recounted the dream to her husband, Kinanah. Recognizing the prophetic significance of a *Badr* (full moon) entering her lap—a clear omen of her future marriage to the Prophet (s), the true *Badr* of humanity—Kinanah, consumed by rage and jealousy, struck her forcefully on her face. The mark of this blow remained visible on her cheek for days, even weeks, a testament to the pain she endured, and which the Prophet (s) would later notice after their marriage.

Concurrently, within the fortress, Marhab, the chieftain of *Qamus*, was

also visited by a dream that confirmed an ancient prophecy. His wet nurse, a wise woman skilled in discerning the future, had long ago foretold that his death would come at the hands of a warrior named *Haydar*. On this very night, Marhab dreamt of a sword, bearing the name *Haydar*, striking him down. This dual prophecy, both from his wet nurse and his own dream, filled him with a potent mixture of dread and resolve.

For three consecutive days, the Muslim army, without the Prophet (s) at its direct lead due to his illness, launched repeated assaults on *Qamus*. Each time, the commanders appointed by the Prophet (s) returned unsuccessful. The formidable walls of *Qamus* held firm, and the might of the Jewish defenders, bolstered by their initial successes, grew. Confidence swelled within the Jewish ranks, while a sense of frustration began to spread among some in the Muslim camp.

As the sun began to set on the third day of the stalemate, a divinely inspired moment occurred. The Prophet (s), despite his lingering illness, emerged from his tent. His blessed gaze swept over the disheartened army. With a voice that resonated with the power of revelation, he declared: "□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□□□□" ("Indeed, I will give this banner tomorrow to a man whom Allah and His Messenger love, and he loves Allah and His Messenger. He is not a fleer, and Allah will grant victory through him on both his hands.")

This declaration electrified the Muslim army. All hearts yearned to be the recipient of such an immense honor. It is narrated that even *Umar ibn al-Khattab* (*r.a.*) later recalled that this was the night he wished for the banner more than anything else in his life, hoping to be the man beloved by Allah and His Messenger.

That night, *Imam Ali* (*a.s.*) was suffering from a severe eye ailment (*ashoob-*

e-chashm), a recurring affliction that caused him intense pain. When the Prophet (s) was informed of Ali's (a.s.) suffering, he immediately went to his cousin's tent. He asked Ali (a.s.) about his condition, and Ali (a.s.) described the excruciating pain. The Prophet (s) then spoke words of comfort and wisdom, sharing a *hadith* that was so profound it made Ali (a.s.) forget his pain. Then, with his blessed hands, the Prophet (s) applied his saliva to Ali's (a.s.) eyes. By the morning, Ali's (a.s.) eyes were completely healed, as if he had never suffered.

A profound question arose among scholars regarding Ali's (a.s.) presence: was he already in Khaybar, or was he in Medina during these three days? While historical accounts vary, some significant narrations suggest that Ali (a.s.) was indeed in Medina due to his severe eye pain. In this case, upon the Prophet's (s) declaration, a divine command was given, and the sacred invocation, "□□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□ □□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□ □□□□□□□" ("Call upon Ali, the Manifestor of Wonders, you will find him a helper for you in calamities. Every sorrow and grief will soon disappear through your *wilayah*, O Ali!"), echoed, calling Ali (a.s.) swiftly from Medina to Khaybar. His arrival, whether from Medina or already in Khaybar, marked the definitive turning point for the conquest of *Qamus*.

The immediate and unwavering response of *Imam Ali* (*a.s.*) to the call of the Prophet (s) stands in stark contrast to moments of seemingly inexplicable 'delay' in other historical events, particularly in *Karbala*. The human mind struggles to reconcile such immediate presence with perceived absences, yet the divine wisdom behind such phenomena often remains veiled.

The enduring legacy of *Imam Ali's* (*a.s.*) complete obedience and devotion shines through in every facet of his life. Generations later, the depths of

his sacrifice and that of his pure progeny would be laid bare. In the aftermath of the tragedy of *Karbala*, when the Holy Household was left devastated and dispersed, the steadfastness of *Sayyidah Zaynab* (*s.a.*), daughter of Ali (a.s.), became a beacon of resilience.

On the harrowing *Shab-e-Ghariban* (the Night of Loneliness) in Karbala, as darkness enveloped the battlefield and the tattered remnants of the tents smoldered, Sayyidah Zaynab (s.a.) tirelessly gathered the orphaned children, consoled the grieving women, and watched over the sacred, unburied bodies. Later, as she kept vigil, she saw a figure approaching from afar, seemingly a horseman from Najaf (the resting place of *Imam Ali* (*a.s.*)). Out of concern for the sanctity of the women and children, and in her grief-stricken state, she cried out, asking the approaching rider to change his path, explaining the tragic state of the camp and how her children had just fallen asleep. As the figure drew nearer, Sayyidah Zaynab (s.a.) bravely approached, placing her hand on the bridle of the horse, asking him to leave her and the children in peace. However, as the figure dismounted, she recognized him: it was her beloved father, *Imam Ali* (*a.s.*).

In a moment of profound *haya* (modesty) and reverence, despite the unimaginable circumstances, Sayyidah Zaynab (s.a.) instinctively stepped back. When her companions, bewildered, asked why she retreated from her own father, she replied that she was searching for a *chador* (veil) to cover herself, as she had never stood before her father with her head uncovered. This poignant moment, amidst the chaos and devastation, encapsulates the unparalleled purity, dignity, and unwavering adherence to divine and familial protocols that characterized *Ahlul Bayt*.

This eve, marked by the Prophet's (s) declaration, the companions' hopes, Ali's (a.s.) miraculous healing, and the spiritual call for his aid, laid the foundation for the most significant victory in Khaybar. The final con-

frontation with Marhab and the conquest of *Qila-e-Qamus* were now imminent.

Chapter 113

The Conquest of Khaybar: Ali's Valiant Victory

As the siege of Khaybar continued, the Muslim army, despite having captured nine smaller forts, found themselves facing the formidable *Qila-e-Qamus*. This fortress, known as the stronghold of Marhab, stood as the final and most challenging bastion of Jewish resistance. Its sheer size and strategic placement made it a far more difficult target than the preceding forts, a reality that dawned upon both the Muslims and the inhabitants of Khaybar. While the earlier victories were important, they were but preludes to the ultimate confrontation. The Prophet (s), still recuperating from the severe headache that had confined him to his tent, understood the gravity of the impending battle.

For three days, the Prophet (s) remained in seclusion, his absence creating a palpable sense of anticipation and even doubt among some of the companions. Meanwhile, inside *Qila-e-Qamus*, foreboding dreams plagued its leaders. Safiyyah, Kinanah's wife, had already dreamt of the full moon descending into her lap, a premonition of her future marriage to the Prophet (s) that had infuriated Kinanah. Marhab himself expe-

rienced a vivid dream of his death at the hands of a sword wielded by a man named *Haydar*, a prophecy echoed by his wet nurse years prior. These dreams, though interpreted differently by their dreamers, hinted at the profound change that awaited Khaybar.

On the third evening, the Prophet (s) emerged from his tent, his presence radiating an undeniable power. With a profound declaration that would echo through history, he announced, "**Tomorrow, I shall give the banner to a man whom Allah and His Messenger love, and he loves Allah and His Messenger. He is not one who flees, and Allah will grant victory through him on both his hands.**" This declaration immediately ignited hope and ambition in the hearts of many, as each companion yearned to be the recipient of such a profound honor. Even Umar ibn al-Khattab (r.a.) later recounted that this was the only time he had ever wished for a leadership position.

However, a grave concern arose: Imam Ali (a.s.), the very person whose unique qualities seemed to fit the Prophet's (s) description, was suffering from an excruciating case of *ashob-e-chashm* (severe eye inflammation), rendering him almost blind and in immense pain. Some companions subtly tried to explain Ali's (a.s.) condition, suggesting he was not fit for battle. Yet, the Prophet (s) repeated his query, "**Where is Ali?**" When some finally admitted Ali (a.s.) was in his tent, the Prophet (s) commanded them to bring him forth.

Imam Ali (a.s.) was led to the Prophet's (s) tent, his eyes barely open due to the intense pain. As he approached, the Prophet (s) compassionately took Ali's (a.s.) head into his lap. Then, with a touch of divine mercy, he applied his blessed saliva to Ali's (a.s.) inflamed eyes. Instantly, the pain vanished, and Ali's (a.s.) vision was perfectly restored, as if he had never suffered. This miraculous healing was accompanied by the Prophet's (s) special prayer for Ali (a.s.): "**O Allah, protect him from the heat and the**

cold." This prayer, according to historical accounts, bestowed upon Ali (a.s.) an unparalleled resilience to extreme temperatures, allowing him to wear light clothing in severe cold and heavy garments in intense heat without discomfort—a testament to the Prophet's (s) profound blessings.

With his eyes healed and his spirit reinvigorated, Imam Ali (a.s.) received the banner from the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) then laid out the strategic and ethical guidelines for the battle. "**O Ali, approach them first and invite them to Islam.**" He emphasized the profound value of guiding humanity: "**By Allah, if Allah guides a single person through you, it is better for you than possessing red camels**" (the most precious of possessions). He further instructed Ali (a.s.) that if they refused Islam, he should offer them the option of paying *jizya* (tribute), ensuring their protection and rights within the Islamic state. Only if both offers were refused should they resort to combat. This highlights the Prophet's (s) unwavering commitment to peace and *da'wah* (inviting to Islam) even in the face of aggression.

As soon as the banner was in his hand, Imam Ali (a.s.) set off with astonishing speed, moving so swiftly towards *Qila-e-Qamus* that the rest of the Muslim army, still scrambling to prepare themselves, cried out for him to slow down. Ali (a.s.) did not halt, embodying the Prophet's (s) earlier description of one who "does not flee."

The formidable Marhab, witnessing Ali's (a.s.) approach, emerged from the fort. A giant of a man, clad in double armor and carrying two swords, he was the embodiment of Khaybar's might. He began to recite a *rajaz*, proclaiming his name and prowess: "Khaybar knows that I am Marhab, fully armed, a brave warrior, experienced in war." Ali (a.s.), in turn, recited his iconic response, which became a battle cry throughout Islamic history: "**I am the one whom my mother named Haydar**" (meaning "lion" in Arabic, especially one that rips things apart), "**the lion of the**

jungles, one who gives full measure." This was not merely a poetic exchange; it was a psychological warfare, asserting Ali's (a.s.) divine strength and lineage.

The duel commenced. With a single, decisive blow of his legendary sword, **Dhul-Fiqar**, Imam Ali (a.s.) cleaved Marhab in two, from the crown of his head to his waist, fulfilling the prophecy of Marhab's dream. The fall of Marhab, followed by the swift defeats of his brothers, Harith and Antar, shattered the morale of the Jewish forces within *Qila-e-Qamus*.

In a moment of profound spiritual significance, the Archangel Jibra'il (a.s.) descended to the Prophet (s), his forehead visibly perspiring—an angelic expression of awe and exertion. He conveyed a divine proclamation that resonated throughout the heavens: "**La Fata illa Ali, la Sayfa illa Dhul-Fiqar!**" (**There is no young man except Ali, and no sword except Dhul-Fiqar!**). Jibra'il (a.s.) then expressed his profound amazement, stating that while he had been commanded to perform daunting tasks by Allah, such as lifting the entire city of Prophet Lot's people to the heavens and casting it down, none had filled him with the same overwhelming sense of awe and wonder as witnessing Ali's (a.s.) valor and power in this battle.

With the strongest Jewish warriors vanquished, Imam Ali (a.s.) advanced towards the massive gate of *Qila-e-Qamus*. The gate, a colossal stone slab reportedly 12 feet high, 6 feet wide, and 1 foot thick, and resting a foot above the ground, was the fort's ultimate defense. As the remaining Jewish fighters attempted to attack him, one managed to strike his shield, causing it to fall. Without hesitation, Ali (a.s.), with a resounding cry of **Allah-u-Akbar** (*Allah is the Greatest*), grasped the gate, and with superhuman strength, uprooted it from its hinges. He then wielded the massive stone gate as his shield, protecting himself from the raining arrows and spears.

The uprooted gate, now in Ali's (a.s.) hands, served a dual purpose. He not only used it to protect himself but also laid it down over the trench surrounding the fort, creating a bridge for the Muslim army to cross. He carried groups of Muslims across in stages, displaying an almost ethereal grace, as if his feet barely touched the ground. This monumental feat allowed the entire Muslim army to enter the fort, effectively neutralizing Khaybar's last major defense.

Upon entering, Imam Ali (a.s.) encountered a group of prominent Jewish women, including Safiyyah (r.a.), who was one of the noblewomen of Khaybar. Ali (a.s.), upholding the Prophet's (s) teachings of compassion and respect, immediately instructed Bilal (r.a.) and other trusted companions to escort these women to the Prophet's (s) camp with utmost care and dignity.

Later, when Safiyyah (r.a.) was brought before the Prophet (s), he noticed a profound sadness and marks of grief on her face. When asked, she explained that she had passed by the bodies of her slain relatives and tribesmen, causing her immense sorrow. The Prophet (s) expressed great compassion, and with a gentle but firm tone, he reprimanded Bilal (r.a.) for not choosing a path that would spare the women the sight of their deceased kin. He then personally offered Safiyyah (r.a.) a *chadar* (veil) from his own women's provisions, emphasizing the paramount importance of preserving the modesty and dignity of all women, even in the aftermath of battle. This act underscored the profound Islamic principle that even in victory, humanity, compassion, and respect for all, especially women, must prevail. The conquest of Khaybar, therefore, was not merely a military triumph but a profound demonstration of the Prophet's (s) divine wisdom, Ali's (a.s.) unparalleled valor, and Islam's intrinsic values of justice and mercy.

Chapter 114

Khaybar's Aftermath: Justice, Piety, and Prophetic Wisdom

As the dust settled on the triumphant conquest of Khaybar, the Prophet Mohammad (s) began to solidify the newfound peace and administer the spoils of war, revealing profound principles of justice, mercy, and ethical conduct. The immediate aftermath brought forth a series of events that further illuminated the Prophet's (s) character and the divine wisdom guiding the nascent Islamic state.

One historical clarification that emerged from the battle pertained to the powerful words uttered by Imam Ali (a.s.) after uprooting the colossal gate of *Qila-e-Qamus*. While it is famously recounted that Ali (a.s.) declared, "**I did not uproot it with human strength, but with divine strength**," a historical nuance distinguishes this battlefield utterance from his later statements during his own Caliphate. Decades later, when addressing similar challenges, Ali (a.s.) would reiterate this core truth, often adding phrases that connected his strength to his unique bond with the Prophet (s) and his unwavering stance against all forms of disbelief. This distinction underscores the consistency of Ali's (a.s.) reliance on di-

vine aid, both in the heat of battle and in the broader challenges of leadership.

Another point of clarification arose concerning the immense weight of the spearhead of Harith, one of the Jewish champions slain by Ali (a.s.). Accounts mentioned a weight of "ten *mann*," which caused confusion due to the varying definitions of the *mann* unit across different regions and eras. It is crucial to understand that the *mann* in ancient Arabia was significantly smaller than, for example, the *mann* used in India during Mughal or British rule. The Arabian *mann* was equivalent to approximately two and a half *seer*, or roughly seven to twelve *seer* (a *seer* being a unit of weight). Thus, Harith's spearhead, while undoubtedly heavy and formidable, was not of an impossible or mythical weight, resolving a common misinterpretation often fueled by a lack of historical context.

With the formidable fortress of *Qamus* captured, Ali (a.s.) swiftly entered the stronghold. His immediate concern was for the safety of the Jewish women, ensuring their dignified passage to the Prophet's (s) camp. Amongst them was Safiyyah bint Huyayy, who would soon become one of the Prophet's (s) wives. In a display of profound compassion, the Prophet (s) gently reprimanded Bilal (r.a.) for leading Safiyyah and her relatives past the slain bodies of their loved ones, highlighting Islam's emphasis on respect and dignity, even for defeated enemies.

The Prophet (s) then arrived at Khaybar, his heart filled with gratitude. He sought out Ali (a.s.), embracing him tightly and kissing his forehead. Ali (a.s.), overwhelmed with joy and emotion, shed tears, which the Prophet (s) acknowledged, asking if they were tears of happiness or sorrow. Ali (a.s.) affirmed they were tears of pure joy, knowing that the Prophet (s) was pleased with him. The Prophet (s) then delivered a profound pronouncement, assuring Ali (a.s.) that it was not only he, the Messenger of Allah, who was pleased, but that all the angels, including Jibra'il

(a.s.) and Mika'il (a.s.), and indeed, the Lord of all Creation Himself, were pleased and proud of Ali (a.s.).

Following the decisive victory, the remaining Khaybarites, who had not been directly involved in the fierce battles, sought terms of peace. They expressed their willingness to surrender all their wealth, land, and produce, asking only for the safety of their lives, women, and children. The Prophet (s), ever inclined towards mercy and peace, accepted their proposal. This agreement, however, had an important caveat: it did not extend protection to individuals who had personally committed crimes against Muslims outside the battlefield. Kinanah, Safiyyah's husband, for instance, had murdered Mahmud ibn Maslamah through treachery and was later executed for concealing a significant tribal treasure—a clear violation of the terms of surrender and a crime against the nascent Islamic state.

The Khaybarites then made a further plea. Recognizing that cultivating their lands would be impractical for the Muslims residing in Medina, they requested to remain on their ancestral lands and work them, offering to share the produce with the Muslims. The Prophet (s) agreed, establishing the principle of *muzara'ah*, or sharecropping, which became a foundational economic practice in Islamic jurisprudence. According to this arrangement, the land belonged to the Muslims, while the Jews provided the labor, with the harvest being equitably divided between both parties. To ensure absolute justice, the Prophet (s) appointed Abdullah ibn Rawahah (r.a.) as his representative to oversee the division of the produce. Abdullah ibn Rawahah (r.a.), known for his impeccable integrity, would arrive at Khaybar, assess the harvest, and divide it into two equal halves. He would then present the Jews with the option to choose which half they preferred, or even offer to combine both halves and divide them again if they felt any injustice. This scrupulous adherence to fairness, even with former enemies, elicited a remarkable response from the Jews themselves,

who exclaimed, "**This is the justice by which the heavens and the earth are sustained!**"

The administration of *ghanimah* (spoils of war) at Khaybar was meticulously overseen by the Prophet (s), demonstrating the profound importance of *amanat* (trustworthiness) in Islam. All spoils, no matter how small, were to be collected centrally. The Prophet (s) issued a stern warning against *ghulul*, the misappropriation of spoils, emphasizing that even the smallest theft would result in severe consequences in the afterlife. Three poignant incidents underscored this principle: 1. A Muslim *ghulam* (servant) who was martyred during the campaign had secretly kept a small piece of cloth from the spoils. After his death, his grave was miraculously seen to be filled with fire, and the Prophet (s) revealed that it was due to this single misappropriated item. 2. Another companion, who passed away due to illness after the battle, was found to have a few rings, looted from the battlefield, hidden amongst his belongings. Despite his death, the Prophet (s) refused to lead his *Janazah* prayer, instructing the other companions to do so, sending a powerful message about the sanctity of public property. 3. A companion once approached the Prophet (s), asking if even a shoelace found on the battlefield needed to be surrendered. The Prophet (s) gravely replied that if it was not surrendered, it would become a shoelace of fire wrapped around his feet on the Day of Judgment. These incidents profoundly illustrate Islam's strict stance on honesty and accountability regarding collective wealth.

The distribution of the *ghanimah* proceeded after the *khums* (one-fifth) was set aside for Allah, His Messenger, and the *Ahlul Bayt*, and another portion for *Bayt al-Mal* (the public treasury) which supported the overall functioning of the Islamic state (e.g., funding delegations, purchasing horses, paying judges' salaries, and maintaining mosques). The remaining portion was then divided among the 1400 Muslim combatants, with specific allocations for cavalry (200 extra shares) and those who provided

crucial logistical support without directly fighting (e.g., the 20 women who accompanied the army). Notably, even those loyal companions who had been part of the *Bay'at al-Ridwan* at Hudaybiyyah but did not participate in Khaybar, such as Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari, received a full share, affirming their loyalty and perseverance.

In a remarkable act of interfaith respect, when the Jews requested the return of their religious texts, including scrolls of the Torah, which had been found among the spoils, the Prophet (s) immediately ordered their return. Despite the fact that these books held significant monetary value and belonged to a defeated enemy, the Prophet (s) decreed that they be returned, underscoring Islam's reverence for sacred scriptures and the rights of non-Muslims to practice their faith without impediment.

Among the women captured at Khaybar was Safiyyah bint Huyayy (r.a.), the daughter of Huyayy ibn Akhtab, a former chief of Banu Nadir, and the widow of Kinanah, the chief of Khaybar. Due to her noble lineage and high status, the Prophet (s) deemed it inappropriate for her to be treated as a common captive. He chose to free her and offered her the choice of returning to her people or marrying him. Safiyyah (r.a.), remembering a dream she had had before Khaybar of a full moon falling into her lap (which her former husband Kinanah had violently interpreted as her seeking to marry the Prophet), chose to marry the Prophet (s). This decision elevated her status and brought a powerful Jewish family into the fold of Islam. Her age at the time was seventeen, and this was her third marriage. Safiyyah (r.a.) developed a deep love for the Prophet (s), and her sincere grief upon his passing was so profound that it even drew suspicion from some other wives, who questioned its authenticity. The Prophet (s) would later defend her against such jealousy by reminding them of her exalted lineage, stating: "How can you blame her when her father was Harun (Prophet Aaron), her uncle was Musa (Prophet Moses), and her husband is Muhammad (s)?" This statement also led

to the revelation of **Ayat al-Tanabuz** (**Surah al-Hujurat, 49:11**), which prohibits calling one another by offensive nicknames.

During the Khaybar campaign, the Prophet's (s) life was also endangered by a poisoning attempt. A Jewish woman named Zaynab bint Harith, whose father (Harith), husband (Salam), and several uncles had been killed in the battle, sought revenge. She roasted a goat, specifically poisoning the shoulder, knowing it was the Prophet's (s) favorite part. Bishr ibn al-Bara' (r.a.), a companion who ate from the poisoned meat, quickly succumbed to its effects and was martyred. The Prophet (s) himself took a bite but immediately spat it out, sensing the poison through divine intuition. When questioned, Zaynab brazenly admitted her act, claiming she wanted to test if he was a true prophet; if so, he would survive, if not, she would have avenged her family. Initially, the Prophet (s) released her, but after Bishr's martyrdom, she was handed over to Bishr's family for *qisas* (retribution) and executed. Tragically, the effects of this poison lingered in the Prophet's (s) body for years, contributing to his eventual demise approximately four years later during his final illness, a fact confirmed by traditions.

A highlight of Khaybar's conclusion was the joyous arrival of Ja'far ibn Abi Talib (r.a.), the Prophet's (s) cousin and elder brother of Imam Ali (a.s.). He led a group of 72 Muslims from Abyssinia, where they had sought refuge for nearly 14 years under the protection of King Negus. They were joined by six other Muslims from Yemen. Upon learning that the Prophet (s) was at Khaybar, they immediately traveled there. The Prophet (s) was overcome with emotion upon seeing Ja'far, embracing him warmly and kissing him. He exclaimed, "I do not know which makes me happier today: the conquest of Khaybar by my brother Ali, or the arrival of my brother Ja'far!" This profound statement underscored the immense significance of both events. As a special gift, the Prophet (s) taught Ja'far a highly recommended prayer, **Salat al-Ja'far al-Tayyar**, emphasiz-

ing its immense spiritual rewards, including the forgiveness of sins, and urging its regular performance.

Among the gifts sent by King Negus with Ja'far was a beautiful shawl interwoven with gold threads. The Prophet (s) held it up and declared that he would give it to "a man whom Allah and His Messenger love, and who loves Allah and His Messenger." Once again, Imam Ali (a.s.) was summoned. Upon his arrival, the Prophet (s) bestowed the precious shawl upon him. Ali (a.s.), known for his detachment from worldly possessions, took the shawl. As gold was forbidden for men, he removed the gold threads, which amounted to an astonishing one thousand *mithqal* (approximately three kilograms) of pure gold. Before even entering his home in Medina, Ali (a.s.) distributed all this wealth to the poor, widows, and orphans, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to charity and his indifference to material riches. Later, the Prophet (s) visited Ali's (a.s.) home, expecting a feast from the Khaybar spoils, but found the house devoid of food. Miraculously, a delicious feast appeared from the chamber of Sayyidah Fatima (s.a.), reminiscent of the divine provisions granted to Maryam (a.s.) in her *mihrab*. The Prophet (s) recognized this as a profound sign of divine favor upon his daughter, acknowledging that Allah provides sustenance without measure to whomever He wills.

The conquest of Khaybar thus concluded, not merely as a military victory but as a profound testament to the Prophet's (s) comprehensive leadership—a blend of strategic brilliance, unwavering justice, deep compassion, and absolute reliance on divine guidance. It further solidified the foundations of the Islamic state, showcasing the ethical principles that would govern its interactions with both allies and adversaries.

Chapter 115

Strategic Compassion, Divine Justice, and the Grant of Fadak

As the sun rose on the eighth year of the Prophet's (s) residence in Medina, this discourse marked the one hundred and fifteenth chapter in the unfolding tapestry of the *Seerat-e-Paighambar*, a continuous chronicle that, by the grace of Allah, has been presented for eight consecutive years. The narrative of the Battle of Khaybar, extensive and profound, had continued into the previous year, and despite earnest efforts, could not be concluded in the prior session. However, the remaining events are poised to find their completion within this chapter, although some reiteration from previous accounts may be necessary to ensure seamless continuity for the audience.

The final phases of the Khaybar campaign unveil profound lessons, foremost among them the Islamic principle of *Mu'allafat-ul-Quloob*, or the winning of hearts. This concept, often demanding significant sacrifice and immense forbearance from those who have already dedicated much to the cause of Islam, underscores the divine wisdom behind certain strategic decisions. It teaches that, at times, to secure the greater good of the

Ummah and to foster unity, it becomes necessary to extend kindness, even preferential treatment, to those who are new to the faith or even those who were recently adversaries, potentially at the expense of the feelings of long-standing, loyal companions.

A striking illustration of this principle emerged in the aftermath of Khaybar. The Banu Ghatafan, a prominent tribal confederation, had initially pledged to support the Jews of Khaybar against the Muslims. However, as previously recounted, divine intervention and strategic deception led them to retreat midway, abandoning their alliance with Khaybar out of fear for their own villages and families. After Khaybar's conquest and the distribution of its vast spoils, a delegation from Banu Ghatafan approached the Prophet (s), claiming a share of the *ghanimah* (spoils of war). Their argument was that they had refrained from joining the fight against the Muslims, and thus, deserved a portion of the spoils. This claim, however, was a misrepresentation, as they had not been explicitly requested by the Muslims to remain neutral; rather, their retreat was born of self-preservation.

Some fervent young Muslims, having endured the hardships of the campaign and witnessed the immense sacrifices made by the Prophet's (s) loyal companions, were indignant. They questioned the legitimacy of Banu Ghatafan's claim, pointing out that such allocations were typically reserved for active combatants, or those who had been requested to remain neutral. Yet, the Prophet (s), in His infinite wisdom and foresight, silenced their protests. He understood that while Banu Ghatafan's claim was technically unfounded, granting them a share, even a small one, would serve as a powerful gesture of reconciliation and a means to prevent future hostilities. It would transform potential adversaries into allies, or at least neutral parties, thus strengthening the nascent Islamic state. This act exemplified *Mu'allafat-ul-Quloob*, demonstrating that the long-term spiritual and political gains of winning hearts often supersede immediate con-

siderations of strict justice in distribution.

With Khaybar completely subdued, its immense wealth and fertile lands, which had been the accumulated treasure of generations of Jewish communities, now belonged to the Muslims. The Prophet (s), however, displayed unparalleled magnanimity and foresight. Instead of expelling the Jews, He established a unique agreement based on the principle of *muzara'ah* (sharecropping). The Jews were allowed to remain on their lands and cultivate them, provided they would share half of their produce with the Muslims. This arrangement not only showcased Islamic compassion but also underscored a profound spiritual lesson: what is destined for a person from divine sustenance will reach them, regardless of their actions. However, pursuing it through illicit means, such as rebellion or deception, results in receiving it with humiliation and loss of control, rather than with dignity and full ownership. The Jews of Khaybar, who once risked half their annual produce to the Banu Ghatafan in exchange for an alliance against Islam, now received the same half of their produce, but as tenants on their former lands, after suffering utter defeat and loss of sovereignty. This served as a stark reminder of the futility of defying divine will and the consequences of ill-gotten gains.

Following the conquest of Khaybar, the Muslim army continued its advance to secure the surrounding Jewish settlements. The next target was **Wadi al-Qura**, an area adjacent to Khaybar. As the Muslims halted and began to unpack their provisions, preparing to engage in peaceful negotiations with the inhabitants as was the Prophet's (s) custom, an unforeseen attack occurred. The Jews of Wadi al-Qura launched a sudden barrage of arrows, one of which struck Mid'am, a freed slave of the Prophet (s), in the neck, resulting in his immediate martyrdom. When some companions, in their sorrow, offered congratulations to Mid'am for his martyrdom, the Prophet (s) declared with a solemn expression, "His grave is filled with fire." The companions, astonished, questioned how such a

fate could befall a martyr, a loyal servant of the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) then explained that Mid'am had secretly taken a small, seemingly insignificant piece of cloth from the spoils of war before its proper distribution. This incident powerfully reiterated the strict Islamic injunction against *ghulul* (misappropriation of spoils), emphasizing that even the smallest act of dishonesty in this regard carries severe consequences, even for a martyr. After this incident, Imam Ali (a.s.) was dispatched and swiftly brought Wadi al-Qura under Muslim control.

The army then proceeded to **Fadak**, located approximately 40 kilometers from Khaybar. Having witnessed the decisive fall of Khaybar and Wadi al-Qura, the inhabitants of Fadak, primarily Jews, wisely chose not to resist. Instead, they sent a delegation to the Prophet (s), offering their surrender without battle. This land, acquired without direct warfare, fell under the category of *Fay'*. According to **Surah al-Hashr, Verse 7**, "*Whatever Allah has given to His Messenger as spoils from the people of the towns belongs to Allah and to His Messenger and to the near relatives and the orphans and the needy and the traveler, so that it may not be a fortune circulating among the rich from among you*." This verse clearly stipulates that *Fay'* is specifically for Allah, His Messenger, and the Prophet's (s) near relatives (*dhul-qurba*), among others.

Upon the Prophet's (s) arrival at Fadak, Archangel Jibra'il (a.s.) descended with the revelation of **Surah Bani Isra'il (Al-Isra), Verse 26**: "**And give the relative his due right.**" The Prophet (s) immediately inquired of Jibra'il (a.s.), "Who is this relative whose right is to be given?" Jibra'il (a.s.) responded by pointing to Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), specifying, "Khadijah's daughter." This designation held profound significance, indicating that the grant of Fadak was a divine acknowledgement of the immense sacrifices and financial contributions made by Lady Khadijah (r.a.) in the early, challenging days of Islam. Her wealth had sustained the nascent Muslim community when it was at its most vulnerable, when the Prophet

(s) and His companions faced severe persecution and deprivation in Mecca. Now, with Islam's triumph, Allah was repaying that debt of gratitude through His Messenger.

In a momentous act, the Prophet (s) formally conveyed Fadak to Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), not merely as a verbal gift, but as a legally binding document. When Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) questioned the need for a written decree between father and daughter, the Prophet (s) replied, "**This document will serve you well in the future.**" This prophetic foresight hinted at the future disputes and challenges Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) would face concerning her rightful inheritance. The Prophet (s) even called upon Imam Ali (a.s.) and Salman al-Farsi (r.a.) as witnesses to this written grant, further solidifying its authenticity and ensuring its record for posterity.

Finally, the last Jewish settlement in the region, **Tayma**, also surrendered peacefully without a battle. With the submission of Khaybar, Wadi al-Qura, Fadak, and Tayma, the Jewish presence in the Arabian Peninsula, which had long posed a significant threat to the burgeoning Islamic state, was comprehensively neutralized, bringing security and stability to Medina.

Amidst these conquests, a pivotal incident occurred involving **Usama ibn Zayd**, the beloved son of Zayd ibn Harithah. During a scouting mission (possibly around Fadak or Khaybar), Usama's small contingent encountered a wealthy Jewish man named Mardas (also referred to as Murdas), who had fled to a mountain with all his riches. As Usama approached with his sword drawn, Mardas, seeing no escape, immediately uttered the *Kalimah*: "**Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah**" (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah). However, Usama, believing Mardas's declaration to be a mere ploy to save his life and

property, disregarded it and killed him.

Upon hearing of this, the Prophet (s) was profoundly displeased and severely reprimanded Usama, repeatedly asking, "**Did you split open his heart to know what was in it?**" The Prophet's (s) words conveyed a crucial principle: outward profession of faith must be accepted, and one cannot judge the sincerity of another's heart. Immediately after this incident, **Surah an-Nisa, Verse 94** was revealed, warning against such actions: "*O you who have believed, when you go forth* [*to fight*] *in the cause of Allah, investigate carefully and do not say to one who offers you peace, 'You are not a believer,' intending* [*thereby*] *to obtain the perishable goods of worldly life; with Allah are many acquisitions.*" Usama deeply regretted his action and vowed never to kill anyone who recited the *Kalimah* again.

However, this incident, particularly Usama's subsequent vow, highlights a crucial lesson regarding the interpretation of religious texts. While Usama's repentance was sincere, his vow later led him to a grave error during the caliphate of Imam Ali (a.s.). When Imam Ali (a.s.) engaged in battles against the *Khawarij* and other rebellious factions, Usama, adhering to his literal vow, refused to fight them, reasoning that since they uttered the *Kalimah*, he could not raise his sword against them, despite their clear rebellion against the rightful Imam. This demonstrates the profound danger of misinterpreting Hadith or Qur'anic verses without a comprehensive understanding of Islamic jurisprudence.

This incident, therefore, serves as a powerful testament to the indispensable role of qualified scholars, *mujtahidun* and *maraji'*, in guiding the *Ummah*. Mere translation of religious texts or superficial understanding can lead to catastrophic misjudgments in both worldly and spiritual matters. The complexity of deriving rulings and understanding the nuanced meanings of divine revelation necessitates deep knowledge, rigorous methodology, and divine insight, a "light of *ijtihad*" that only Allah grants to His chosen

scholars. The speaker emphasized the unparalleled stature of *Maraji'* like Ayatollah Khoei, whose profound understanding and juristic authority were vital in navigating the intricate paths of religious guidance. True adherence to Islam requires not just recitation of faith but diligent adherence to the principles elucidated by those divinely qualified to interpret them, ensuring that even in the face of profound grief or worldly distractions, one's *shari'i* duties remain clear and fulfilled, just as Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.) exemplified amidst the unimaginable tragedies of Karbala.

Chapter 116

The Return from Khaybar: Miracles, Divine Lessons, and Meccan Reactions

With the formidable stronghold of Khaybar subdued and its Jewish inhabitants either relocated or allowed to remain under the equitable terms of *muzara'ah*, the Prophet Mohammad (s) and his triumphant army began their journey back to Medina. This return was not merely a physical passage but a profound leg of the prophetic mission, imbued with divine signs and invaluable lessons for the nascent Muslim community.

Before detailing the miraculous journey, it is pertinent to briefly revisit the unique nature of the spoils acquired from Khaybar, particularly Fadak. The **Holy Qur'an**, in **Surah al-Hashr, Ayat 6-7**, distinguishes between *Ghanimah* (spoils of war acquired through active combat) and *Fay'* (wealth acquired peacefully, without the engagement of cavalry or infantry). Unlike *Ghanimah*, which is distributed among the fighting force after *khums* (one-fifth) is set aside for Allah, His Messenger, and the *Ahlul Bayt*, *Fay'* is solely the property of Allah and His Messenger, to be distributed as they deem fit for the welfare of the *Ummah* and the needs of His *dhul qurba* (close relatives). Fadak, acquired peacefully, fell under the category of

Fay'. As such, the Prophet (s), in fulfillment of divine command and as a return for her mother Khadijah's (r.a.) immense sacrifices for Islam, formally granted Fadak to his daughter, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), solidifying it in writing.

The journey back was marked by a series of divine manifestations that further illuminated the Prophet's (s) unique stature and Allah's unwavering support for His Messenger.

The first such marvel occurred when the Muslim army encountered a wide, unfordable river that blocked their path. The companions, recalling moments of despair in previous struggles, expressed concern, some even murmuring, "**Inna la mudrakun**" (**We are indeed overtaken**), echoing the sentiments of Prophet Musa's (a.s.) companions when faced with the Red Sea. Despite the absence of an immediate enemy threat, the sheer obstacle created apprehension. The Prophet (s), dismounting his horse, raised his hands in supplication, then struck the water with his whip. Instantly, the river's turbulent waters solidified, transforming into firm ground, allowing the entire army, with their animals and loaded spoils, to cross without a single foot becoming wet. This miracle transcended the parting of the sea for Prophet Musa (a.s.), as it eliminated the need for even *dry land* within the parted waters; the water itself became traversable, a testament to Allah's absolute power and the Prophet's (s) elevated status.

Further into the journey, at a place called Sahba, the Prophet (s) decided to rest. He lay down, resting his blessed head in the lap of Imam Ali (a.s.). Imam Ali (a.s.), deeply absorbed in the honor of serving the Prophet (s) and perhaps lost in contemplation, became so engrossed that he did not realize the sun was setting and the time for *Asr* prayer was passing. When the Prophet (s) awoke, he noticed Ali's (a.s.) distress over the missed prayer. With profound compassion, the Prophet (s) addressed the set-

ting sun, gesturing towards it. By Allah's command, the sun, which had already descended below the horizon, returned to its position in the sky, halting its westward movement until Ali (a.s.) could perform his *Asr* prayer in its prescribed time. This miraculous event, known as **Radd al-Shams** (The Return of the Sun), is also recounted in the tradition of Prophet Yuṣha□ ibn Nun (Joshua), but Ali's (a.s.) instance stands as a unique testament to his spiritual elevation and the Prophet's (s) miraculous power. This incident underscored that the Prophet's (s) actions, though seemingly beyond human capability, were always divinely orchestrated, often to demonstrate a lesson for the *Ummah* and to highlight the unique merits of his *Ahlul Bayt*.

Later that night, as the Muslim army camped, the Prophet (s) entrusted Bilal al-Habashi (r.a.) with the responsibility of waking everyone for the *Fajr* prayer before dawn. Bilal (r.a.), despite his vigilance, was overcome by extreme fatigue from the arduous journey and fell into a deep sleep. He woke only when the sun had fully risen, much to his dismay and the alarm of the other companions. Upon realizing that *Fajr* had been missed, the Prophet (s) calmly instructed everyone to gather their belongings and move a short distance away from that spot, as it was the place where Satan had caused them to oversleep. Once they had relocated, the Prophet (s) led them in performing the *qadha* (make-up) prayer for *Fajr*. He then taught them that any prayer missed due to genuine forgetfulness or involuntary sleep is to be performed as soon as one remembers or wakes up, and that Allah, in His boundless mercy, considers such a *qadha* as if it were performed within its original time. This was not a mistake on the Prophet's (s) part, but a divine lesson given through circumstances, designed to bring ease and understanding to the *Ummah* regarding the making up of missed prayers, contrasting with the stricter laws of previous nations.

As the Muslim army continued its journey towards Medina, news of the

Khaybar conquest spread rapidly. However, in Mecca, a Jewish merchant with significant financial interests leveraged the initial confusion to spread false rumors of a decisive Muslim defeat at Khaybar, claiming that Muslim men were killed, women and children enslaved, and their wealth plundered. The Meccan polytheists, whose hopes were pinned on the demise of Islam, erupted in jubilant celebrations. The streets of Mecca echoed with cheers and boasts, and prominent Meccan leaders openly rejoiced at what they believed was the final blow to the Prophet (s) and his followers. They even went so far as to attempt to buy the supposed plundered Muslim wealth from the Jewish merchant, unaware of the actual events.

However, this premature celebration quickly turned into profound humiliation when the verified news of Khaybar's glorious conquest reached Mecca. The polytheists' spirits were crushed, their hopes shattered, and their misjudgment exposed. The victory at Khaybar not only eliminated a major Jewish threat to Medina but also dealt a significant blow to the morale and strategic standing of Quraysh. It further isolated Mecca, paving the way for the ultimate triumph of Islam across the Arabian Peninsula.

The immense success of the Khaybar campaign, particularly due to Imam Ali's (a.s.) unparalleled valor and decisive actions, also set a tragic precedent. While the victory solidified Islam's standing, it also intensified the deep-seated envy and animosity among certain factions towards Imam Ali (a.s.) and the *Ahlul Bayt*. The overwhelming victories at Khandaq and Khaybar, where Ali (a.s.) defeated the champions of disbelief, instilled a profound sense of humiliation and a desire for revenge in the hearts of those who opposed Islam, a desire that would tragically manifest in future generations, even after the Prophet's (s) passing. The Prophet's (s) return from Khaybar, thus, marked a pivotal moment: a testament to divine power, a wellspring of wisdom for the believers, and a subtle foreshadowing of the enduring struggles that would face his pure lineage.

Chapter 117

The Minbar, The Miraculous Trunk, and The Universal Call

Upon the successful conclusion of the Khaybar campaign, the Prophet Mohammad (s) returned to Medina, bringing with him the spirit of triumph and the promise of a strengthened Muslim community. The immediate aftermath involved addressing various internal and external affairs, ensuring the consolidation of the nascent Islamic state.

Among the early matters was the handling of a small group of individuals, led by Aban ibn Sa'id (r.a.), who had been tasked with monitoring rebellious elements in the region of Najd. These individuals, though not having participated in the Khaybar battle, returned to Medina. The Prophet (s), in his profound wisdom and characteristic generosity, allocated them a share from the spoils. This distribution, however, was not from the general *ghanimah* (war booty) but specifically from his own share, which included the *khums* (one-fifth) portion rightfully belonging to him as per divine injunction. This act was a strategic move to solidify their commitment to Islam and integrate them further into the community, a practice often referred to as strengthening the hearts of new con-

verts (*Mu'allafat al-Quloob*). Some companions, notably Abu Hurayrah (r.a.), questioned this decision, given that Aban ibn Sa'id had only recently embraced Islam and had previously been involved in hostilities against the Muslims. Aban ibn Sa'id himself, upon hearing Abu Hurayrah's questioning, responded with a spirited defense, emphasizing that he did not seek worldly gains but had truly accepted Islam, underlining his sincerity and dedication. The Prophet (s) validated his approach, demonstrating that his actions were rooted in divine wisdom and an encompassing mercy, rather than mere material distribution.

As the Muslim population in Medina steadily grew and the Islamic state gained greater stability after crucial events like the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah and the conquest of Khaybar, the gatherings in Masjid an-Nabawi became increasingly large. The Prophet's (s) sermons and discourses, delivered while standing, became challenging for all congregants to hear and see clearly, especially those at the back. Recognizing this need, the companions suggested the construction of a *minbar* (pulpit) from which the Prophet (s) could address the multitude. This *minbar* was subsequently built, marking a new phase in the communal life of Medina.

A profoundly moving and widely attested miracle occurred soon after the *minbar* was constructed in 7 AH. Before the *minbar*'s erection, the Prophet (s) would lean against a date palm trunk while delivering his sermons. On the first occasion when the Prophet (s) ascended the newly built *minbar* to deliver his address, a distinct and heart-wrenching sound emanated from the old date palm trunk. It began to weep, sounding like a camel calf separated from its mother, crying out in profound grief and longing. The entire mosque bore witness to this extraordinary phenomenon. The Prophet (s), pausing his sermon, descended from the *minbar* and walked towards the weeping trunk. He embraced it, caressed it with his blessed hand, and lovingly consoled it, assuring it of a place in Paradise. The trunk, once embraced, gradually ceased its lamentations, finding solace

in the Prophet's (s) touch and promise. This miraculous event, known as the "Weeping of the Date Palm Trunk" (*Hannanatul Jidh'a*), underscored the Prophet's (s) profound connection with all creation and served as a powerful sign of his elevated status and the divine mercy he embodied. The trunk was later buried, its story immortalized as a testament to the Prophet's (s) deep bond with the natural world.

With the Islamic state firmly established and the community thriving, the Prophet's (s) mission transitioned into its final, universal phase. The *da'wah* (invitation to Islam) evolved through distinct stages: 1. **The Private Call:** Initially, the Prophet (s) was commanded to "Warn your nearest kinsmen" (**Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 26:214**), focusing on his immediate family and close relatives. 2. **The Public Call within Mecca:** This was followed by the directive to "Then proclaim what you are commanded" (**Surah Al-Hijr, 15:94**), leading to the open declaration of Islam to the people of Mecca. 3. **The Regional Call:** Subsequently, the scope expanded to "And warn thereby the Mother of Cities and those around it" (**Surah Al-An'am, 6:92**), extending the message to Mecca's environs and surrounding tribes, including the notable mission to Ta'if. 4. **The Universal Call to Humanity:** The culmination of this progression was the global mission, articulated in verses such as "Say: 'O mankind! Indeed, I am the Messenger of Allah to you all...' " (**Surah Al-A'raf, 7:158** or **Surah Ali 'Imran, 3:157**). This universal stage, which began in earnest after the peaceful consolidation post-Khaybar, marked a strategic shift towards inviting all of humanity to Islam.

To facilitate this universal *da'wah*, the Prophet (s) initiated a series of diplomatic correspondences. He dispatched letters to the kings and rulers of various empires and regions, inviting them to embrace Islam. These letters were a testament to the Prophet's (s) vision of a globally unified community under the banner of divine monotheism. To authenticate these crucial dispatches, a unique seal was created. This silver seal bore

the inscription "Muhammad Rasul Allah" (Muhammad, Messenger of Allah) arranged vertically in three lines, with "Allah" at the top, "Rasul" in the middle, and "Muhammad" at the bottom, signifying the divine origin of the message and the Prophet's (s) role as its conveyor.

One of the most notable of these letters was addressed to Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor. When Heraclius received the Prophet's (s) invitation, he reportedly recognized the truth of the message and the prophethood of Mohammad (s). However, his worldly attachments, fear of losing his kingdom, and the potential opposition from his courtiers and people prevented him from openly embracing Islam. This exemplified the challenges faced in propagating the universal message where temporal power and political considerations often overshadowed spiritual conviction.

The Prophet (s) gathered his companions and profoundly emphasized their collective responsibility in conveying the message of Islam to all corners of the world, especially to those who had not yet received the divine guidance. He impressed upon them that having received Allah's guidance came with the sacred duty to share it with others, asserting that neglecting this duty was akin to denying Allah's boundless mercy. This underscored the active and missionary nature of Islam, encouraging Muslims to be beacons of guidance and knowledge to humanity.

Chapter 118

The Universal Call to Kings: The Encounter with Heraclius and Rome

With Medina now a secure and established Islamic state, the message of Islam was poised for a new, universal phase. The Prophet Muhammad (s), the Seal of the Prophets, was not merely a messenger for the Arabs but for all humanity, destined to convey Allah's final message to every corner of the earth. This universal mission necessitated a global outreach, a strategic endeavor that began with the dispatch of diplomatic letters to the kings and rulers of the world. Historical accounts record 185 such documents from the Prophet's (s) blessed hand, 29 of which were specifically addressed to heads of state beyond the Arabian Peninsula, some even preserved to this day in museums, such as the one in Istanbul.

The responses to these divine invitations varied, falling generally into three distinct categories. Firstly, there was outright rejection, often fueled by arrogance and pride, exemplified by the Persian Emperor. Secondly, there was a cautious, politically motivated acknowledgment of the truth, yet a reluctance to embrace Islam due to worldly interests and fear of losing power, as was the case with the Roman Emperor. Lastly, there was

immediate and humble acceptance, driven by an unreserved recognition of the truth, even at the cost of personal safety, as seen with the King of Abyssinia, Najashi.

Among these pivotal diplomatic endeavors, the letter to Heraclius, the Emperor of the Byzantine Roman Empire, stands out. To fully appreciate this encounter, it is essential to understand the geopolitical landscape of the time. Just a few years prior to the Prophet's (s) *da'wah*, the world was dominated by two superpowers: the Sassanid Persian Empire and the Byzantine Roman Empire. A fierce war had raged between them, with Persia initially defeating Rome, a defeat that deeply saddened the Muslims in Mecca because, despite their polytheism, the Romans were Christians—People of the Book who adhered to a form of monotheism, unlike the fire-worshipping Persians. The Meccan polytheists seized this opportunity to taunt the Muslims, saying, "Just as the monotheists (Romans) were defeated by the polytheists (Persians), so too shall we defeat you." In response, **Surah Ar-Rum** was revealed, prophesying Rome's future victory: "**The Romans have been defeated in the nearest land. But they, after their defeat, will overcome within a few years. To Allah belongs the command before and after. And on that day the believers will rejoice**" (**30:2-4**). Miraculously, Rome's victory over Persia coincided with the Muslims' triumph in the Battle of Badr, bringing joy to the believers on two fronts.

Heraclius, a sagacious and insightful ruler, was known for his keen interest in astronomical predictions. He was disturbed by astrological signs indicating the emergence of a new prophet from the 'circumcised nation.' Initially, he mistakenly thought this referred to the Jews, who were the only prominent group known for circumcision at the time. However, this query was resolved by the arrival of the Prophet's (s) special envoy, Dihya al-Kalbi (r.a.), who carried the letter of invitation to Islam. Dihya al-Kalbi was a companion of remarkable beauty, so much so that Jibra'il

(a.s.) would often assume his form when appearing to the Prophet (s) in human guise.

Upon receiving the letter, Heraclius, then residing in Homs after his victory celebrations, ordered a search for any Arabs present in his domain. By divine coincidence, Abu Sufyan, then a leading figure of Quraysh and still an adversary of Islam, was in Syria leading a large Meccan trade caravan. He and his companions were brought before Heraclius. The Emperor, through an interpreter, began to question Abu Sufyan extensively about the Prophet (s), instructing Abu Sufyan's companions to stand behind him and signal if he lied.

Heraclius's questions were incisive: "What is his lineage among you?" Abu Sufyan admitted, "He is of noble lineage." Heraclius noted that prophets always arise from noble families. "Has anyone among you ever claimed prophethood before him?" "No," replied Abu Sufyan. Heraclius deduced that this indicated an authentic claim, not a copycat. "Was there ever a king among his ancestors?" "No." Heraclius reasoned that this ruled out a desire for inherited kingship. "Are his followers strong or weak?" "They are generally the weak and the poor," Abu Sufyan conceded, adding that their numbers were increasing daily. Heraclius observed that the early followers of prophets are often the vulnerable, and truth's adherents consistently grow. "Does anyone apostatize after accepting his faith?" "No." This, Heraclius stated, was a sign of true faith, as its sweetness never leaves the heart once tasted. "Did you ever accuse him of lying before he claimed prophethood?" Abu Sufyan, despite his enmity, had to admit, "No, he has always been truthful." Heraclius remarked that one who never lies to people would certainly not lie about Allah. "Does he ever break promises?" Abu Sufyan hesitated, mentioning the recent Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, implying its unfairness, but effectively admitting the Prophet (s) had not broken his word. Heraclius recognized that a true prophet does not renege on covenants. "What does he enjoin

upon you?" Abu Sufyan replied, "He bids us worship Allah alone, associate no partners with Him, offer prayers, give charity, maintain kinship, speak truth, and live chastely." Heraclius instantly recognized this as the essence of true religion, the very message of Prophet Isa (a.s.) and all prophets.

Heraclius then shared his profound insights with his court: "I knew a prophet was to appear, but I did not think he would be from Arabia. If what this man (Muhammad) says is true, then he will certainly conquer the very ground I stand upon. If I could, I would go to him, wash his feet, and drink that water."

Dihya al-Kalbi (r.a.) then proceeded to Rome (modern-day Vatican City) to deliver the message to the Christian religious leader, the Pope. This venerable figure, clad in black robes symbolizing his spiritual devotion, received the Prophet's (s) letter. Upon reading it, his eyes welled with tears, and he kissed the blessed missive. He immediately changed his black robes to white, signifying purity and new conviction. He gathered the Christian scholars and clergy, announcing, "O people! The last Prophet has appeared, the one whom Isa (a.s.) foretold, and for whom we have been waiting! I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger!" This bold declaration, however, was met with furious rejection from the assembled clergy, who saw it as an attack on their faith and authority. Overwhelmed by the mob, the righteous Pope was martyred for his immediate acceptance of Islam.

Upon Dihya al-Kalbi's return to Homs, he related the Pope's martyrdom to Heraclius. The Emperor, witnessing this tragic outcome, understood the immense opposition he would face if he openly embraced Islam. He told the Prophet's (s) envoy, "Tell your Prophet that I believe in him, but my people would not spare me, just as they did not spare the Pope. If I were to accept Islam, I would lose my kingdom. If the Prophet (s) de-

sires partnership in my kingdom, I am willing to grant it." Heraclius, a man of astute political strategy, recognized the truth of Islam but chose worldly power over open faith, offering a compromise that implicitly acknowledged the Prophet's (s) authority.

This epoch-making outreach, with its varied outcomes, highlighted the Prophet's (s) universal mission and set the stage for the unfolding narrative of Islam's spread across the globe. The next chapter will delve into the response of the arrogant Persian Emperor and the consequences of his rejection.

Chapter 119

The Divine Reckoning of Khusraw Parviz

As the Prophet Mohammad (s) continued to expand Islam's universal message, the 7th year after the *Hijrah* witnessed further significant developments in his diplomatic efforts. Having previously sent an invitation to Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor, the Prophet (s) now turned his attention towards the mighty Persian Empire, then under the rule of Khusraw Parviz, a powerful yet deeply arrogant sovereign.

For this crucial mission, the Prophet (s) entrusted the letter to **Abdullah ibn Hudhafah al-Sahmi** (r.a.), a venerable Companion known for his courage and wisdom. His selection for such a formidable task underscored his esteemed position in the Prophet's (s) eyes. Khusraw Parviz, the Persian monarch, had reigned for nearly five decades, building an empire that rivaled the Byzantines in might and influence. His rule, marked by both strategic brilliance and profound pride, had instilled a deep sense of obedience in his subjects. He embodied the pinnacle of worldly power and an accompanying disdain for any perceived challenge to his authority.

Upon receiving the Prophet's (s) letter, which commenced with the sacred phrase **"Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem"** (In the Name of Allah, the

Most Gracious, the Most Merciful) and the Prophet's (s) name preceding his own, Khusraw Parviz erupted in fury. His translator read the words aloud: "From Mohammad, the Messenger of Allah, to Khusraw, the great king of Persia. Peace be upon him who follows guidance and believes in Allah and His Messenger, and bears witness that there is no god but Allah, the One, without partner, and that Mohammad is His servant and His Messenger. I invite you to Islam. Accept Islam and you will be safe. If you refuse, then the sin of all the Persians, Magians, and Zoroastrians will be on your shoulders."

The arrogant emperor, unable to tolerate what he perceived as an audacious challenge from a ruler whom he considered a mere chieftain of Mecca, snatched the letter from his translator's hands and tore it to shreds. He then immediately dispatched a royal decree to **Bazan**, his governor in Yemen, commanding him to send two of his strongest men to Medina to arrest this "young man" who dared to claim prophethood and bring him to Persia. Khusraw Parviz's pride had blinded him to the truth, leading him to disregard the divine message with contempt.

When news of Khusraw Parviz's insolence reached Medina, the Prophet Mohammad (s) raised his blessed hands and invoked a powerful prayer against the Persian monarch: **"May Allah tear his kingdom into pieces, just as he tore my letter!"** This pronouncement was not merely a prayer but a divine prophecy, foreshadowing the inevitable downfall of the proud empire. The Prophet (s) also displayed his remarkable spiritual insight when Abdullah ibn Hudhafah (r.a.) recounted that Khusraw Parviz, in his contempt, had presented him with a handful of dirt as a token of disdain. The Prophet (s), with profound wisdom, interpreted this as a positive omen, remarking, **"This is a good omen; their land shall be ours!"** This emphasized the concept of *fa'l-e-neek* (a good omen), transforming an act of insult into a sign of future triumph.

Meanwhile, Bazan, the governor of Yemen, having received Khusraw's imperial order, dispatched two strong and cunning men to Medina. These envoys arrived dressed in lavish, regal attire, adorned with gold, and with shaven beards—a custom contrary to the Prophet's (s) teachings. When they presented themselves before the Prophet (s), he initially turned his face away, disapproving of their appearance. He then inquired about their shaven beards, to which they responded that their king had commanded it. The Prophet (s) calmly asserted that his Lord had commanded him to keep his beard and shave his mustache. The envoys then relayed Khusraw's demand for the Prophet's (s) arrest.

The Prophet (s), unperturbed by their threats, instructed them to return the following day. When they returned, eager to execute their king's command, the Prophet (s) delivered an astounding revelation. With a serene countenance, he informed them: "My Lord has informed me that your king, Khusraw Parviz, has been killed by his own son, Shiruyah, tonight, in the seventh hour of the night."

The envoys were utterly bewildered. They could not fathom such a precise prophecy from a man whom their king sought to arrest. They immediately returned to Yemen and relayed the Prophet's (s) words to Governor Bazan. Bazan, deeply impressed by the Prophet's (s) foresight, declared that if the prophecy proved true, he would bear witness to his prophethood. He immediately dispatched a messenger to Persia to verify the news. Soon after, a letter from Shiruyah, the new Persian king, arrived, confirming the assassination of Khusraw Parviz on the exact night and hour the Prophet (s) had specified. Shiruyah's letter also stated his reason for the regicide was his father's tyranny and corruption.

Upon receiving this irrefutable confirmation, Governor Bazan, along with his entire court and the two envoys who had visited Medina, immediately embraced Islam. This profound event marked the peaceful acceptance

of Islam in Yemen, without a single battle, a testament to the Prophet's (s) divine connection and the compelling power of his prophecy. This episode served as a stark reminder that worldly power and arrogance, no matter how formidable, ultimately submit to the divine will.

The Prophet's (s) steadfastness and patience in the face of such blatant hostility, coupled with his accurate prophecy, powerfully demonstrated the authenticity of his message and the unparalleled strength of faith. The conversion of Bazan and the people of Yemen further consolidated the burgeoning Islamic state, adding another vital region to the sphere of Muslim influence and strengthening the foundation for future *da'wah*.

In a poignant and deeply symbolic moment many years later, reflecting on the essence of *huquq an-nas* (rights of people) and profound respect for land, Imam Hussain (a.s.) would purchase the land of Karbala before his martyrdom. He stipulated two conditions for this acquisition: first, that the tribe of Banu Asad would always offer hospitality and food to the pilgrims visiting his grave for one day and night; and second, that after the impending tragedy, they would ensure the burial of the martyrs, emphasizing that their bodies should not remain unburied. This foresight, even in the face of ultimate sacrifice, mirrored the Prophet's (s) own emphasis on justice, human dignity, and the profound rights inherent in all creation.

Chapter 120

Echoes of Prophethood: The Letters to Muqawqis and Najashi

The seventh year after *Hijrah* marked a significant expansion in the Prophet Muhammad's (s) universal call to Islam. While the letters of invitation began to be dispatched in the sixth year after *Hijrah*, the responses from distant rulers typically arrived in the seventh year, accounting for the extended travel time required for messengers to reach far-flung empires and return. Over thirty such letters bear the Prophet's (s) authentic seal, conveying his divine message. While numerous other directives and agreements were also issued under his command, these thirty letters specifically represent the Prophet's (s) direct, personal invitations to leaders of nations. Due to the nature of this oral narration, we focus on six of these pivotal correspondences. Having previously detailed the Prophet's (s) letters to Heraclius, the Byzantine Roman Emperor, and Khusraw Parviz, the Emperor of Persia, our attention now turns to the rulers of Egypt and Abyssinia.

The Prophet Muhammad (s) extended his *da'wah* to *Muqawqis*, the Coptic ruler of Egypt. For this crucial mission, he chose one of his insight-

ful and eloquent companions, Sayyiduna Hatib ibn Abi Balta'ah (r.a.). *Muqawqis*, though a Christian and nominally subordinate to the Roman Emperor, governed Egypt with considerable autonomy, regularly sending tribute to Rome. The very letter sent to *Muqawqis* stands as a historical marvel, its original manuscript remarkably preserved in Istanbul's Topkapi Palace Museum to this day. This preservation not only attests to its authenticity but also serves as a profound testament to the meticulous accuracy with which the sayings and traditions (*ahadith*) of the Prophet (s) were transmitted and recorded across generations, for the content of the physical letter matches word-for-word the accounts preserved in the *hadith* literature.

The Prophet's (s) letter to *Muqawqis* was similar in content to that sent to Heraclius. It began with the Prophet's (s) name, followed by the addressee, and offered salutations to those who follow true guidance. It then unequivocally invited *Muqawqis* to embrace Islam, promising him safety and a dual reward from Allah—one for his own acceptance, and another for the conversion of his people who would follow his lead. The letter warned that should he refuse, the sin of his entire nation's disbelief would fall upon him. Crucially, it concluded with a divine injunction from the **Holy Qur'an, Surah Aal-Imran, Verse 64**: "**O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you — that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah.**" It further declared, "**But if they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'**"

Upon Sayyiduna Hatib's (r.a.) arrival in Alexandria, then the capital of Egypt, *Muqawqis* granted him a respectful audience. Aware of the unfolding events in Medina, *Muqawqis* was keen to engage with the Prophet's (s) envoy. He initiated a debate, questioning Sayyiduna Hatib (r.a.) with a challenging query: "If Muhammad (s) is truly a prophet of Allah, why did he not pray against his own people, the Quraysh, who expelled him

from Mecca, the very place of his childhood and youth?" Sayyiduna Hatib (r.a.), with inspired wisdom, countered immediately: "Do you acknowledge Prophet Isa (a.s.) as a true Messenger of Allah?" *Muqawqis* affirmed this without hesitation. Sayyiduna Hatib (r.a.) then pressed: "Then why did Prophet Isa (a.s.) not pray against the Children of Israel when they sought to crucify him, if he was indeed a true prophet?" This eloquent and logical riposte, grounded in *Muqawqis's* own faith, left the Coptic ruler speechless. Sayyiduna Hatib (r.a.) further emphasized the fate of Pharaoh, reminding *Muqawqis* of the consequences of rejecting truth.

Muqawqis acknowledged Sayyiduna Hatib's (r.a.) profound points, admitting that Pharaoh lacked true faith, while he himself adhered to a religion acknowledging God and the prophets. He stated that if a better faith were presented, he would consider it, but he was not like Pharaoh. Despite being intellectually convinced of the Prophet's (s) truthfulness, *Muqawqis* opted for a non-committal, ambiguous response, prioritizing his kingdom and pride over immediate conversion. He sent a letter to the Prophet (s), expressing his knowledge of a coming prophet and his consideration of the message, requesting time. He wrote his name after that of the Prophet (s), showing deference.

In a gesture of diplomacy, *Muqawqis* dispatched valuable gifts to the Prophet (s) with Sayyiduna Hatib (r.a.). These included a thousand gold dinars, a white mule named Duldul (which later became the mount of Imam Ali (a.s.), and subsequently Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Hussain (a.s.), symbolizing its presence until Karbala), and two *jariya* (handmaidens or girls) of noble Coptic lineage, named Sayyidah Mariya and Shireen. Sayyidah Mariya al-Qibtiyyah (r.a.) held a special place in the Prophet's (s) household; she was the only one of his wives or concubines, apart from Sayyidah Khadijah al-Tahira (r.a.), to bear him a child—a son named Ibrahim, whose birth will be detailed in the events of 8 AH. So revered

was Sayyidah Mariya (r.a.) that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.), centuries later, specifically instructed a companion visiting Medina to pray in her house, affirming its sanctity and significance as a place where his grandfather (the Prophet (s)) often prayed. The Prophet (s) himself, upon receiving *Muqawqis's* reply and gifts, remarked that *Muqawqis* had understood the truth of Islam but allowed the arrogance of his kingship to prevent his acceptance. Indeed, *Muqawqis* never embraced Islam and would eventually die in a state of disbelief.

Next, the Prophet Muhammad (s) directed his call to Najashi, the benevolent King of Abyssinia (*Habshah*). Like *Muqawqis*, Najashi was a Christian monarch, largely autonomous but also a tributary to Rome. However, Najashi's interaction with Islam had a much deeper history, going back to the two waves of *Hijrah* from Mecca years earlier, when he had provided refuge and protection to the persecuted Muslims.

The Prophet's (s) letter to Najashi was notably distinct from those sent to other rulers. It addressed Najashi by name in the salutation, a unique mark of respect that many scholars interpret as an indication that Najashi might have already secretly embraced Islam or was very close to doing so, having already protected the early Muslims. The letter did not contain the usual warning of double sin for rejecting the message, further suggesting a positive disposition. The Prophet (s) began by praising Allah, affirming His Oneness, and testifying to the prophethood of Isa (a.s.) as the Spirit of Allah, born to the pure Sayyidah Maryam (r.a.). He then invited Najashi to believe in the final prophethood and accept Islam, emphasizing the swift benefits of acceptance.

Simultaneously, the Prophet (s) sent another envoy, Amr ibn Umayyah al-Damri (r.a.), with a special message for Najashi: a marriage proposal to **Umm Habibah** (r.a.), the daughter of Abu Sufyan. Umm Habibah (r.a.) was among the early Muslims who had migrated to Abyssinia with her

husband, Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh, who sadly apostatized and died a Christian. She was left stranded and distressed in a foreign land. Najashi, acting as the Prophet's (s) representative, formally conducted the marriage ceremony and paid the *mahr* (dower) on the Prophet's (s) behalf.

Upon receiving the Prophet's (s) letter and hearing Sayyiduna Ja'far ibn Abi Talib (r.a.) (who was still in Abyssinia since the *Hijrah*), Najashi publicly declared his full acceptance of Islam in the presence of his court and the Muslim emigrants. This open declaration astonished his advisors and some of his Christian clergy. Following his conversion, Najashi dispatched a delegation of thirty learned Christian scholars and priests to Medina to meet the Prophet (s). These scholars were profoundly moved when the Prophet (s) recited verses from **Surah Al-Ma'idah (5), particularly verses 82-84**, which speak of the closeness of Christians to believers and the prophethood of Isa (a.s.) and Sayyidah Maryam (r.a.). Overwhelmed, they wept and immediately embraced Islam.

The impact of Najashi's conversion was far-reaching. He openly declared Abyssinia's independence from Roman influence and refused to pay further tribute, solidifying the nascent Islamic state's diplomatic standing and asserting its spiritual sovereignty. When news of Najashi's conversion reached Heraclius, the Roman Emperor, he recognized the gravity of the shift, further confirming the pervasive influence of Islam's message. Najashi remained a steadfast Muslim until his passing. When the Prophet (s) received news of his death, he performed *Salat al-Gha'ib* (funeral prayer for an absent person) for Najashi, a rare and profound gesture signifying Najashi's high status in Islam, despite his physical distance from Medina.

The Prophet (s) also sent a letter to Hawzah ibn Ali, the ruler of Yamamah, which will be detailed in a subsequent chapter. These diplomatic missions collectively underscored the Prophet's (s) role as a uni-

versal Messenger, inviting all humanity to the divine truth, irrespective of their power or previous beliefs, and eliciting diverse responses that shaped the burgeoning Islamic world.

Chapter 121

The Far-Reaching Invitations: Divine Unions and Profound Trials of Faith

The year 7 AH, following the strategic success of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah and the conquest of Khaybar, marked a pivotal period in the Prophet Muhammad's (s) universal call to Islam. Having secured Medina's borders from major threats, the time had come to extend the divine message beyond the Arabian Peninsula, fulfilling the promise of Islam's global reach. As previously narrated, in the month of Dhul Hijjah, 6 AH, the Prophet (s) dispatched six envoys bearing letters to the prominent rulers of the world. While four of these crucial missions, including those to Heraclius, Khusraw Parviz, *Muqawqis*, and Najashi, have been detailed, the journeys of the remaining two messengers and their significant interactions complete this historic phase of *da'wah*.

The fifth letter among those sent was addressed to **Harith ibn Abi Shamir al-Ghassani**, the king of the Ghassani tribe, who held a significant position as a governor under the Roman Emperor, Heraclius, on the Syrian border. The Prophet (s) entrusted this letter to **Shuja' ibn Wahb al-Asadi** (r.a.). Upon Shuja's (r.a.) arrival in Ghassani territory, he found King

Harith deeply engrossed in preparations for Heraclius's visit to Jerusalem. Despite the king's preoccupation, Shuja' (r.a.) managed to present the Prophet's (s) concise but profound letter, which began with the salutation: "**Peace be upon him who follows the guidance, believes in Allah, and testifies to His Oneness.**" The letter further invited Harith to embrace Islam, assuring him that if he did so, his dominion would remain with him. Harith, initially taken aback by this unexpected invitation from someone he perceived as a minor ruler, reacted with disdain and even considered attacking Medina. He sought Heraclius's permission for this aggressive act. However, Heraclius, having recently acknowledged the signs of prophethood through his questioning of Abu Sufyan, sternly forbade Harith from interfering with the Prophet's (s) messenger and commanded him to respond with respect. Consequently, Harith returned a non-committal reply and permitted Shuja' (r.a.) to depart safely. Upon Shuja's (r.a.) return, the Prophet (s) prophesied that Harith's kingdom would not last even a year, a prediction that astonishingly came to pass when Harith was slain shortly thereafter.

The sixth and final letter, sent to **Hawdhah ibn Ali al-Hanafi**, the ruler of Yamamah, situated between modern-day Riyadh and Bahrain, carried a unique significance as Yamamah was a prominent Christian stronghold. For this mission, the Prophet (s) selected **Sulayt ibn Amr** (r.a.), a companion well-versed in Christian theology and customs from his long stay in Abyssinia. The letter to Hawdhah was even more concise, stating: "**Peace be upon him who follows the guidance... I invite you to believe in Allah and His Messenger. Know that my religion will soon reach every place on earth where human or animal feet can tread.**" It further assured Hawdhah that his current authority would be preserved upon his acceptance of Islam. Hawdhah, influenced by a Christian scholar in his court who confirmed the Prophet's (s) authenticity based on the Gospel, seemed inclined to accept Islam. However, he made his conversion con-

ditional, demanding that the Prophet (s) either appoint him as his successor or grant him control over Yamamah. The Prophet (s), upon receiving this conditional proposal, unequivocally rejected it. He declared that he would not give Hawdhah even a date peel for such a conditional acceptance of Islam. This incident powerfully underscored a fundamental principle: Islam demands unconditional submission to Allah and His Messenger. Faith cannot be bargained or traded for worldly gain or position. The Prophet (s) then prophesied Hawdhah's demise and the emergence of a false prophet in his territory, a prophecy that also came true with the rise of **Musaylamah al-Kadhdhab** in Yamamah after Hawdhah's death.

Concurrent with these diplomatic endeavors, a profound marital union unfolded, orchestrated by divine will. The Prophet (s) sent a proposal to **Umm Habibah (Ramlah bint Abi Sufyan)** (r.a.), who was then residing in Abyssinia. Umm Habibah (r.a.) was among the earliest emigrants to Abyssinia, seeking refuge from Qurayshi persecution. Tragically, while there, her husband, Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh, apostatized and embraced Christianity, leaving Umm Habibah (r.a.) in a precarious position as a Muslim woman. Recognizing her plight and her steadfast faith, the Prophet (s) entrusted Najashi, the King of Abyssinia, with the unique role of his representative (*wakeel*) for this marriage.

Najashi, already deeply reverent towards the Prophet (s) and leaning towards Islam, received the proposal with immense honor. He immediately dispatched a *jariya* named Abrahah to convey the joyous news to Umm Habibah (r.a.). Overwhelmed with happiness, Umm Habibah (r.a.) gifted all her jewelry to Abrahah, who, in turn, refused the material gifts, requesting instead that Umm Habibah (r.a.) convey her *salam* to the Prophet (s) when she returned to Medina. Najashi then formally solemnized the marriage on the Prophet's (s) behalf, setting the *mahr* at 400 dinars, which he paid from his own treasury. The significance of *mahr*

in Islam is paramount; it is a fundamental right of the wife, not a mere formality, and remains obligatory even if unmentioned, to be paid before all other claims upon a husband's demise. Najashi also hosted a grand *walimah* (marriage feast), symbolizing the blessed nature of the union.

Later, as a group of Muslims, including Ja'far ibn Abi Talib (r.a.) and Umm Habibah (r.a.), returned from Abyssinia to Medina (which coincided with the Prophet's (s) return from Khaybar), Umm Habibah (r.a.) faithfully delivered Abrahah's *salam* to the Prophet (s), who graciously returned her greetings. This marriage marked a significant triumph for Umm Habibah (r.a.), who had endured immense trials, transitioning from destitution and abandonment to becoming a revered **Mother of the Believers**. Indeed, the year 7 AH saw three notable marriages for the Prophet (s) who were to reside in his blessed household: Umm Habibah (r.a.) early in the year, Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.a.) after Khaybar, and Sayyidah Maymunah (r.a.) during the Compensatory *Umrah* (*Umrat al-Qada*).

These narratives, particularly the varied responses to the Prophet's (s) call and the personal trials of individuals like Umm Habibah (r.a.), serve as profound lessons on the nature of faith. Islam does not promise a life free from hardship or worldly tribulations; rather, it demands unconditional submission and perseverance in the face of adversity. This profound truth finds its most poignant manifestation in the lives of the **Ahlul Bayt**, who endured the most immense trials and sufferings, yet never uttered a word of complaint to their Lord.

Following the Prophet's (s) passing, the burden of grief and injustice weighed heavily upon his beloved daughter, **Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra** (a.s.). Her sorrow was so profound that it took a severe toll on her physical health, transforming her from a vibrant young woman into one weakened by incessant mourning. Day after day, Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.) would journey to the **Jannatul Baqi'** cemetery, seeking solace beneath a tree as

she wept for her father, the Prophet (s). However, in a cruel act of heartlessness, even this small comfort was denied to her when the tree was cut down. Her physical state deteriorated rapidly; at the tender age of eighteen, she became so frail that she could no longer stand for her prayers.

On her final day, displaying unparalleled selflessness even in extreme weakness, Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.) prepared meals and washed clothes for her beloved children, Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.), ensuring their needs were met before her departure from this world. As the end drew near, she had a vision of her blessed father, the Prophet (s), accompanied by her mother, Sayyidah Khadijah (a.s.). They conveyed to her that her trials were over, and they had come to take her with them.

Later, as Imam Ali (a.s.) returned to the house, he found Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.) weakened and preparing for her last moments. Meanwhile, Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) were at their grandfather's grave when the Prophet's (s) voice, though unseen, urged them to return home swiftly to bid farewell to their mother. Rushing back, they entered their mother's chamber. Hasan (a.s.) sat by her feet, and Husayn (a.s.) by her head. Both brothers, with hearts heavy with anguish, extended their *salam* to her. When no reply came, Husayn (a.s.) cried out in desperation, lamenting the day when even his *salam* to his mother went unanswered. At that moment, Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.) stirred, her weakening hands reaching out to embrace Husayn (a.s.), holding him close to her chest.

This heart-wrenching scene is a testament to the fact that faith does not exempt one from suffering. The **Ahlul Bayt**, despite their unparalleled piety and proximity to Allah, endured the most profound sorrows. Their contentment with Allah's decree, their active choice to bear hardship for His pleasure, even when worldly means could alleviate it, such as Fiddah, the *jariya* in Sayyidah Fatimah's (a.s.) household, offering herself to be sold to relieve their hunger, and Imam Ali (a.s.) refusing, stating that

their *faqah* (hunger) was a choice and the earth beneath them was filled with gold, exemplifies a level of submission beyond mere patience. Their lives embody the principle that true faith lies in absolute submission to divine will, understanding that trials are part of the journey and blessings are often hidden within adversity, not contingent upon worldly ease.

Chapter 122

Wisdom, Compassion, and Divine Protection: The Conversion of Thumamah and the Attack of Magic

As the seventh year of the *Hijrah* drew to a close, the blessed life of Prophet Mohammad (s) neared its sixtieth year. The era of defensive battles, where enemies besieged Medina, was largely over. Islam was now expanding rapidly, with the message of truth reaching far and wide through every possible means. It was a pivotal moment in Islamic history when future adversaries were being defeated even before they could launch their full assaults. The strategy of defense had evolved: no longer was it merely about resisting an immediate attack, but also about preemptively weakening a known, impending threat. This proactive approach characterized many of the later campaigns during the Prophet's (s) lifetime.

The universal call of Islam, or *da'wah*, was intensifying, grounded in the fundamental Islamic principle that every Muslim is a *muballigh* (a conveyor of the message). This responsibility falls upon every believer to disseminate Islam's teachings. Unlike other religions where the masses

~~are expected to make sacrifices while religious leaders enjoy privileges,~~ Islam binds its Prophet (s) to the same, if not greater, obligations. If a Muslim is enjoined to pray, the Prophet (s) himself would strive to be the foremost in prayer. If a month of fasting is prescribed, the Prophet (s) would fast more days than any other. Every divine command was first applied with utmost rigor to his own blessed self, before being conveyed to humanity. The Prophet (s) was the ultimate *muballigh*, reaching out to all known parts of the world.

The Qur'an outlines three principal methods for conveying the divine message, as revealed in **Surah An-Nahl, Verse 125**: **"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel, and argue with them in a way that is best."** This verse underscores the importance of *hikmah* (wisdom and sagacity), *maw'idhah hasanah* (good and beautiful admonition), and *jidal billati hiya ahsan* (argumentation in the best manner). The Prophet's (s) diplomatic letters to various rulers exemplify *maw'idhah hasanah*, delivering the message clearly: "Embrace Islam and be safe; embrace Islam and receive a double reward. If you do not, you will face a double punishment." For those requiring reasoned debate, *jidal* was employed. Yet, for others, *hikmah* was paramount, transforming hearts not through direct admonition or argument, but through profound wisdom and conduct.

A prime example of such *hikmah* unfolded in the very beginning of 7 AH, illustrating how some individuals, immune to sermons or debates, could only be swayed by the profound wisdom embodied by the Prophet (s) and the Islamic society. This is epitomized by the conversion of **Thumamah ibn Uthal**, the chieftain of the Banu Hanifah tribe in Najd. Najd was a strategically vital region, serving as the primary source of grain and wheat for Mecca. Thumamah was a staunch enemy of Islam, openly commanding his tribesmen to kill any Muslim they encountered without question or negotiation. His tribe's territory also lay on the path for

those traveling between Medina and the eastern regions like Bahrain and Kuwait. His persistent enmity posed a significant threat to the burgeoning Islamic state.

Recognizing this danger, the Prophet (s) offered a reward for anyone who could capture Thumamah. Although the task was perilous given the Banu Hanifah's strength, the companion Mohammad ibn Maslamah (r.a.) seized an opportune moment. Thumamah, customary before Islam, would undertake an annual *Umrah* to Mecca. Mohammad ibn Maslamah (r.a.) captured Thumamah while he was en route to Mecca for this purpose, presumably less guarded due to his intent for pilgrimage.

Thumamah was brought to Medina, his hands bound behind his back. Upon entering the city, he was immediately recognized by the Medinans, many of whom harbored deep resentment towards him and his tribe due to past grievances and the loss of family members. A crowd gathered, anxious and fearful of his potential escape, insisting he be bound securely. When the Prophet (s) emerged from his chambers and saw Thumamah bound tightly, he immediately instructed: "Loosen his bonds! An individual, even in captivity, has rights. This method of binding is not appropriate." Despite the companions' apprehension, fearing his escape, the Prophet (s) insisted that his hands be brought forward and tied loosely to a date palm trunk outside Masjid an-Nabawi. "Let him go if he wishes," the Prophet (s) declared, "I know what you do not."

The Prophet (s) then approached Thumamah, who was still tied to the date palm, and asked, "Thumamah, what is your opinion of me?" Thumamah, defiant, replied, "O Muhammad, at this moment, there is no face more hateful to me than yours, no religion more hateful than yours, and no city more hateful than yours!" The Prophet (s) simply smiled and left him. The entire day, Thumamah remained tied to the tree. He was provided with food and drink. The next day, the Prophet (s) again asked

him, "What is your opinion of me now?" Thumamah repeated his earlier statements. On the third day, the same exchange occurred. After his third defiant reply, the Prophet (s) told his companions, "Untie his bonds and let him go wherever he wishes." The companions were astonished, unable to comprehend why such a dangerous enemy was being released. The Prophet (s) reiterated, "I know what you do not."

Thumamah was released. He walked away, not in chains, but free to observe. The Prophet (s) had offered him the freedom to reflect on the Islamic society he had witnessed. Thumamah saw the Muslims' devotion, their prayers, their mutual rights, their profound love for their Prophet (s), and the Prophet's (s) unparalleled *akhlaq* (morals). He understood that Islam was not about power or earthly dominion, but truth.

Upon leaving Medina, Thumamah returned to his tribe. His first act was to clear all his financial debts and obligations, declaring, "If any of you have any right, money, or debt upon me, claim it now, lest someone accuse me of embracing Islam to evade payments." After rectifying all his affairs, he returned to Medina. Before entering the city, he bathed, donned new clothes, and proceeded to Masjid an-Nabawi. The Muslims, still reeling from the shock of his release, were now even more astonished to see their former enemy re-enter their city.

Thumamah approached the Prophet (s), who was in the Masjid, and declared, "O Muhammad, son of Abdullah! Until yesterday, there was no face more hateful to me than yours, no religion more hateful than yours, and no city more hateful than yours. But today, by Allah, there is no face more beloved to me than yours, no religion more beloved than yours, and no city more beloved than yours!" He then recited the *Shahadah* (declaration of faith) and embraced Islam.

He sought the Prophet's (s) permission to complete his *Umrah*, which had been interrupted by his capture, and to inform the Quraysh in Mecca

of his conversion. The Prophet (s) granted his request. Thumamah proceeded to Mecca and, after completing his *Umrah*, made a thunderous declaration to the Quraysh chieftains: "From this day forth, by Allah, not a single grain of wheat or barley will reach you from Najd until you believe in Allah and His Messenger!" True to his word, Thumamah cut off Mecca's grain supply. The Quraysh, proud and arrogant, soon faced severe famine. In desperation, they sent a letter to the Prophet (s), appealing to him as their kinsman, asking him to intervene and lift the blockade. The Prophet (s) sent a special message to Thumamah, instructing him not to starve the Meccans. Only then did Thumamah resume the grain supply. This was the triumph of *hikmah*, demonstrating how hearts could be transformed through the Prophet's (s) wisdom and compassion.

Another significant event in 7 AH, illustrating the persistent malevolence of Islam's enemies, was the attempt to cast a spell of magic (*sihr*) upon the Prophet (s). After their repeated failures to halt the spread of Islam through warfare (like Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, and Khaybar) and through psychological warfare, the disbelievers of Mecca and the Jews of Medina resorted to sorcery. This was a long-standing practice in Arabia, dating back to pre-Islamic times, where some individuals were believed to possess the power to afflict others with the evil eye or magic.

The Jews of Medina hired a renowned sorcerer named **Labid ibn A'sam**, promising him 300 *dinars*, with the Quraysh also contributing. Labid, aided by his daughters, who were also skilled in magic, sought a personal item belonging to the Prophet (s) to perform their spell. They used a Jewish boy who frequented the Prophet's (s) household, taking advantage of the Prophet's (s) boundless mercy and love for children. This boy retrieved a comb with some strands of the Prophet's (s) hair. The sorcerers then tied eleven knots on a string, wrapped the comb and hair in a date palm sheath, and concealed it at the bottom of a well belonging to the Banu Zuraiq tribe, placing a stone over it for concealment.

As a result, the Prophet (s) began to experience a severe weakness or illness. While some traditions, particularly among some non-Shi'a scholars, suggest that the Prophet (s) lost his senses or was temporarily deluded, Shi'a scholars unanimously affirm that no magic could ever affect the intellect, consciousness, or prophetic faculties of a prophet. A prophet's infallibility (*ismah*) precludes such an affliction. However, physical weakness, like any other human ailment, was a possibility. Indeed, the Prophet (s) and Imams (a.s.) suffered physical injuries and illnesses, just as he was wounded in battles or became ill before his demise.

In this state of weakness, the archangels Jibra'il (a.s.) and Mika'il (a.s.) descended, revealing the location of the magic. Jibra'il (a.s.) recited **Surah al-Falaq** and **Surah an-Nas**, the two final *surahs* of the Qur'an, also known as **al-Mu'awwidhatayn** (the two refuges), which were revealed specifically as a remedy against magic and evil. The Prophet (s) then summoned Imam Ali (a.s.), who, upon divine instruction, went to the well of Banu Zuraiq. The water of the well had turned murky due to the magic. Imam Ali (a.s.) descended into the well, removed the stone, retrieved the date palm sheath, and brought it to the Prophet (s).

As Imam Ali (a.s.) recited **Surah al-Falaq** and **Surah an-Nas**, eleven knots on the string untied themselves, one by one, with each verse. By the time the eleventh verse was recited, the last knot was undone, and the Prophet (s) was miraculously cured of his illness and weakness. This incident stands as a powerful testament to the divine protection afforded to the Prophet (s) and the efficacy of the Qur'an as a source of healing and spiritual refuge.

The unwavering loyalty and profound faith demonstrated by the companions, particularly during trials, served as a beacon for all believers. As Imam Hussain (a.s.) would later declare on the night of Ashura in Karbala, offering his companions the chance to depart before the battle,

their response epitomized true devotion. Despite the gravity of the situation and the clear path of martyrdom, not a single one chose to leave. This profound commitment, even in the face of inevitable suffering, reflects the ultimate submission and love for the divine path, a legacy passed down from the Prophet (s) himself.

Chapter 123

A Wolf's Testimony and the Laws of Strength

As the seventh year after the *Hijrah* drew to a close, a period of relative stability settled upon Medina. The fledgling Islamic state, having weathered severe trials, now stood firm. With external threats somewhat diminished and internal unity growing, Prophet Mohammad (s) continued to solidify the foundations of Islamic society and expand the universal call of Islam. Amidst this period, new divine legislations were revealed, offering profound solutions to long-standing societal issues and preparing the believers for future challenges.

One such significant divine intervention concerned the pre-Islamic practice of *dhihar*. For centuries, if a husband declared his wife to be like his mother's back, she became permanently forbidden to him, akin to an incestuous relationship, with no possibility of reconciliation or remarriage. This harsh custom brought immense suffering to families. A poignant instance of this occurred with Khawla bint Tha'labah, a devout and elderly Muslim woman. Her husband, in a moment of anger, uttered the fateful words of *dhihar*. Distraught and without a remedy, Khawla approached

the Prophet (s), pleading for a solution. Her youth and wealth had been spent serving her husband, and now, in her old age and poverty, she faced utter destitution, her children caught in the middle. The Prophet (s), in his profound reliance on divine guidance, did not immediately provide a ruling but awaited revelation. Soon thereafter, **Surah Al-Mujadilah, Verse 1** was revealed, providing a compassionate path to reconciliation through a prescribed expiation (*kaffarah*), effectively abolishing the harsh and unforgiving nature of *dhihar* and replacing it with a just and merciful framework. This revelation underscored Islam's transformative power, replacing ancient injustices with divine mercy.

Around the sixth year of *Hijrah*, a truly astonishing event unfolded, highlighting the universal recognition of divine truth. A shepherd named Shuraha, tending his flock outside Medina, encountered a wolf attempting to snatch a lamb. Shuraha bravely drove the wolf away multiple times. To his utter bewilderment, the wolf suddenly spoke in clear human language, challenging Shuraha's interference and stating that its sustenance was from Allah, found in the wilderness. The wolf then spoke of a matter even more astonishing: the advent of Prophet Mohammad (s), the last Messenger of Allah. It lamented the Jews, who, despite recognizing the Prophet (s) through clear signs in their scriptures, stubbornly rejected him. Yet, the wolf declared, more astonishing still were those who acknowledged the Prophet (s) but denied his chosen successor, Imam Ali (a.s.). Overwhelmed, Shuraha questioned the wolf about his flock, stating his desire to rush to the Prophet (s). The wolf, in a miraculous display of faith, assured him, "Fear not, we will guard your animals; for you are going to believe in the last Prophet of Allah and his successor, and Allah has commanded us to protect your flock."

Shuraha immediately hastened to the Prophet's (s) mosque in Medina. The Prophet (s), perceiving the extraordinary event, announced to the assembled multitude that a man was approaching with a profound and

unusual story. As Shuraha narrated his encounter, a segment of the congregation, largely composed of hypocrites, reacted with skepticism, accusing the Prophet (s) of pre-arranging such a tale to impress the people. The Prophet (s) then challenged the disbelievers to accompany him to the wilderness. He led the entire gathering, numbering hundreds, to the precise location. From a distance, they witnessed the incredible sight: the wolf and its mate diligently guarding the sheep, circling the flock with protective vigilance.

To further remove any doubt, the Prophet (s) instructed Shuraha to call out to the wolf, asking it to whom he was being sent. The wolf, upon hearing Shuraha's voice, approached the Prophet (s) with utmost reverence, prostrating and kissing his blessed feet. Then, in a moment of even greater significance, the Prophet (s) directed a group of companions to lead Imam Ali (a.s.) to a separate area and have Shuraha ask the wolf to identify the Prophet's (s) successor. The wolf, without hesitation, moved towards Imam Ali (a.s.), prostrated before him, kissed his feet, and began to eloquently enumerate Ali's (a.s.) boundless virtues and titles, declaring him as the rightful successor.

Witnessing the astonishment of the crowd, the Prophet (s) addressed them, saying, "You are amazed by a single wolf showing devotion to Ali. What would be your state if you had seen what I saw on the night of *Miraj* (ascension)? When I reached *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, where even Jibra'il (a.s.) is not permitted to pass, I saw an image of my brother and successor, Ali (a.s.), and the angels there were prostrating before it, for Allah has declared that whoever acknowledges a single virtue of Ali, Allah will elevate his status in Paradise for a million years." This miraculous event served as a powerful testament to the Prophet's (s) truthfulness and the divinely ordained status of Imam Ali (a.s.).

In the same pivotal year, Islam, anticipating the expansion of its call and

the increasing need for martial readiness, introduced a unique legal provision regarding specific forms of competition and betting. While gambling and betting (*jawa*) were strictly prohibited, akin to alcohol, for their corrupting influence, a crucial exception was made for activities directly related to military training and preparedness for Jihad. This divine allowance permitted *jawa* in two specific forms: animal racing (such as horses, camels, mules, and elephants) and marksmanship competitions (like archery, spear-throwing, and sword fighting). The condition was that the prize money must be provided by a neutral party or other participants, ensuring that the winner did not wager their own money. This ruling was designed to encourage the development of essential skills and the cultivation of a martial spirit among the Muslim youth.

The Prophet (s) himself actively participated in and promoted these competitions. He organized regular races, often contributing prize money from the *Bayt al-Mal* (public treasury). There are accounts of his own participation, notably with his camel, Ghadhba, which was renowned for its speed and consistent victories. On one occasion, however, Ghadhba lost a race to a lean, unremarkable camel. Upon this surprising defeat, the Prophet (s) remarked, "**It is Allah's right to bring down whatever He raises in this world.**" This incident, observed by many, served as a profound lesson on humility and divine decree, even in moments of seemingly trivial competition. This temporary permissibility of specific *jawa* for Jihad preparation underscored Islam's pragmatic wisdom in encouraging activities vital for the community's strength and defense, distinguishing them clearly from forbidden forms of gambling.

Throughout this period, the profound commitment to modesty and divine injunctions, particularly within the Prophet's (s) household, remained exemplary. A poignant account highlights the extreme care with which Imam Ali (a.s.) safeguarded the modesty of his daughters, especially Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.) and Sayyidah Kulthum (a.s.). Despite their in-

nate purity, Ali (a.s.) ensured they lived in strict seclusion, emphasizing their complete withdrawal from public gaze. It is narrated that when Imam Ali (a.s.) sought to take his daughters to visit the grave of Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), he chose the dead of night, long after people had retired, and even then, took every precaution. He extinguished the lamp at the grave, fearing that its light might accidentally cast a shadow or reveal a glimpse of his daughters to any passerby, emphasizing that even in the utter darkness of a graveyard, their purity and modesty should remain inviolable from the gaze of non-*mahram* eyes. This profound dedication to their *hijab* and dignity demonstrated the unparalleled standards upheld by the *Ahlul Bayt*, serving as a living testament to the deeper principles of Islamic modesty and reverence.

Chapter 124

The Return to Mecca: A Pilgrimage of Prophetic Wisdom and Family Bonds

The events of the seventh year after the *Hijrah* unfolded, marking the sixtieth year of the Blessed Prophet Mohammad's life and two decades since the declaration of his prophethood. This pivotal year, 7 AH, commenced with the momentous Ghazwah Khaybar and culminated in the fulfillment of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah through the *Umrat al-Qada*, the Compensatory *Umrah*. While some aspects of this *Umrah* were touched upon previously in the context of legal discussions, its profound historical and spiritual significance warrants a detailed recounting of its events.

A fundamental principle illuminated during this period concerned the Islamic perspective on activities that, while generally forbidden, might be permitted under specific, broader societal needs. Islam, as a practical religion, acknowledges the evolving needs of humanity. While certain acts, such as gambling, are strictly prohibited, instances arose where a similar mechanism was permitted to serve a greater, collective good. This applied specifically to competitions and betting related to martial arts, archery, and animal racing. Such activities, known as *jawa*, were sanc-

tioned not for personal gain or frivolous entertainment, but as a means to encourage and develop the physical and martial prowess of the Muslim army. These were not individual exceptions but a collective, divinely sanctioned permission for the advancement of the faith's defense. The Prophet (s) himself participated in and organized these events, setting an example for his followers and demonstrating the practical wisdom embedded within Islamic teachings for the strength and readiness of the community. This permission was affirmed by the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s), extending until the Day of Judgment, underscoring the enduring importance of military preparedness.

The time for *Umrat al-Qada* arrived, a year after the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. The treaty had stipulated that the Muslims could perform *Umrah* in Mecca, provided they remained unarmed and limited their stay to three days, during which the Quraysh would vacate the city. The Prophet (s) departed from Medina with approximately 1,400 companions (some narrations mention 2,000). Despite the treaty, the Prophet (s) knew the unpredictable nature of the Quraysh. Thus, he brought weapons and warhorses, storing them at a place called *Yajaj*, about eight miles outside Mecca. Two hundred armed companions were stationed there to guard the armaments, while the remaining 1,200 entered Mecca, fulfilling the terms of the agreement by entering unarmed.

As the Prophet (s) and his companions prepared to perform the *Tawaf* around the Holy Ka'bah, a subtle yet powerful display of strength and faith was orchestrated. The Quraysh, witnessing the Muslims' return, had spread rumors that the climate of Medina had weakened them, making them frail and sick. To counter this propaganda, the Prophet (s) commanded the Muslims to perform the first three rounds of *Tawaf* with a brisk, vigorous pace, known as *raml*, swaying their shoulders and demonstrating their vitality. The remaining four rounds were performed at a normal walking pace. This act not only refuted the false rumors but also

served as a vivid display of Muslim strength and resilience before their adversaries. The Prophet (s) himself performed the *Tawaf* and *Sa'i* between *Safa* and *Marwah* while mounted on his camel, *Qaswa*, further illustrating the ease and practicality of Islamic rituals.

During this *Umrah*, the Quraysh had placed idols on the hills of *Safa* and *Marwah*. In response, a profound divine directive was revealed. The Prophet (s) recited **Surah al-Baqarah, Verse 158**: "**Indeed, *Safa* and *Marwah* are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever performs *Hajj* or *Umrah* at the House, there is no blame upon him for circumambulating them. And whoever volunteers good—then indeed, Allah is Appreciative and Knowing.**" This verse definitively clarified that the presence of idols did not invalidate the sacredness of the ritual or the intention behind it. It established that performing *Sa'i* between *Safa* and *Marwah* was permissible and meritorious, as long as the act was dedicated solely to Allah, solidifying a permanent religious injunction for all Muslims.

Another momentous event that underscored the triumph of Islam was the *adhan* called by Bilal al-Habashi (r.a.). By the Prophet's (s) command, Bilal ascended to the roof of the Holy Ka'bah and delivered the call to prayer. From their vantage points on the surrounding hills, the arrogant leaders of Quraysh were forced to witness this powerful spectacle—a symbol of the former enslaved African's voice echoing the declaration of Allah's Oneness and Mohammad's prophethood over their sacred house. This was a bitter sight for them, but they were bound by the treaty and could not intervene.

The Muslims adhered strictly to the three-day limit stipulated in the treaty. As the sun began to set on the fourth day, signaling the end of their permitted stay, Suhayl ibn Amr, the Quraysh representative, approached the Prophet (s) to remind him to leave. At this point, the Prophet (s) had intended to hold a *walimah*, a wedding feast, in Mecca, as he had, during

this very *Umrah*, married Sayyidah Maymunah bint al-Harith (r.a.), the 24th and last of his wives. However, Suhayl curtly refused, insisting that the Muslims depart immediately as per the agreement. The Prophet (s), ever-true to his word and committed to the treaty, agreed to leave. He then held the *walimah* about ten miles outside Mecca, after the Muslims had exited the city boundaries.

As the Muslim army began its departure from Mecca, a poignant scene unfolded. Hamzah ibn Abd al-Muttalib's (r.a.) orphaned daughter, Umamah, who had been left behind in Mecca with her mother, was seen running after the Prophet's (s) camel. Despite her young age, she clung to the hope of being with her family. The Prophet (s), filled with compassion, instructed Imam Ali (a.s.) to take her. This immediately led to a loving dispute over her custody among three eminent companions: Imam Ali (a.s.), Ja'far al-Tayyar (r.a.), and Zayd ibn Harithah (r.a.). Ja'far (r.a.) argued for her custody, emphasizing that Umamah was the daughter of his paternal uncle (Hamzah) and that his wife, Asma bint Umays, was Umamah's maternal aunt. Imam Ali (a.s.), her cousin, contended that he had brought her from Mecca. Zayd (r.a.), having been made a brother to Hamzah during the *mu'akhat* in Medina, felt a familial claim to her. The Prophet (s), listening to their arguments, made a definitive ruling in favor of Ja'far al-Tayyar (r.a.), declaring, "**The maternal aunt is like the mother.**" This decision underscored the elevated status and responsibility of the maternal aunt in caring for an orphan, showcasing the Prophet's (s) profound emphasis on family ties, compassion, and the rights of the vulnerable, particularly orphaned children, a stark contrast to the pre-Islamic practices that often neglected female offspring.

This *Umrah* also witnessed the clarification of certain pre-Islamic customs. Before Islam, some Arab tribes, including the Quraysh (though not all, with a special group called *Ahle Hums* being an exception), had a peculiar custom during *Ihram*: they would not enter their homes through the

main door but rather through a hole in the back wall or by climbing over the walls. During this *Umrah*, a Muslim companion, not from *Ahle Hums*, entered a tent through the front, leading to others questioning him. The Prophet (s) then recited **Surah al-Baqarah, Verse 189**: "**It is not righteousness that you enter houses from their rears, but righteousness is [in] one who fears Allah. And enter houses from their doors. And fear Allah that you may succeed.**" This verse abolished the superstitious practice, confirming that piety lay in righteousness and obedience to Allah, not in adherence to arbitrary customs, thereby simplifying the rituals and affirming the rational nature of Islam.

The journey of *Umrat al-Qada* served as a powerful demonstration of Islam's triumph, its Prophet's (s) wisdom, and the compassion inherent in its teachings. It not only fulfilled a treaty obligation but also firmly reestablished the presence of Islam in Mecca, setting the stage for future events that would reshape the Arabian Peninsula. The collective spirit of the Muslims, their discipline, and their unyielding devotion, even in the face of provocation, cemented their status as a rising power and a beacon of justice and mercy.

Chapter 125

The Prophet's Marriages and the Blessed Birth of Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra (a.s.)

The seventh year of the *Hijrah* was drawing to a close, marking twenty years since the announcement of prophethood and seven years since the *Hijrah*. This period culminated in the **Compensatory *Umrah*** (**Umrat al-Qada**), which the Prophet (s) and his companions performed, fulfilling the condition of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. While the Prophet (s) and his companions, though fully capable of confronting Quraysh by force, had chosen peace for its deeper strategic advantages, this *Umrah* was a profound demonstration of their commitment to agreements and their spiritual strength.

During this auspicious journey, an important event occurred: the Prophet's (s) marriage to Sayyidah Maymunah bint Harith (r.a.). This union, unique among the Prophet's (s) marriages, later became a point of discussion among scholars, particularly regarding whether it took place while the Prophet (s) was still in the state of *Ihram*. The protests by the Meccan youth outside the Prophet's (s) tent and Quraysh's firm refusal to attend the *walimah* (wedding feast) inside Mecca — citing the three-day limit

of the Hudaybiyyah treaty — strongly indicate that the marriage transpired during this very journey. Shi'a scholars generally concur that the Prophet (s) had sent Abu Rafi' to Mecca to arrange the marriage even before departing Medina, thus concluding the *nikah* before entering the sacred precincts. This mirrors his marriage to Umm Habibah (r.a.) in Abyssinia, where Najashi acted as his *wakeel* (representative). This nuanced understanding resolves potential *fiqh* conflicts regarding marriage during *Ihram*.

Sayyidah Maymunah (r.a.) holds a special place as the Prophet's (s) last wife, signaling the conclusion of his extensive marital life, which began with Sayyidah Khadijah (r.a.). Her marriage brought significant strategic benefits to Islam, particularly in forging connections with the powerful, often hostile, region of Najd. Sayyidah Maymunah's (r.a.) sister was married to the chieftain of Najd, and her nephew, who later became the chieftain, visited her in Medina, demonstrating the profound ripple effects of this marriage in softening hearts and opening pathways for *da'wah* in a challenging environment. Furthermore, Sayyidah Maymunah (r.a.) was the sister of Umm al-Fadl (wife of Abbas and mother of Abdullah ibn Abbas) and the maternal aunt of prominent figures like Khalid ibn Walid, intertwining her with many influential families.

The Prophet's (s) marriages, encompassing twenty-five women in his life, are a testament to divine wisdom and serve various purposes, from providing solace and support to solidifying alliances and protecting vulnerable women. The Qur'an highlights the unique status of the Prophet's (s) wives in **Surah Al-Ahzab, Verse 5**: **"The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers."** Furthermore, **Surah Al-Ahzab, Verse 50** delineates the specific permissions granted to the Prophet (s) regarding marriage, which differ from those of ordinary Muslims. These include wives to whom *mahr* was given, those acquired through lawful means (like captives of war), and a unique privi-

lege: a believing woman who dedicates herself to the Prophet (s) without *mahr*. This latter category was exclusive to the Prophet (s), underlining his exalted status.

Out of the twenty-five women associated with the Prophet (s) through marriage or proposal: * **Eleven were his renowned wives**, known as *Umm al-Mu'minin* (Mothers of the Believers). These include Sayyidah Khadijah (r.a.), Sawdah (r.a.), Aishah (r.a.), Hafsah (r.a.), Zaynab bint Khuzaymah (Umm al-Masakin), Umm Salamah (r.a.), Zaynab bint Jahsh (r.a.), Juwayriyah (r.a.), Umm Habibah (r.a.), Safiyyah (r.a.), and Maymunah (r.a.). Two of these, Sayyidah Khadijah (r.a.) and Zaynab bint Khuzaymah (r.a.), passed away during his lifetime. The first of his wives to pass away after him was Zaynab bint Jahsh (r.a.), whose unparalleled generosity famously led the Prophet (s) to predict that the first of his wives to join him in the hereafter would be "the one with the longest hand" (referring to charity, not physical length). * **Two were *kaniz* (concubines)**: Maria al-Qibtiyyah (the mother of his son Ibrahim) and Rayhana bint Zayd. These were not taken as spoils of war but were gifts, demonstrating their dignified status. * **One was a woman who gifted herself to the Prophet (s)**: Umm Sharik, as permitted by **Surah Al-Ahzab, Verse 50**. This noble act of devotion was a testament to the profound respect and love some women held for the Prophet (s) and his mission. * **One marriage proposal was rejected by the woman's father** on false pretexts, claiming his daughter had *bars* (leprosy). The Prophet (s) emphasized that illness can be a divine mercy. * **Ten others** had brief or unconsummated relationships with the Prophet (s). Two passed away before the marriage was consummated (e.g., Shaniyah bint Sawlat and Qayla bint Ash'ath). Three, due to misunderstanding or misguidance, sought refuge from him with Allah (e.g., Asma bint Nu'man, Malika, and Sana from Banu Amir). The Prophet (s) honored their requests. Five were divorced or separated due to their inability to adapt to the simple life of the Prophet's (s) house-

hold or for other reasons, such as Fatima bint Zahhak, who chose worldly wealth over staying with the Prophet (s) and later became an object of pity.

Beyond his marriages, the Prophet's (s) blessed lineage is of immense significance. According to the most widely accepted narrations among Shi'a scholars, the Prophet (s) had four children: three sons and one daughter. His sons were Qasim, Abdullah (also known by the titles Tayyib and Tahir), and Ibrahim. * **Qasim** was his eldest son, born in Mecca before the declaration of prophethood. He passed away in infancy and is buried in Jannat al-Mu'alla in Mecca, alongside his mother, Sayyidah Khadijah (r.a.). * **Abdullah** was born shortly after the announcement of prophethood in Mecca. He also passed away in childhood. His titles, Tayyib (Pure) and Tahir (Purified), reflect his blessed existence. * **Ibrahim** was the Prophet's (s) youngest son, born in Medina to Maria al-Qibtiyyah. He, too, passed away in infancy and is buried in Jannat al-Baqi' in Medina.

The early deaths of Qasim and Abdullah led the polytheists of Mecca to mock the Prophet (s) as "Abtar" — meaning cut off, without male progeny, implying his lineage and mission would end. It was in response to this cruel taunt that Allah revealed **Surah al-Kawthar**: **"Indeed, We have granted you, [O Muhammad], Al-Kawthar. So perform *salat* for your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]. Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off."** **Al-Kawthar** signifies abundant goodness, plentiful progeny, and the heavenly river. This revelation was a divine assurance that the Prophet's (s) lineage and mission would not only continue but flourish through his daughter, Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.), defying the enemies' curses.

The birth of Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra (a.s.) was a momentous event, occurring five years after the declaration of prophethood, on the 20th of Ja-

madi al-Thani. This day was indeed the first true joy for the nascent Muslim community after years of relentless persecution, torture, and hardship in Mecca. As the time of her birth approached, Sayyidah Khadijah (r.a.), despite her noble lineage, was shunned by the women of Mecca, who refused to assist her in childbirth due to her unwavering support for the Prophet (s). In her moment of need, as she lay on her bed, four luminous women appeared, radiating heavenly light, their countenances and attire unlike any mortal women. They were none other than Sarah (the wife of Prophet Ibrahim), Asiyah (the believing wife of Pharaoh), Maryam (the mother of Prophet Isa), and Kulthum (the sister of Prophet Musa).

These celestial midwives surrounded Sayyidah Khadijah (r.a.), offering comfort and assistance. When Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.) came into the world, a profound miracle unfolded. She was born pure and clean, immediately prostrating in *sajdah* to Allah, raising her finger towards the heavens, and eloquently testifying: **"I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that my father is the Chief of all Prophets, and my husband is the Chief of all Successors, and my two sons are the Chiefs of all the youth of Paradise."** This miraculous birth was shielded by veils of divine light, allowing only her mother to perceive the event.

The four holy women then washed Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.) with water from the spring of **Kawthar**, brought in heavenly ewers, and clothed her in divine garments. Her birth filled the chamber with an extraordinary light, illuminating not only Sayyidah Khadijah's (r.a.) home but also the entire Ka'bah and the surrounding Haram. This radiant light, manifesting at the time of Fajr prayer, prompted the companions to inquire about its source. The Prophet (s) joyfully responded, explaining that it was the manifestation of **Al-Kawthar** — the divine promise of abundant progeny and blessing that had now taken physical form in his beloved daughter, Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.).

Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.) was given the name Fatimah, meaning "one who cuts off" or "one who frees." This name holds a profound prophecy: on the Day of Judgment, she will intercede for her followers, freeing them from the fires of Hell. Her very existence is a testament to the continuation of the Prophet's (s) lineage and mission, a source of solace and joy for believers until the Day of Judgment. The power and blessings associated with her name are immense; it is narrated that calling upon Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) by the name of **"Ya Zahra!"** draws his immediate attention, regardless of his preoccupations. Her birth was the first *Eid* for the Muslims, marking the beginning of their spiritual and communal joy, a beacon of hope and triumph over persecution.

Chapter 126

The Unfolding Tapestry: Great Conversions and the Battle of Mu'tah

The seventh year of *Hijrah* had concluded with the triumphant return from *Umrat al-Qada*, a journey that saw the fulfillment of the postponed pilgrimage and the Prophet's (s) marriage to Sayyidah Maymunah (r.a.). This period, much like the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, had presented a facade of concession that ultimately proved to be a profound strategic victory for Islam. As the 8th year of *Hijrah* dawned, the unfolding narrative of Islam's growth continued to demonstrate how apparent setbacks often paved the way for deeper, more significant triumphs. This period would witness the conversion of prominent figures and a pivotal battle that, despite its initial challenges, underscored the divine protection and ultimate destiny of the burgeoning Muslim community.

The early months of the 8th year of *Hijrah* brought with them the remarkable conversion of two figures who had, until then, been formidable adversaries of Islam: Amr ibn al-As and Khalid ibn al-Walid. Their acceptance of Islam, occurring just months before the monumental **Conquest of Mecca** (***Fath Makkah***), serves as a testament to the irresistible force of

divine truth.

Amr ibn al-As, a shrewd diplomat and once a fierce opponent, reflected on the relentless rise of Islam. His earlier mission to Abyssinia, dispatched by the Quraysh to reclaim Muslim refugees, had ended in failure when King Najashi, a covert believer in Islam, refused to hand over the Muslims. This experience had planted seeds of doubt regarding Mecca's strategy. As he witnessed the aftermath of the **Battle of Khandaq**, Amr recognized that Quraysh had exhausted their strength, fielding their largest possible army only to retreat in defeat. He concluded that Mecca could no longer withstand the tide of Islam, and that its future lay with the Muslims. Resolving to leave Mecca, he journeyed to Abyssinia, a familiar land where he still held connections.

It was in Abyssinia that Amr ibn al-As encountered the Prophet's (s) emissary, Amr ibn Umayyah al-Damri, who had been sent to invite King Najashi to Islam and to arrange the Prophet's (s) marriage to Sayyidah Umm Habibah (r.a.). Sensing an opportunity, Amr ibn al-As, still entrenched in his past enmity, audaciously requested Najashi to hand over the Muslim envoy. Najashi's response was immediate and resolute. He vehemently condemned the notion of harming an envoy, declaring it an act of profound disgrace. Furthermore, he asserted his unshakeable faith in the Prophet Mohammad (s), proclaiming him not merely a prophet of God but the chief of all prophets. This profound affirmation from a Christian monarch, who had never personally met the Prophet (s), shattered Amr ibn al-As's preconceived notions. Witnessing Najashi's conviction, Amr ibn al-As realized the truth of the Prophet's (s) mission. Humbled, he extended his hand to Najashi, accepting Islam at the hands of the Christian king. This remarkable event marks a rare instance in Islamic history where a future Companion (*Sahabi*) embraced Islam through the testimony of a Follower (*Tabi'i*)—a unique spiritual lineage.

Similarly, Khalid ibn al-Walid, renowned for his military prowess and instrumental role in the Muslims' temporary setback at Uhud, experienced a profound change of heart. He had been profoundly impacted by the events of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah and the subsequent *Umrat al-Qada*. He had witnessed the Muslims, initially turned back from Mecca, return a year later to perform their pilgrimage unhindered, despite his own thwarted attempts to attack them. He recognized an unseen hand protecting the Prophet (s) and his followers. He concluded that Quraysh had lost their will and capacity to resist, and that Islam was destined to dominate. Deciding to embrace Islam before Mecca's eventual conquest, he departed from Mecca and providentially met Amr ibn al-As and Uthman ibn Talhah at Marw al-Zahran. Together, they made their way to Medina.

Upon their arrival, Khalid ibn al-Walid, burdened by his past actions, especially his role in the **Battle of Uhud**, expressed apprehension about the Muslims seeking retribution. The Prophet (s) immediately reassured him, uttering a profound declaration that would become a cornerstone of Islamic theology: "**Islam demolishes what precedes it (sins).**" He further explained that *Hijrah* (migration for the sake of Allah) and *Hajj* (the pilgrimage) also have the power to wipe away past transgressions. This divine assurance liberated Khalid from his fear and allowed him to embrace his new faith fully.

The Prophet (s) then sought to integrate these influential new converts into the Muslim community by entrusting them with significant responsibilities. Amr ibn al-As was given a crucial diplomatic mission: to carry the Prophet's (s) letter of invitation to Islam to the rulers of Oman, two brothers named Jaifar and Abd.

Amr ibn al-As traveled to Oman and presented the Prophet's (s) message. Abd, the younger ruler, initially expressed skepticism, question-

ing how Najashi, a subordinate of the powerful Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, could embrace Islam without repercussions. Amr ibn al-As explained that Heraclius himself, despite his political constraints, acknowledged the truth of the Prophet's (s) message. Abd then inquired about the tenets of Islam, particularly the oneness of Allah, the prohibition of various vices, and the obligatory nature of *Zakat*. Though initially hesitant about *Zakat*, which imposed a tax on their primary source of livelihood, Abd was ultimately convinced. He consulted with his elder brother Jaifar, and after deep contemplation, both brothers accepted Islam without reservation. Their conversion, detailed in a letter sent back to the Prophet (s), marked a peaceful expansion of Islam's influence in distant lands.

However, the 8th year of *Hijrah* was also marked by a significant military engagement known as **Ghazwah Mu'tah**. This battle, fought in the month of Jumada al-Ula, stemmed from a grave act of treachery by the Byzantines and their Ghassanid Arab allies. The Prophet (s) had dispatched an emissary, Harith ibn Umayr al-Azdi, with a letter for the Byzantine governor of Sham (Syria). Harith was intercepted and brutally executed by Shurahbil ibn Amr al-Ghassani, a sub-governor under Harith. The murder of an envoy was a universally condemned act, considered a profound violation of international law and morality, even among pagan societies. This atrocity demanded a response from the nascent Islamic state.

Despite the Prophet (s) not physically participating in this expedition, it is historically designated as a "Ghazwah" rather than a "Sariyyah" (an expedition led by a companion). This unique classification is attributed to two primary reasons: the large number of prominent companions who participated, and, more significantly, the extraordinary spiritual presence of the Prophet (s) during the battle. While the Muslim army marched to Mu'tah, the Prophet (s) remained in his mosque in Medina, miraculously

witnessing the entire unfolding of the battle in real-time. He described every detail to the companions gathered around him, narrating the exact moments of engagement, individual acts of bravery, and the martyrdom of his beloved companions as they occurred. This profound connection meant he was, in essence, spiritually present and leading the campaign.

The scale of the confrontation at Mu'tah was daunting: 3,000 Muslim soldiers faced a combined Byzantine and Ghassanid army estimated at 250,000, an overwhelming numerical disparity. Before the battle, the Prophet (s) appointed the commanders in a specific succession. According to the revered narrations from the *Ahlul Bayt*, the Prophet (s) declared: "**Ja'far ibn Abi Talib** shall be your commander. If Ja'far is martyred, then **Zayd ibn Harithah** shall take the banner. If Zayd is martyred, then **Abdullah ibn Rawahah** shall lead." This order differs from some historical accounts, but its authenticity is strongly supported by elegies (*marsiyas*) penned by companions like Ka'b ibn Malik, which mourn the martyrs in the sequence of Ja'far, Zayd, and then Abdullah, thereby implying the order of command.

A Jewish scholar named Nu'man ibn Musawwil, present when the Prophet (s) announced the chain of command, was struck by this arrangement. He remarked that if all three commanders were martyred in succession, it would serve as definitive proof of Mohammad's (s) true prophethood, for it was a sign found in the Torah that a true prophet's appointed commanders would all attain martyrdom.

As the news of the martyrdom of Ja'far ibn Abi Talib reached Medina, the Prophet's (s) grief was profound, echoing the sorrow he displayed for his uncle, Hamzah, after Uhud. He visited Ja'far's home, called his orphaned children, Abdullah and Awn, and tenderly stroked their heads, showering them with compassion. He supplicated for Abdullah, blessing him with a long life and abundant wealth. The Prophet's (s) visible mourning

for his martyred companions, who are eternally alive in the sight of Allah, provided a powerful refutation to those who argue against mourning for martyrs. The Prophet (s) himself set the precedent, demonstrating that grief for those departed is a natural and permissible human expression, even for those exalted in paradise.

Abdullah ibn Ja'far, blessed by the Prophet (s), indeed lived a long and prosperous life. Though he was not present at the tragedy of Karbala, his devotion to Imam Husayn (a.s.) was unwavering. He sent his two sons, Awn and Muhammad, to accompany Imam Husayn (a.s.), symbolizing his complete support. A poignant encounter is narrated when Abdullah ibn Ja'far met Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.) as she departed from Mecca for Karbala. Despite being her husband, he approached her with immense reverence, knowing her position as the daughter of the Prophet (s) and the sister of the Imam. He did not seek to prevent her journey, but rather offered support, bringing provisions and entrusting his sons to Imam Husayn (a.s.), declaring, "O Princess, I have only come because the Messenger of God has said that if one travels, they should take provisions for the journey. My Master is traveling, so there must be provisions." He implored Imam Husayn (a.s.) to accept his sons as a sacrifice on his behalf if the need arose. This interaction further solidified Sayyidah Zaynab's (a.s.) unwavering resolve and her profound spiritual understanding, reflecting the deep loyalty and mutual respect within the *Ahlul Bayt*.

Chapter 127

The Unceasing Mission: *Da'wah* Beyond the Battlefield

The 8th year of *Hijrah* dawned, following the profound events of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah and the victory at Khaybar, which had largely neutralized the two most significant threats to the nascent Islamic state: the Quraysh of Mecca to the east and the Jewish strongholds of Khaybar to the west. One might have assumed that a period of respite or consolidation would follow for the Muslims in Medina. However, the life of Prophet Mohammad (s) consistently demonstrated that the mission of Islam—the *da'wah*, or invitation to divine truth—was a perpetual, ongoing duty, unaffected by temporary peace or even apparent setbacks. Muslims, the Prophet (s) taught, are never "off-duty" from this sacred obligation; it is a commitment from the moment of faith until death, and there is no "retirement" from spreading the message of Allah.

The Prophet's (s) universal *da'wah*, which had begun in the 7th year of *Hijrah* with letters dispatched to kings and emperors, continued unabated. Now, the focus shifted from grand empires to the lesser rulers and tribal chiefs whose territories bordered the expanding influence of Islam. It was

in the pursuit of this continuous mission that a critical series of events unfolded in the month of Safar, 8 AH, leading to a significant military engagement.

One of the Prophet's (s) envoys, Harith ibn Umayr al-Azdi, was dispatched to the region of Syria. His mission was purely diplomatic, carrying the message of Islam. However, upon reaching the Syrian border, Harith was intercepted by Sharjeel ibn Amr al-Ghassani, the Christian governor of Busra under the Byzantine Empire. Sharjeel, known for his hostility towards Muslims, immediately recognized Harith as an envoy. Despite the universally acknowledged principle in both pre-Islamic and Islamic societies that envoys were inviolable and their lives sacred—a norm respected even by the most barbaric among the Quraysh—Sharjeel, in an act of unprecedented treachery, seized and brutally assassinated Harith. This was a profound breach of diplomatic conduct and a direct insult to the Prophet (s) and the Islamic state. Across the entire history of Prophethood, in over two decades of sending envoys, Harith was the *only* one to be martyred while on such a mission.

Concurrently, another *da'wah* expedition was undertaken. The Prophet (s) dispatched a delegation of 15 missionaries, led by Ka'b ibn Amr al-Ghifari (also mentioned as Ka'b ibn Malik in some traditions), to the Wadi al-Qura region, near the Syrian frontier. These were not warriors but unarmed preachers, carrying no weapons beyond those for self-defense, intending solely to convey the message of Islam. However, they were ambushed by various Arab Christian tribes who had migrated from Mecca and Khaybar to the Syrian borders, having felt threatened by the growing power of Islam. Motivated by a desire for revenge stemming from earlier defeats of their Meccan and Jewish allies, these tribes amassed a force of three to four thousand warriors against the mere 15 Muslims. They surrounded and mercilessly massacred the entire delegation. Only Ka'b ibn Amr, severely wounded, managed to escape under the cover of night

and eventually returned to Medina to report the tragedy. The barbarity of the ambush was such that the missionaries were not merely killed, but brutally tortured and mutilated, indicating the enemies took pleasure in their suffering.

These two incidents—the assassination of an envoy and the massacre of unarmed missionaries—were intolerable provocations. They underscored the need for a decisive response to send a clear message: while Islam promotes peace, it will not tolerate such egregious acts of injustice and aggression. The Prophet (s) immediately ordered the preparation of a force to march towards Syria to seek retribution for these unprovoked attacks. This expedition became known as the **Ghazwah Mu'tah**.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Battle of Mu'tah involved a Muslim force of 3,000 confronting an immense Byzantine army, estimated to be between 200,000 and 300,000. Despite the overwhelming odds and the martyrdom of its three appointed commanders—Zayd ibn Harithah, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, and Abdullah ibn Rawahah—the battle was not a defeat in the conventional sense. Instead, its long-term strategic benefits proved immense.

Firstly, Mu'tah significantly weakened the Byzantine Empire, the superpower of its age, in the eyes of the Arab tribes. For 3,000 Muslims to confront such a massive army without being annihilated was a testament to their unwavering spirit and divine support. This encounter cracked the aura of invincibility surrounding the Byzantines, paving the way for future Islamic expansion into Syria.

Secondly, the battle served as an invaluable training ground. Muslims learned the tactics of a sophisticated, organized army unlike the tribal skirmishes they had experienced against the Quraysh or Jews. This first encounter with Byzantine warfare provided crucial intelligence and experience that would prove vital in future conquests, notably the swift sub-

jugation of Byzantine territories after the Prophet's (s) passing.

Thirdly, Mu'tah had a profound psychological impact on the remaining Arab tribes. The spectacle of a mere 3,000 Muslims willingly facing hundreds of thousands, completely devoid of fear of death, deeply impressed them. This display of absolute conviction and courage instilled a deep sense of awe and terror, which would directly facilitate the peaceful **Conquest of Mecca** (*Fath Makkah*) just a few months later, also in 8 AH. Had it not been for the psychological conditioning of Mu'tah, it is likely that many Arab tribes would have allied with Quraysh and fiercely resisted the Muslim advance on Mecca. The fact that Mecca was conquered with minimal bloodshed was a direct consequence of Mu'tah's terrifying impression on the tribal consciousness.

The emphasis on *da'wah* as an incessant duty was paramount throughout the Prophet's (s) mission. Upon his arrival in Medina, his very first act was to establish the **Masjid an-Nabawi**, the central hub for the propagation of Islam, communal prayer, and learning. Adjacent to the Masjid, a platform known as the *Suffah* was constructed. This simple structure, initially just a raised patch of earth with a palm-leaf roof, served as accommodation for the impoverished and homeless Muslim migrants (*Muhajirun*), particularly the *Ahl as-Suffah* who had no families or residences in Medina. It is significant that the Prophet (s) prioritized the construction of the Masjid—a center for *da'wah*—over immediate, more comfortable housing for the *Muhajirun*, even though providing for their needs was also a grave responsibility. The Masjid, as the heart of *da'wah* and communal gathering, was built first, and later, as resources allowed, more permanent dwellings were arranged for the *Ahl as-Suffah*. This practical example illustrates that the establishment of a focal point for conveying the divine message takes precedence even over addressing immediate humanitarian needs, unless life is directly at stake.

This relentless commitment to *da'wah* extended beyond the Prophet's (s) lifetime and is exemplified by the lives of his purified progeny, the *Ahlul Bayt*. A powerful parallel can be drawn to the life of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.), the Seventh Imam, who spent 14 of his 35 years of Imamate incarcerated in the dungeons of Haroun al-Rashid. While many perceive his life as one of perpetual imprisonment and silence, the Imam's (a.s.) existence in the harshest of conditions was, in fact, a continuous act of *da'wah* through the sheer power of his character and spiritual fortitude.

Haroun, the Abbasid caliph, tormented the Imam (a.s.) in various prisons, constantly moving him and assigning the most ruthless guards to break his spirit. These prisons were often described as extremely restrictive—so low one could not stand upright, so narrow one could not stretch one's legs while sleeping. Yet, despite these torturous conditions, Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) remained steadfast, always in a state of prayer, remembrance of Allah, and profound gratitude. His unwavering *shukr*, even in the depths of suffering, was legendary. He would often say, "Praise be to Allah, Who has given me a peaceful place for worship," referring to his cell.

Remarkably, time and again, the cruelest guards assigned to him would, after witnessing his profound piety, patience, and devotion, undergo a transformation. They would come to understand his true divine station, eventually becoming his admirers and even secret followers. Haroun would frequently replace these softened guards, bringing in new, harsher ones, only for the cycle to repeat. The Imam's (a.s.) very presence, his character, and his constant remembrance of Allah became his most potent *da'wah*. The guards, upon their release from duty, would inevitably return to their families and communities, speaking of the incredible spiritual strength and *karamah* of the Imam (a.s.), thereby spreading his message and the virtues of the *Ahlul Bayt*.

Haroun also tried to discredit the Imam (a.s.) publicly. On one occasion, in the presence of the entire Islamic world gathered for *Hajj* in Medina, Haroun ascended the Prophet's (s) *minbar*, declaring, "Peace be upon you, O son of my uncle!" to emphasize his own lineage to the Prophet (s) through Abbas, attempting to equate it with the Imam's (a.s.). Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.), then, came forward and addressed the Prophet's (s) tomb, saying, "**Assalamu Alayka ya Rasulullah, Assalamu Alayka ya Jaddi** (Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah, Peace be upon you, O my Grandfather!)." This subtle yet profound distinction asserted his direct lineage through Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) and the Prophet's (s) daughters, a bond superior to that of an uncle. When challenged by Haroun, the Imam (a.s.) famously asked Haroun if he would allow his own daughter to marry the Prophet (s). Haroun was aghast, considering it unthinkable. The Imam (a.s.) then countered, "But my daughter could marry the Prophet (s), for she is his daughter, not his granddaughter. This is the difference between us." This powerful rebuttal silenced Haroun and exposed his false claims.

Ultimately, Haroun realized that the Imam's (a.s.) influence was growing even from within prison walls. Desperate to silence him, Haroun ordered Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) to be poisoned. After his martyrdom on the 25th of Rajab, 183 AH, Haroun, fearing public outrage, ordered that the Imam's (a.s.) body be placed on the Baghdad Bridge, left exposed for public viewing and to be trampled by passersby, hoping to dishonor him and prevent his identification. However, this malicious act, too, became an unforeseen act of *da'wah*.

The transcript relates a miraculous incident: A blacksmith in Baghdad, who had vowed to serve a descendant of Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) if his wish was granted, was guided by Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.) herself, appearing to him veiled, to the Baghdad Bridge. She told him that her son was there, and he could fulfill his vow by serving him. When the black-

smith reached the bridge, he found the Imam's (a.s.) body exposed. Animals refused to step on it, and even people who were rushing through the night halted in reverence. The blacksmith then, following divine instruction, gently removed the fetters from the Imam's (a.s.) neck and chains from his feet, performing the ritual washing (*ghusl*) and shrouding of the holy body. News of the Imam's (a.s.) martyrdom spread rapidly, and even Haroun's own cousin, Sulayman ibn Abi Ja'far al-Hashimi, moved by the sight, took the Imam's (a.s.) body, gave it a proper funeral, and buried it with dignity.

The fate of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) serves as a profound reminder that the mission of *da'wah* is never halted, even by the most extreme forms of oppression. Just as the Prophet (s) continually expanded the reach of Islam even after overcoming major military threats, the *Ahlul Bayt* continued to propagate the truth through their exemplary lives, their patience, and their suffering. Their actions taught that genuine *da'wah* is often achieved not merely through words but through the profound impact of one's character and unwavering commitment to Allah, even in the face of apparent defeat or dire persecution. Such steadfastness ultimately turns the tables on the oppressors, transforming their malicious intentions into unexpected opportunities for the truth to shine forth.

Chapter 128

Mu'tah: A Clash of Ideals and the Abundance of Divine Blessings

As the early months of the eighth year of *Hijrah* unfolded, consolidating the Islamic state's security and establishing diplomatic outreach, the community faced a grave challenge that laid bare the hypocrisy and barbarity of supposed "civilized" powers. This challenge culminated in the pivotal engagement known as **Ghazwah Mu'tah**.

The immediate catalysts for Mu'tah were two egregious acts. The first was the assassination of Harith ibn Umayr al-Azdi, an envoy dispatched by the Prophet Mohammad (s) to Sharjeel ibn Amr al-Ghassani, the Byzantine governor of Busra. Harith was on a diplomatic mission to the ruler of all Syria, whose capital was Busra, a major city near modern-day Damascus. The murder of an envoy, a universally condemned act even among the most "uncivilized" tribes, was a blatant violation of international law and a profound insult. Simultaneously, a separate group of sixteen Muslim missionaries, led by Ka'b ibn Amr al-Ghifari, venturing into the Syrian region, was brutally ambushed. Fifteen of these innocent individuals were mercilessly martyred, suffering repeated spear wounds, with the

sixteenth barely surviving. These unprovoked attacks, on unarmed envoys and missionaries, demonstrated a flagrant disregard for human life and diplomatic norms.

The Prophet (s) had consistently shown restraint and sought peaceful resolutions, even with the pagans of Mecca and the Jews of Khaybar, who, despite their conflicts, often respected the sanctity of envoys. Yet, here were "civilized" Christian rulers committing atrocities that even the *jahiliyyah* Arabs would deem shameful. This stark contrast highlighted a fundamental principle of Islam: while honorable enemies could be engaged in dialogue and treaties, ruthless and treacherous adversaries who attacked innocent messengers required a decisive response. Islam does not endorse a passive acceptance of injustice; it mandates a robust defense of truth and human dignity, especially when the enemy acts with such barbarity, claiming piety while committing unspeakable acts.

To address this grievous affront, the Prophet (s) mobilized a force of three thousand Muslims. Though not physically present, the expedition was termed a *Ghazwah* due to his real-time spiritual presence and narration of the battle from Medina. At a gathering three miles outside Medina, at a place called Jurf, where armies would traditionally assemble, the Prophet (s) appointed three commanders in succession: first, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib; then, Zayd ibn Harithah; and finally, Abdullah ibn Rawahah. He declared that if the first fell, the second would take command, and if the second fell, the third would lead, and if all three were martyred, the Muslims should choose a leader among themselves.

A Jewish scholar present at this declaration remarked, "If these three are indeed martyred as the Prophet (s) has said, then this is a true Prophet, for it is a principle among the Prophets of *Bani Israel* that if they appoint more than one commander, all of them are martyred." He then approached Zayd ibn Harithah and Abdullah ibn Rawahah, asking if they believed

the Prophet (s) to be true. Upon their affirmation, he conveyed that their martyrdom was inevitable, implying it was a death march. While Ja'far al-Tayyar (r.a.) needed no such prompting, Zayd and Abdullah's responses exemplified profound *taqwa*. They viewed impending martyrdom as a source of immense joy, a celebration akin to Eid, eagerly anticipating their return to Allah.

Among these valiant commanders, Abdullah ibn Rawahah (r.a.) held a unique spiritual standing. He was the brother-in-faith to Miqdad ibn Aswad (r.a.), a companion whom the Prophet (s) had praised, stating that he was among the ten degrees of faith, and in certain virtues, even surpassed Salman al-Farsi. Abdullah ibn Rawahah was known for his unwavering courage, always leading the army into battle and being the last to leave the battlefield upon return. Yet, upon hearing the Jewish scholar's prophecy, he wept. When questioned, he revealed that his tears were not from fear of death, but from profound apprehension regarding the afterlife. He cited **Surah Maryam, Ayats 71-72**: **"There is none of you but will pass over it (Hell). This is with your Lord an absolute decree. Then We will save those who were *taqwa*, and We will leave the wrongdoers therein on their knees."** His concern was not death itself, but the terrifying prospect of passing over Hell and the uncertainty of salvation, despite his profound faith. This incident illustrates the deep spiritual insight and self-accountability of the Prophet's companions.

As the Muslim army prepared to depart, the Prophet (s) imparted crucial ethical guidelines for warfare: **"Go forth in the Name of Allah, and fight in the way of Allah against those who are enemies of Allah and your enemies. But beware, do not kill the monks in their monasteries, do not kill women, children, or the elderly. Do not cut down trees, do not destroy buildings, and do not commit treachery."** He specifically instructed them to only engage those "whose minds are entered by Satan," indicating a distinction between those who actively fought Islam

and those who were merely engaged in worship or were non-combatants. This emphasizes Islam's commitment to justice and human dignity even in conflict. To Abdullah ibn Rawahah (r.a.) specifically, the Prophet (s) gave two final pieces of advice: first, perform as many prostrations (*sajdah*) as possible in the lands they were going, for the earth bears witness to a person's worship; and second, remember Allah constantly, at every moment.

The Battle of Mu'tah, though outwardly a tactical draw or even a setback due to the heavy losses of commanders, proved to be a strategic triumph. It provided invaluable combat experience against the formidable Byzantine Empire, psychologically preparing the Muslim army for future large-scale encounters. Furthermore, it exposed the true nature of the Byzantine Empire's cruelty and validated the Prophet's (s) truthfulness through the martyrdom of the three commanders.

This period of the Prophet's (s) life was not solely defined by military engagements but also by profound divine revelations that underscored the Prophet's (s) spiritual stature and the destiny of his blessed lineage. Earlier, the Meccans had mocked the Prophet (s) by calling him "Abtar" (childless, cut off) after the demise of his infant sons. In response, Allah revealed **Surah al-Kawthar**: **"Indeed, We have granted you, [O Mohammad], *Al-Kawthar*. So pray to your Lord and offer sacrifice. Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off."** *Al-Kawthar* signifies abundant good, including an abundance of progeny and blessings. This prophecy was miraculously fulfilled through Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra (a.s.), whose birth had already illuminated Mecca and promised a continuous, pure lineage.

This abundance was reflected even in the rituals of Islam. The speaker noted the unique evolution of *Salat*: initially, only two prayers (Fajr and Maghrib) were obligatory, with four *rak'ats* total. On the Night of *Mi-*

raj, five prayers became obligatory, but with a total of ten *rak'ats*. It was only after the revelation of **Surah al-Kawthar** and the advent of its blessings, particularly the birth of Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.) and her luminous progeny, that the *rak'ats* in *Salat* were increased to seventeen, the number practiced to this day. This increase in worship, performing more *sajdah*, was a direct fulfillment of the divine injunction in *Surah al-Kawthar* to "pray to your Lord and offer sacrifice" in response to His abundant blessings.

The *Qur'an* further unveiled the depth of the Prophet's (s) blessed lineage through the powerful imagery of **Surah al-Rahman, Ayats 19-22**: **"He has released the two seas, meeting [side by side]; between them is a barrier [so] neither of them transgresses. From both of them emerge pearl and coral."** When questioned about these verses, Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) famously explained their inner meaning. He clarified that the "two seas" refer to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) and Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra (a.s.), the "barrier" between them is the Prophet Mohammad (s) himself, and the "pearl and coral" emerging from them are their illustrious sons, Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (a.s.) and Imam Husayn Sayyid al-Shuhada (a.s.). This revelation further solidified the central role of the *Ahlul Bayt* in divine wisdom.

The anticipation of Imam Husayn's (a.s.) birth was a period of immense joy. Umm Ayman, a loyal servant to the Prophet's mother, Aminah, had a profound dream where a limb from the Prophet's (s) body fell into her lap. Initially distraught, believing it a bad omen, she was reassured by the Prophet (s) that it signified the birth of a child from his lineage (Husayn) who would be part of him. Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.) herself observed that as the time for Husayn's birth approached, his *nur* (light) seemed to overshadow the *nur* of Imam Hasan (a.s.) and even her own, the *nur* that gave her the title *Zahra*. The Prophet (s) explained that this was because Imam Hasan (a.s.) carried his own singular *nur*, while Imam Husayn

(a.s.) carried not only his own *nur* but also the *nur* of all the succeeding Imams from his lineage, symbolizing the continuation of the divine mission. This explains the immense spiritual significance of Imam Husayn's (a.s.) birth.

The Prophet (s) exemplified the true way to celebrate such divine blessings. He did not advocate for worldly amusements but for increased devotion and submission to Allah. This was powerfully illustrated when he chose to add *rak'ats* to the daily prayers on the day Imam Husayn (a.s.) was born, affirming that true joy for divine blessings manifests through increased worship. Just as Imam Husayn's (a.s.) arrival established the seventeen *rak'ats* of daily prayer, his sacrifice at Karbala preserved *Salat* for all time, making him the one whose coming *created* and whose departure *saved* prayer.

Furthermore, Imam Husayn (a.s.) taught a profound lesson on the true value of knowledge and service. On one occasion, he lavishly rewarded a humble teacher who had taught his son Surah al-Hamd, gifting him a thousand dinars and a thousand garments. When questioned about such generosity for what seemed a minor service, Imam Husayn (a.s.) responded that what the teacher imparted (knowledge of *Qur'an*) was eternal and infinitely more valuable than any material recompense, which would eventually perish. This emphasized that true appreciation recognizes the enduring spiritual benefit over fleeting worldly gain. The Prophet (s) and his *Ahlul Bayt* consistently guided humanity towards recognizing and valuing the eternal blessings of Allah through devotion, knowledge, and selfless service.

Chapter 129

The Martyrs of Mu'tah and Divine Victory

The strategic import of the Battle of Mu'tah, which unfolded in the early months of the 8th year of *Hijrah*, cannot be overstated. Though seemingly a tactical setback due to the sheer numerical superiority of the enemy, it was, in its profound essence, a significant strategic triumph, akin to the peace treaty of Hudaybiyyah in its long-term implications. The Prophet (s) dispatched a force of three thousand Muslims, primarily comprised of the devoted yet largely civilian companions, to confront a formidable adversary: the Byzantine Empire and their allied Christian Arab tribes. This vast enemy host numbered between one hundred thousand and three hundred thousand, boasting a highly trained, well-equipped army seasoned by recent conflicts with the Persian Empire. This was a stark contrast to the small-scale skirmishes Muslims had engaged in previously, marking their first major direct confrontation with a global superpower of the era.

Before their departure, the Prophet (s) laid down stringent ethical guidelines for warfare, principles that starkly contrasted with the brutal norms of the time. He commanded them not to harm women, children, the elderly, or monks dwelling in monasteries. He forbade the destruction of trees, the demolition of houses, or the burning of crops. This instruction

underscored Islam's commitment to justice and compassion, even in the throes of battle.

The Prophet (s) appointed three successive commanders: Zayd ibn Harithah, followed by Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, and then Abdullah ibn Rawahah. As the Muslim army marched towards the Syrian borders, intelligence reports confirmed the overwhelming numbers of the Byzantine forces. A wave of concern rippled through the ranks; some suggested waiting for the Prophet's (s) further instructions or engaging in a smaller, less direct confrontation. However, Abdullah ibn Rawahah, the third in command, rose to deliver an impassioned address. He reminded the Muslims that their struggle was not for worldly gain, spoils of war, or territorial conquest, but for martyrdom and the pleasure of Allah. He eloquently articulated that Allah had honored Islam through their striving and that they fought for a spiritual objective, not a material one, bolstering their resolve and commitment.

The Muslim forces arrived at Mu'tah, a valley renowned for its sword manufacturing. The clash of three thousand against hundreds of thousands was unprecedented. The first commander, Zayd ibn Harithah, fought with unparalleled courage, holding the banner high until he fell, succumbing to numerous wounds, embracing martyrdom.

Upon Zayd's fall, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet's (s) beloved cousin and brother of Imam Ali (a.s.), immediately seized the banner. He fought with extraordinary valor, exemplifying unwavering faith. When his right hand was severed, he gripped the banner with his left; when that too was cut off, he clutched it to his chest with his arms, determined not to let it fall. He continued to fight until he was martyred, his body riddled with wounds. In honor of his sacrifice, the Prophet (s) later revealed that Allah had granted Ja'far two wings in Paradise, enabling him to fly with the angels, earning him the title "Ja'far al-Tayyar" (the flying Ja'far) or

"Dhul Janahayn" (the possessor of two wings).

Following Ja'far's martyrdom, Abdullah ibn Rawahah, the third commander, took the banner. Initially, he hesitated briefly, not from fear of death, but due to a profound moment of reflection on his worldly attachments—his family, servants, and possessions. He recited poignant verses, acknowledging this inner struggle and reaffirming his ultimate desire for martyrdom. In a remarkable act of devotion, he even made arrangements to free his household and, as recounted in some narratives, divorced his wife, believing her love for him might impede his path to ultimate sacrifice. His resolve became absolute, and he plunged into the battle, fighting fiercely until he, too, was martyred. It is reported that a radiant light emanated from his mouth at the moment of his passing, a testament to his purity and sincerity.

With the three appointed commanders martyred, Thabit ibn Arqam, a companion, quickly took the banner and, assessing the situation, passed it to Khalid ibn al-Walid. Khalid, a recent convert to Islam, displayed remarkable tactical brilliance. He shrewdly rearranged the Muslim ranks, shifting the vanguard to the rear, the left flank to the right, and vice versa. This maneuver created the illusion of new reinforcements arriving, disorienting the Byzantine army. Misinterpreting this as a fresh influx of Muslim troops, the Byzantines hesitated and then began to retreat, allowing the Muslim force to withdraw safely without being annihilated.

A profound miracle unfolded in Medina during the battle. The Prophet (s), seated in the mosque, miraculously witnessed the entire engagement in real-time. He narrated the events to the awe-struck companions, describing the fall of each commander, their bravery, and the changing tide of the battle. He informed them of Zayd's martyrdom, then Ja'far's, and finally Abdullah ibn Rawahah's, conveying the divine honors bestowed upon them.

When the Muslim army returned to Medina, some people, not understanding the strategic brilliance of the retreat, initially called the returning soldiers "fleeing" (*al-firarun*). However, the Prophet (s) immediately intervened, correcting their perception. He declared that these soldiers were "the attackers" (*al-karrarun*) and that they would indeed return for future battles.

The Prophet (s) displayed profound grief for the martyrs, especially for Ja'far, whom he mourned deeply, similar to his mourning for Hamzah. He visited Ja'far's widow, Asma bint Umays, and comforted his orphaned children: Abdullah, Muhammad, and Awn. He embraced Abdullah ibn Ja'far, who bore a striking resemblance to the Prophet (s) himself, and blessed him. For Muhammad ibn Ja'far, the Prophet (s) noted his resemblance to Abu Talib. Out of immense compassion for the families of the martyrs, the Prophet (s) established a noble *sunnah*: he instructed his household to prepare and send food to Ja'far's family for three days, alleviating their burden during their period of mourning. This practice became a deeply cherished tradition in Islam, emphasizing communal support during times of sorrow.

The Battle of Mu'tah, though not a decisive military victory in terms of territory gained, was a significant strategic success. It shattered the myth of Byzantine invincibility, provided invaluable combat experience for the Muslim army in confronting a superpower, and psychologically prepared the Arab tribes for the future **Conquest of Mecca**. It demonstrated the resilience of the Muslim spirit, the divine protection afforded to the Prophet (s) and his companions, and the enduring spiritual value of martyrdom in the path of Allah. The spiritual stations of the martyrs, particularly Ja'far, Zayd, and Abdullah ibn Rawahah, were elevated and recognized by Allah, serving as eternal beacons of sacrifice and devotion.

In the broader context of the Prophet's (s) teachings, the emphasis was

also placed on the spiritual preparedness for the journey to the afterlife. The shroud (*kafān*), as the final garment for the deceased, held profound spiritual significance. It was a means of testifying to one's faith and connection to the blessed lineage of the Prophet, offering solace and spiritual aid for the journey to the Hereafter. The Prophet (s) taught that certain practices, like the provision of sustenance for the bereaved, were acts of profound compassion that eased the burden of grief for the living and honored the departed.

Chapter 130

The Expedition of Dhat al-Salasil: A Testament to Prophetic Wisdom and Strategic Leadership

As the Muslim community in Medina continued to consolidate its strength after the Battle of Mu'tah, the Prophet Muhammad (s) remained ever vigilant, strategically responding to threats and extending the message of Islam. While the *ghazwat*—battles personally led by the Prophet—are well-known, numerous other expeditions, known as *saraya*, were dispatched under the command of his trusted companions. These *saraya* were critical in asserting the nascent Islamic state's authority, gathering intelligence, and preempting hostile tribal movements.

One such significant expedition, known as the *Sariya* of Dhat al-Salasil, took place in the seventh or eighth year after the *Hijrah*. The Prophet (s) appointed Amr ibn al-Aas as its commander, dispatching a force towards the northern regions, where tribes like Banu Quda'ah, Banu Bali, and Banu Udhrah were reportedly gathering with hostile intentions near the Byzantine borders. This expedition was particularly challenging due

to the harsh environmental conditions encountered by the Muslim force.

The journey was marked by intense cold and scarcity of water, pushing the companions to their limits. Amidst these arduous circumstances, Amr ibn al-Aas made several leadership decisions that, though unconventional, were rooted in deep strategic foresight. At one point, facing extreme cold, Amr instructed his men to perform *tayammum* (dry ablution) for the Fajr prayer, even when water was reportedly available nearby. His reasoning was that performing a full ablution or bath in the biting cold risked severe illness or even death for his soldiers, potentially incapacitating the army.

Furthermore, Amr strictly forbade the lighting of fires at night, despite the freezing temperatures and the companions' desperate need for warmth. This decision was a calculated strategic move to maintain complete secrecy and prevent the enemy from detecting their presence or estimating their numbers. Surprise was paramount for the success of this mission, as the Muslim force was relatively small compared to the potential gathering of enemy tribes.

Upon their return to Medina, some companions, feeling the brunt of the harsh conditions and perhaps misunderstanding Amr's decisions, expressed their complaints to the Prophet (s). They questioned Amr's leadership, particularly his insistence on *tayammum* over water and his prohibition of fires for warmth. The Prophet (s), in his unparalleled wisdom and understanding of the circumstances, listened patiently. He then summoned Amr and asked him to explain his actions.

Amr ibn al-Aas eloquently articulated his rationale, explaining that he feared perishing from the cold if he or his men were to take a full bath, and that preventing fires was crucial for maintaining the element of surprise against the enemy. The Prophet (s), hearing Amr's explanation, was fully satisfied. He affirmed Amr's judgment and commended his

foresight, saying, "Indeed, Allah protected you through your sound judgment." This profound endorsement underscored the Prophet's (s) trust in his chosen commanders and his recognition of the challenging realities of military campaigns. He knew the capabilities of his companions and understood that Amr's decisions, though difficult, were necessary for the expedition's success and the preservation of Muslim lives.

The Expedition of Dhat al-Salasil achieved its objective, successfully dispersing the enemy gatherings and demonstrating the reach and strength of the Islamic state even in distant and challenging terrains. It served as a powerful lesson in strategic leadership, obedience, and the adaptability required in military operations. The Prophet's (s) handling of the companions' complaints also reinforced the importance of trusting the commander's decisions when they are based on sound military judgment and the larger strategic interest, even if they appear unusual at first glance. This episode further highlighted the Prophet's (s) divine insight, as he had chosen Amr, recognizing his intelligence and strategic acumen, for an expedition that required unique and decisive leadership. The Prophet's (s) guidance, whether present in person or through his appointed commanders, remained the bedrock of the Muslim community's strength and success.

Chapter 131

The Expedition of Zat al-Salasil: A Testament to Divine Strategy and Leadership

The eighth year of *Hijrah* unfolded with significant developments, continuing the profound transformation of the nascent Islamic state. Following the heroic, yet arduous, Battle of Mu'tah, where Muslim forces faced the overwhelming might of the Byzantine Empire, the Prophet Mohammad (s) continued to navigate a complex landscape of evolving threats and diplomatic overtures. This period was marked by an expansion of Islam's influence and the continued revelation of divine wisdom, guiding the community towards greater stability and strength.

A remarkable sign of the shifting global order, often recounted as a precursor to Islam's eventual triumph, occurred around this time. When the Persian Emperor, Khosrow Parvez, in arrogant disregard, tore apart the letter of invitation to Islam sent by the Prophet (s), the Messenger of Allah (s) famously prayed: "May Allah tear his kingdom apart." Indeed, divine retribution swiftly followed, as Khosrow's own son, Shiruyeh, rose

against him, assassinating his father and seizing the throne. The Persian Empire, once a formidable power, began a rapid decline, witnessing multiple successions within a short span, a clear fulfillment of the Prophet's (s) prophecy. This incident served as a powerful testament to the Prophet's (s) universal mission and divine backing, foreshadowing the eventual collapse of oppressive empires before the light of Islam.

Among the pivotal military expeditions of the 8th year of *Hijrah*, after the return from Mu'tah and before the monumental Conquest of Mecca, was an important campaign known as *Ghazwah Zat al-Salasil*, also referred to in some narrations as *Ghazwah al-Khabat*. This expedition was necessitated by intelligence reports indicating the gathering of a large, hostile force, primarily from the Banu Quza'ah tribe, near the southern borders of Medina. Their intention was to launch a surprise attack on the Muslim capital, and they had reportedly boasted of chaining the Muslims upon capture, giving the *Ghazwah* its name, "Zat al-Salasil" (of the Chains).

To counter this imminent threat, the Prophet (s) dispatched a force of 300 companions, a contingent that included prominent *Muhajirun* and *Ansar*. What was initially surprising to some was the Prophet's (s) appointment of Amr ibn al-As as the commander of this expedition. The journey proved to be extremely arduous, characterized by severe cold and a desperate shortage of provisions. The companions endured such hunger that they resorted to eating the leaves of trees, and their feet were often wounded from marching on harsh terrain.

During this trying period, Amr ibn al-As's leadership came under scrutiny. At one point, to avoid detection, he ordered the army not to light fires at night, which further intensified the cold for the weary soldiers. Later, he reversed this, perhaps out of strategic miscalculation or a desire to boost morale, leading to a situation that Imam Ali (a.s.) would later critique. The severity of the conditions and Amr's decisions caused significant dis-

tress among the companions, some of whom returned to Medina to report their difficulties to the Prophet (s).

Upon hearing of the army's plight, the Prophet (s), in his infinite wisdom and compassion, decided to send reinforcements. He chose Imam Ali (a.s.) for this critical mission, bestowing upon him a profound blessing: "O Ali! I am sending you to relieve a people from difficulties, and you will come back with success and victory. You will be safe, and those with you will be safe." With this divine assurance, Imam Ali (a.s.) set out with 200 additional companions, carrying provisions and much-needed supplies.

When Imam Ali (a.s.) reached the beleaguered Muslim army, he found them lighting numerous fires. Demonstrating his unparalleled strategic acumen, he immediately expressed his disapproval, stating that such widespread fires would reveal their position to the enemy. He then took command, but not in a way that undermined Amr ibn al-As, but rather by asserting a distinct and superior strategic vision. He did not immediately merge his forces with Amr's but rather took control of the overall operation.

Under Imam Ali's (a.s.) leadership, the combined force began a stealthy night march. He strictly forbade unnecessary conversation and the lighting of any fires, ensuring maximum concealment. His precise instructions ensured that their movements were silent and undetected, allowing them to approach the enemy camp under the cover of darkness. By dawn, they had reached the unsuspecting Banu Quza'ah. Taken completely by surprise, the enemy scattered and fled in disarray without offering significant resistance. The Muslim army, under Imam Ali's (a.s.) brilliant tactical deployment, pursued them, securing valuable spoils without a major confrontation. This swift and decisive victory, achieved through strategic foresight and minimal bloodshed, underscored the divine support enjoyed by the Muslims under their Prophet (s) and his chosen lieu-

tenants.

Upon their triumphant return to Medina, some individuals, including Amr ibn al-As, attempted to claim credit for the victory or expressed veiled grievances regarding Imam Ali's (a.s.) reinforcement. Amr, in a conversation with the Prophet (s), inquired if he had been sent to reinforce him because the Prophet (s) doubted his capabilities. The Prophet (s) immediately dispelled any such notion, elevating Imam Ali's (a.s.) status and clarifying the divine wisdom behind his choice. He declared that Imam Ali (a.s.) was sent not out of doubt, but because of his unparalleled strength, unwavering resolve, and unique capability to achieve victory, reaffirming his blessed station. The Prophet (s) then led the companions in a special *Salat al-Shukr*, a prayer of profound gratitude to Allah for the clear and bloodless victory, with Imam Ali (a.s.) standing behind him, a testament to his pivotal role.

It is important to distinguish *Ghazwah Zat al-Salasil* from another expedition known as *Ghazwah al-Khabat*, which also occurred around this period and involved severe hunger. The *Khabat* expedition, led by Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah, saw the companions reduced to eating tree leaves and, miraculously, a large whale that washed ashore, providing sustenance. While both expeditions highlighted the endurance of the Muslims and divine provision, *Zat al-Salasil* stands out for its strategic military challenge, Imam Ali's (a.s.) critical intervention, and the profound lessons in leadership and *tawakkul*.

This *Ghazwah* served as a critical demonstration of the Prophet's (s) profound wisdom in commanding his forces, his reliance on divine guidance, and his astute understanding of the capabilities of his companions, particularly Imam Ali (a.s.). It also instilled a vital lesson for the Muslims: true *tawakkul* (trust in Allah) is not passive resignation but active, intelligent striving coupled with complete reliance on divine support. This strategic

victory further secured Medina's borders and psychologically prepared the Muslim community for the larger, more significant campaigns that lay ahead, particularly the imminent Conquest of Mecca. The emphasis on ethical conduct in warfare, even in pursuit, continued to distinguish the Muslim army, reflecting the divine values of compassion and justice that underpinned their every action.

Chapter 132

The Violation of Hudaybiyyah and the Impetus for Mecca

The early months of the 8th year of *Hijrah* continued to unfold as a period of dynamic shifts in the regional landscape. Following the Battle of Mu'tah and several smaller expeditions, the strategic balance continued to evolve, setting the stage for one of Islam's most pivotal triumphs. The **Treaty of Hudaybiyyah**, signed two years prior, had stipulated a ten-year truce and allowed Arab tribes to ally with either the Muslims or Quraysh without interference. Among these alliances, the Banu Khuza'ah had chosen to align with the Muslims, while the Banu Bakr had sided with Quraysh.

The fragile peace of Hudaybiyyah was shattered by a grave violation. A poet from the Banu Bakr tribe recited deeply offensive verses, disparaging the Prophet Mohammad (s). A Muslim, driven by righteous indignation, retaliated by killing the poet. This incident, while an act of individual fervor, provided a pretext for the Banu Bakr to unleash their long-standing animosity towards the Banu Khuza'ah. Taking advantage of the dark of night, the Banu Bakr, emboldened by some Quraysh leaders—

specifically Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl, Safwan ibn Umayyah, and Suhayl ibn Amr—launched a brutal surprise attack on the Banu Khuza'ah. This heinous assault occurred while the Banu Khuza'ah were performing their prayers, shattering the sanctity of the *Haram* (sacred precinct) and the explicit terms of the Hudaybiyyah Treaty. The Quraysh leaders, by actively supporting this aggression, explicitly demonstrated their disregard for the peace agreement.

In their dire predicament, the Banu Khuza'ah dispatched a delegation to Medina, seeking the Prophet's (s) protection and justice. Their chief, travelling swiftly, recounted the full extent of the Banu Bakr's treachery and the Quraysh's complicity. He emphasized that the attack was unprovoked and a clear breach of the covenant. Upon hearing their plea, the Prophet (s) was deeply affected. He immediately recognized the gravity of the situation and the necessity of upholding his alliance. Turning to Abu Bakr (r.a.), the Prophet (s) declared, "If I do not help you, then Allah will not help me!" This profound statement underscored the divine imperative to stand by allies and to fulfill covenants, making it clear that defending the oppressed was a matter of faith and divine support.

News of the Banu Bakr's aggression and the Prophet's (s) resolute stance reached Mecca. Realizing the perilous implications of their allies' actions, Abu Sufyan, now the leader of Quraysh, embarked on a desperate journey to Medina. His mission was to appease the Prophet (s), apologize for the breach, and attempt to either renew or amend the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. Upon his arrival in Medina, Abu Sufyan sought out various senior companions, including Abu Bakr (r.a.) and Umar (r.a.), imploring them to mediate with the Prophet (s). He even approached his daughter, Umm Habibah (r.a.), the Prophet's (s) wife, seeking her intercession. However, his pleas were met with firm refusals; no one was willing to compromise on the blatant violation of the treaty. His diplomatic efforts were utterly futile. As he left Medina, clutching a small bundle of dates,

he still hoped for a peaceful resolution.

Meanwhile, the Prophet (s) had already begun secret preparations for a momentous expedition. The betrayal of Quraysh and their allies had provided the clear justification for action. While the full extent of his plan remained undisclosed to most, the Prophet's (s) intention was resolute: to hold Quraysh accountable and to secure Mecca, thus removing the last bastion of polytheism and perpetual animosity against Islam. This period marked the irreversible turn towards the **Conquest of Mecca**, a strategic masterstroke born out of necessity and divine decree.

Chapter 133

The Covenant's Breach and the March to Mecca

The eighth year of *Hijrah* dawned with a pivotal event that irrevocably altered the trajectory of Islam's spread: the audacious violation of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah by Quraysh. The terms of this treaty stipulated that any tribe allied with Quraysh would be afforded protection, just as any tribe allied with the Muslims would be safeguarded. In a blatant act of aggression and miscalculation, the Banu Bakr, allies of Quraysh, launched a brutal attack on the Banu Khuza'ah, who had formally aligned themselves with the Muslims. This assault occurred near Mecca, within the sacred precincts of the *Haram*, and was brazenly aided by some Quraysh leaders themselves. The Banu Khuza'ah, defenseless and suffering, immediately dispatched a delegation to Medina, seeking the Prophet's (s) intervention.

Upon hearing of the treachery, the Prophet Mohammad (s) responded with unequivocal resolve, declaring, "**If I do not help you, Allah will not help me!**" This profound declaration underscored the gravity of the breach and the Prophet's (s) unwavering commitment to his allies, af-

firming that his assistance was not merely a tribal obligation but a divine imperative. The news sent tremors through Mecca, prompting Abu Sufyan, the then-leader of Quraysh, who was returning from Syria, to rush to Medina. He hoped to salvage the broken treaty and avert what he instinctively knew would be a decisive Muslim response.

His diplomatic mission to Medina was fraught with desperation. Abu Sufyan first attempted to seek the Prophet's (s) audience directly, but his overtures were met with a clear and resolute silence from the Prophet (s), signaling that the time for negotiation had passed. He then turned to prominent Muslim figures, hoping to find an intercessor. His first stop was the residence of his own daughter, Sayyidah Umm Habibah (r.a.), who was among the revered *Umm al-Mu'minin*, the wives of the Prophet (s). As Abu Sufyan entered her chamber and attempted to sit on the Prophet's (s) sacred bedding, Sayyidah Umm Habibah (r.a.), with a profound display of unwavering faith and respect for the sanctity of the Prophet's (s) abode, swiftly folded the bedding away. She told her father, "**You are my father, but this is the bedding of the Messenger of Allah, and I cannot allow a polytheist and an impure man to sit upon it.**" Her words, steeped in conviction, highlighted the absolute primacy of faith over familial ties, leaving Abu Sufyan stunned and shamed.

Undeterred by this powerful rejection, Abu Sufyan sought out other influential figures. He approached Imam Ali (a.s.), requesting his intercession with the Prophet (s). Imam Ali (a.s.) firmly declined, stating that the matter was entirely within the Prophet's (s) domain and that no one could interfere. Abu Sufyan then pleaded with Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra (a.s.), entreating her to ask her sons, Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.), to speak on his behalf, hoping their innocence might soften the Prophet's (s) stance. Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.), mirroring her father and husband's resolve, gently but firmly refused, explaining that her children would not act contrary to their grandfather's will. These encounters

unequivocally demonstrated the *Ahlul Bayt's* complete obedience and devotion to the Prophet (s) and their understanding of the divine wisdom guiding his decisions.

Having exhausted all avenues of diplomatic recourse with the Prophet (s) and his closest companions, Abu Sufyan returned to the Prophet's (s) Mosque in a state of utter despair. With no one to intercede or provide a solution, he stood before the Muslims and, in a desperate attempt to create the impression of a resolution, proclaimed, "**O people! I declare the renewal of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah!**" This self-proclaimed declaration was met with a deafening silence; neither the Muslims nor the Prophet (s) acknowledged his words. Knowing his mission had utterly failed, Abu Sufyan returned to Mecca, his heart heavy with dread, leaving Quraysh to face the inevitable consequences of their folly.

Meanwhile, the Prophet (s) immediately commenced preparations for a large-scale expedition towards Mecca. He commanded absolute secrecy, desiring a peaceful entry into the city to minimize bloodshed and preserve lives, prioritizing guidance over retribution. This strategic secrecy was paramount, as any prior knowledge of the Muslim army's approach might incite an unnecessary defensive confrontation from Quraysh. A remarkable incident occurred when Hātib ibn Abi Balta'ah, a companion who had previously participated in the **Battle of Badr**, attempted to send a letter to Mecca, informing Quraysh of the impending attack. The Prophet (s), through divine revelation, became aware of this act. Imam Ali (a.s.) and Zubayr ibn al-Awwam (r.a.) were dispatched to intercept the messenger, recovering the letter as foretold. Upon Hātib's admission, the Prophet (s) displayed his characteristic compassion and wisdom, acknowledging his past sincerity and accepting his apology without public condemnation, highlighting that intentions and previous service could mitigate punishment, though *juristic* matters were distinct. This episode served as a powerful lesson in discretion and loyalty.

As the Muslim army, now numbering around ten to twelve thousand strong, secretly began its march in the month of Ramadan, a unique directive was issued. The Prophet (s) commanded some of his companions to break their fast during the journey, emphasizing that fulfilling the command of Allah and His Messenger (s) in such circumstances was more meritorious than adhering strictly to a voluntary act of worship. This teaching underscored that obedience to the Prophet's (s) direct instructions always superseded individual interpretations of piety, particularly when preparing for a major undertaking like *Jihad*.

En route, the Prophet (s) encountered several key figures who joined his growing army. Among them was his uncle, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (r.a.), who had been secretly observing the situation in Mecca and reporting to Medina. Realizing the gravity of Quraysh's breach and the impending Muslim advance, Abbas (r.a.) decided to finally emigrate with his family. He met the Prophet (s) and his army near the place known as Juhfah. His presence was crucial, providing valuable insights into Mecca's state and further solidifying the Prophet's (s) support network. Others, like the tribes of Banu Ghifar and Banu Muzaynah, also joined the advancing Muslim force, swelling its ranks.

The Prophet's (s) meticulous planning ensured that the approach to Mecca remained concealed from its inhabitants until the last possible moment. His objective was not conquest through overwhelming force and bloodshed, but rather a peaceful entry into the holy city, allowing its people to embrace Islam without coercion or further conflict. The vast army moved with discipline and strategic stealth, ready to reclaim the Ka'bah and cleanse it of idolatry, but with a profound desire for mercy and guidance to prevail.

Chapter 134

Mercy Triumphs: The Night Before the Conquest of Mecca

As the month of Ramadan in the 8th year of *Hijrah* drew to its second *Ashra*, the magnificent Muslim army, now numbering 12,000 strong, reached *Marru al-Zahran* (also known as *Wadi Fatima*), a valley approximately ten miles northwest of Mecca. The journey had been meticulously planned, maintaining the utmost secrecy to ensure a bloodless entry into the sacred city. The Prophet Mohammad (s), ever-wise and merciful, sought to conquer Mecca not by the sword, but by the triumph of truth and compassion.

Upon arrival at *Marru al-Zahran*, as dusk painted the sky, a unique command was issued by the Prophet (s). Instead of gathering around communal fires, every single soldier was ordered to light a separate fire. This strategic maneuver created an awe-inspiring spectacle: twelve thousand individual flames flickering across the vast valley, presenting the illusion of an army far greater in number and spread out over an immense area. This display was intended to strike awe and apprehension into the hearts of the Quraysh, discouraging any thought of resistance.

Unaware of the impending arrival of the Muslim forces, the leaders of Quraysh in Mecca were uneasy. Abu Sufyan, now the de facto leader after the demise of Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab, ventured out of the city with two companions, Hakim ibn Hizam and Budayl ibn Warqa, to gather intelligence. As they observed the countless fires illuminating the horizon, confusion and fear gripped them. They could not comprehend the source or scale of such an encampment.

Meanwhile, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (r.a.), the Prophet's (s) uncle, who had embraced Islam earlier but had remained in Mecca to provide intelligence, seized this opportune moment. Recognizing the gravity of the situation and the Prophet's (s) desire for a peaceful conquest, Abbas (r.a.) rode out on the Prophet's (s) own mule, seeking to encounter someone from Quraysh's leadership. He soon found Abu Sufyan, Hakim, and Budayl.

Upon seeing Abbas (r.a.) and hearing his voice, Abu Sufyan was astonished. Abbas (r.a.) informed him of the Muslim army's arrival, urging him to seek audience with the Prophet (s) immediately to avert bloodshed. Abu Sufyan, realizing the direness of their situation, agreed, and Abbas (r.a.) took him onto the Prophet's (s) mule. As they rode through the Muslim camp, the sight of the Prophet's (s) renowned mount ensured their safety, as no soldier dared to question or harm those riding upon it.

Upon reaching the Prophet's (s) tent, Abu Sufyan was brought before him. Seeing the long-time adversary, some companions, notably Umar ibn al-Khattab (r.a.), called for his execution, remembering his relentless persecution of Muslims. However, Abbas (r.a.) intervened, emphasizing that he had granted Abu Sufyan protection, a right granted to any Muslim to protect a non-Muslim. The Prophet (s), in his boundless mercy and wisdom, honored this protection.

The Prophet (s) then addressed Abu Sufyan directly, asking him if he rec-

ognized that there was no god but Allah. Abu Sufyan, though awestruck by the sheer power and discipline of the Muslim army and convinced of his defeat, initially hesitated on the second part of the declaration of faith, namely, the acceptance of Prophet Mohammad (s) as Allah's Messenger. Abbas (r.a.) pressed him, reminding him of the overwhelming force at their gates and the inevitable consequences of further defiance. Faced with undeniable reality and the Prophet's (s) steadfast resolve, Abu Sufyan eventually pronounced the **Shahadah**, embracing Islam.

This moment was a testament to the Prophet's (s) strategic genius and his profound compassion. Abu Sufyan's conversion, even if initially born out of necessity, served a pivotal role in ensuring a bloodless entry into Mecca. To further facilitate peace, the Prophet (s) bestowed a significant honor upon Abu Sufyan, declaring: "**Whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyan will be safe.**" This act not only acknowledged Abu Sufyan's leadership but also provided a clear pathway for the Meccans to avoid conflict.

As the Muslim army prepared for its final march into the city, an exchange occurred that perfectly encapsulated the spirit of the Prophet's (s) mission. Sa'd ibn Ubadah (r.a.), the commander of the Ansari contingent, passed by Abu Sufyan, proclaiming, "**Today is the day of massacre! Today is the day of humiliation for Quraysh!**" Upon hearing this, Abu Sufyan immediately related it to the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) responded swiftly and definitively, correcting Sa'd (r.a.) by declaring: "**No, Sa'd. Today is the day of mercy! Today is the day of honor for Quraysh!**" This profound statement underscored that the conquest was not an act of vengeance or bloodshed, but a triumph of divine mercy and an opportunity for the Meccans to embrace truth and dignity.

Having accepted Islam and received the Prophet's (s) terms of safety, Abu Sufyan was sent back to Mecca to inform its inhabitants of the impending arrival of the Muslim army and the conditions for their safety. This was

a crucial step in preparing the city for a peaceful transition.

As dawn approached, the Prophet (s) gave precise instructions for the entry into Mecca. The army was divided into multiple contingents, each assigned a specific route to enter the city from different directions. Strict orders were issued: there was to be no bloodshed unless absolutely necessary in self-defense. The Prophet (s) sought to enter Mecca with peace, demonstrating the true essence of Islam as a religion of mercy and guidance.

Chapter 135

The Triumphant Return: Mecca Embraces Islam

The dawn of the conquest of Mecca arrived, heralded by the meticulous preparations and strategic maneuvers of the Prophet Mohammad (s). As the vast Muslim army approached the sacred city, the memory of the Prophet's (s) forced *Hijrah* from Mecca years prior resonated profoundly. At that sorrowful moment, gazing back at the city he deeply cherished, the Prophet (s) had expressed his profound love for Mecca, asserting that had his people not compelled him to leave, he would never have chosen another city over it. On that very journey of emigration, a divine promise had been revealed in **Surah Al-Qasas** (28:85): **"Indeed, He who has ordained the Qur'an for you will surely return you to a place of return."** This momentous day of the conquest was the glorious fulfillment of that divine pledge, a day of victory and mercy, not of vengeance.

As the Prophet (s) prepared to enter the city, his heart overflowing with gratitude, he declared, praising Allah: "All praise be to Allah, who has fulfilled His promise, helped His servant, and granted victory to His army, overcoming the factions (of disbelief) alone." The formidable Muslim

force, now numbering 12,000, was strategically divided into several contingents, each assigned a specific route of entry into Mecca. The Prophet Mohammad (s) himself led the main contingent, instructing all to avoid confrontation and bloodshed unless absolutely necessary for self-defense.

While the Prophet's (s) own contingent entered Mecca peacefully without any resistance, the contingent led by Khalid ibn al-Walid encountered some skirmishes. This brief clash resulted in the martyrdom of two Muslims, Zubair ibn al-Awwam and Karz ibn Jabir al-Fihri, before the Meccans suffered casualties. Though the Prophet (s) had specifically cautioned against initiating any combat, Khalid's encounter necessitated a defensive response, leading to some Meccan fatalities. Meanwhile, the other contingents made their way into the city largely unimpeded, a testament to the comprehensive strategy and the overwhelming show of force that had subdued the Quraysh leadership.

During the entry, an incident involving Umm Hani (r.a.), the Prophet's (s) cousin, highlighted the Prophet's (s) commitment to peace and sanctuary. She had provided refuge to two non-Muslim men, including Abu Jahl's brother. Imam Ali (a.s.), ever diligent in executing the Prophet's (s) directives, arrived to apprehend them. Umm Hani (r.a.) appealed directly to the Prophet (s), seeking his protection for those she had sheltered. The Prophet (s) honored her pledge, declaring that anyone who sought refuge in Umm Hani's (r.a.) house was safe, just as those who sought refuge in Abu Sufyan's house or within the sacred precincts of the Ka'bah itself, or remained inside their own closed homes, were safe. This declaration underscored the conquest as a day of magnanimity rather than retribution, affirming sanctuaries and ensuring a bloodless victory for the majority.

Before entering the sacred precincts of the Ka'bah, the Prophet (s) first proceeded to *Jannat al-Mu'alla*, the historic cemetery of Mecca. He paused

near the graves of his beloved uncle, Abu Talib (a.s.), and his devoted wife, Sayyidah Khadijah al-Kubra (r.a.), showing his reverence and remembering their immense sacrifices. He then performed a purifying *ghusl* (ritual bath), preparing himself for the momentous entry into the *Ka'bah*.

Approaching the Ka'bah, the Prophet (s) rode his camel, his head bowed low in extreme humility and gratitude, almost touching the camel's back. He circumambulated the sacred House seven times, not in the usual brisk *raml*, but in a state of profound prostration, a continuous act of thanksgiving to Allah. His lips moved in prayer, acknowledging Allah's fulfillment of His promise and the triumph He had granted.

Next came the pivotal moment of opening the Ka'bah. The key to the Ka'bah had historically been held by Uthman ibn Talha of the Banu Shaybah clan. Earlier, before the *Hijrah*, when the Prophet (s) had requested Uthman to open the Ka'bah for him, Uthman had defiantly refused, stating it would only open for him if all the Quraysh had perished. Today, with Mecca under Muslim control, the Prophet (s) summoned Uthman. Bilal al-Habashi (r.a.) went to retrieve the key from Uthman's mother. Uthman reluctantly handed over the key. As the Prophet (s) held the key to the Ka'bah, he addressed Uthman, reminding him of his earlier words and the prophecy that had now come to pass. In an unparalleled act of magnanimity, the Prophet (s) returned the key to Uthman, declaring that the honor of bearing the Ka'bah's key would forever remain with his family. This decision solidified the Prophet's (s) commitment to preserving existing dignities where possible and ensured the continuous service of the Banu Shaybah to the Ka'bah.

With the Ka'bah opened, the Prophet (s) entered its sacred interior. Inside, and surrounding the Ka'bah, there were 360 idols of various shapes and sizes, including images of Prophets Ibrahim (a.s.) and Ismail (a.s.), falsely attributed to them. The Prophet (s), carrying his staff, struck each

idol, reciting the glorious verses from the Holy Qur'an: □□□□□" □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □ □□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ "□□□□□□□□ (**"Truth has come, and falsehood has vanished. Indeed, falsehood is ever bound to vanish." - Surah Al-Isra'**, 17:81) and □□□□□" □□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ "□□□□□□□ (**"Truth has come, and falsehood can neither originate nor restore anything." - Surah Saba'**, 34:49). As he struck the idols, they toppled and shattered. For the idols positioned high on the walls, out of his reach, the Prophet (s) called upon Imam Ali (a.s.). Imam Ali (a.s.) ascended upon the Prophet's (s) shoulders, destroying the remaining idols and cleansing the House of Allah from all pagan impurities. The Prophet (s) then asked Ali (a.s.) how he felt in that exalted position, to which Ali (a.s.) responded that he felt as if all veils were lifted before his eyes. The Prophet (s) then uttered a profound statement, "**Ali, blessed is the one who is with the truth, and blessed is the truth that is with Ali.**" Outside the Ka'bah, other prominent idols like Hubal, Lat, and Manat, revered by the Quraysh, were also destroyed.

After the purification of the Ka'bah, the Prophet (s) stood at its threshold and invited the people of Mecca to pledge allegiance to Islam. The inhabitants of Mecca, witnessing the triumph of truth and the merciful conduct of the Prophet (s), came forward in droves to embrace Islam and offer their *bay'at*. While the general pledge was accepted from most, certain individuals, who had committed severe crimes against Islam and its adherents, were specifically excluded from this general amnesty, with a directive for their apprehension. Thus, Mecca, the heartland of idolatry, was liberated, its sacred Ka'bah purified, and its people, witnessing the profound mercy and power of Allah, embraced the truth, ushering in a new era for Islam.

Chapter 136

The Eradication of Ignorance and the Proclamation of Universal Brotherhood

Following the triumphant and largely peaceful entry into Mecca, the blessed Prophet Mohammad (s) continued the purification of the sacred city, beginning with the innermost sanctuary. After the initial removal of the 360 idols surrounding the Ka'bah, the Prophet (s) turned his attention to the images defiling the interior walls of the Holy House. Among these were paintings depicting Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Ismail, and even Sayyidah Maryam (Mary), the mother of Prophet Isa (Jesus). While the presence of images of Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail related to their historical connection with Mecca, the image of Sayyidah Maryam, often associated with a different faith tradition, was likely brought by Meccan traders who frequented Christian lands like Syria. The Prophet (s) personally oversaw the removal and effacement of all these images, ensuring the complete cleansing of the Ka'bah from all forms of polytheistic and improper representations. This act underscored the absolute monotheism of Islam and the sanctity of Allah's House, reaffirming its sole purpose as a place of worship dedicated to the One God.

As the idols within the Ka'bah were dismantled and the interior purified, the Prophet (s) also ordered the destruction of major idols located outside Mecca. Among these were Manat, a significant idol for the people of Medina and its surrounding tribes, located near Qadid on the route between Mecca and Medina. Other prominent idols like Lat and Uzza, revered by various tribes and considered powerful deities, were also targeted. These idols were not merely inanimate objects; they represented deep-seated pre-Islamic beliefs, tribal identities, and systems of power. Their destruction symbolized the comprehensive dismantling of the era of *Jahiliyyah* (ignorance) and the establishment of the pure monotheistic creed throughout the Arabian Peninsula.

Amidst these acts of spiritual and symbolic purification, an unfortunate incident occurred involving a contingent led by Khalid ibn al-Walid. Sent to the tribe of Banu Khuzaymah (or Banu Jazimah, according to some narrations), a branch of the Kinanah tribe, to invite them to Islam and destroy any remaining idols, Khalid's command unfortunately led to bloodshed. Due to deeply ingrained pre-Islamic tribal feuds between Khalid's family and Banu Khuzaymah, and also between the family of Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf (who was also part of the expedition) and Banu Khuzaymah, a misinterpretation of instructions or a resurgence of old animosities led Khalid's forces to engage in combat, killing some members of Banu Khuzaymah who had already declared their acceptance of Islam.

Upon receiving news of this tragic error, the Prophet Mohammad (s) was overcome with immense grief and anger. He immediately raised his hands towards the heavens, declaring, "**O Allah, I disavow what Khalid ibn al-Walid has done! O Allah, I disavow what Khalid ibn al-Walid has done!**" This powerful declaration unequivocally distanced the Prophet (s) and Islam from the injustice. He swiftly dispatched Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) with a significant amount of wealth to Banu Khuzaymah. Imam Ali (a.s.) meticulously compensated every family for their

losses, including blood money for the slain, compensation for stolen property (even to the point of paying for milk spilt from their camels), and additional reparations to ensure no grievance remained. He meticulously calculated the value of even the smallest items, such as a water skin that had been damaged, ensuring complete justice and reconciliation. Imam Ali (a.s.) thus exemplified the Prophet's (s) absolute commitment to justice and mercy, even in the face of unintended harm caused by a Muslim commander. When the people of Banu Khuzaymah were fully compensated and declared their satisfaction, Imam Ali (a.s.) distributed the remaining funds among them, further emphasizing the Prophet's (s) magnanimity and the divine promise, "**And it was due upon Us to aid the believers** (**Wa kāna ḥaqqan ᶜalaynā naṣrul muᵓminīn**)".

After these pivotal events, the Prophet Mohammad (s) ascended Mount Safa, the very place where, eighteen years prior, he had first openly declared his prophethood and invited the Quraysh to Islam, only to be met with derision by his uncle Abu Lahab. Now, with Mecca conquered, a vast assembly gathered before him, eager to hear his pronouncements. The Prophet (s) addressed them, reminding them of the turbulent era of *Jahiliyyah* and then declared, "**O Quraysh! What do you think I am going to do with you?**" Acknowledging his noble character, they replied, "We expect nothing but good from you, noble brother, son of a noble brother." The Prophet (s) then recited the words of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) to his brothers: "**No reproach on you this day. May Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy** (**Lā tathrība ᶜalaykum al-yawm. Yaghfirullāhu lakum wa huwa arḥamur-rāḥimīn**)." He declared a general amnesty, proclaiming, "**Go, you are free!**"

In this landmark address, the Prophet (s) delivered a momentous sermon that laid the foundational principles of the new Islamic society, dismantling all vestiges of the age of ignorance. He emphatically declared, "**All pre-Islamic claims of blood and property are abolished beneath these**

two feet of mine." This meant that all tribal feuds, claims of vengeance, and disputes over wealth from the era of *Jahiliyyah* were nullified. He went on to assert, "**Indeed, Allah has abolished from you the pride of *Jahiliyyah* and its boasting about ancestors. All of you are from Adam, and Adam was from dust.**" He then recited the powerful Qur'anic verse from **Surah Al-Hujurat** (49:13): "**O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.**" This divine proclamation established *taqwa* (God-consciousness and piety) as the sole criterion for honor and superiority, completely eradicating tribalism, racism, and ancestral pride. No longer was a non-Arab inferior to an Arab, nor a white person to a black person; all were equal in the eyes of Allah, distinguished only by their righteousness.

The Prophet (s) then specifically addressed his own clan, Banu Hashim, instructing them to gather. He warned them against complacency and relying on their lineage. He sternly cautioned them, stating that his true friends and allies were those who excelled in piety and good deeds, not merely those related by blood. He admonished them against succumbing to worldly desires while others strove for the hereafter. He made it clear that while he was responsible for his own actions, they were responsible for theirs. He also declared, "**Indeed, Allah has brought an end to injustice between me and you.**" This statement reaffirmed that his mission was to establish justice for all, including his own family, and that no special privileges or exemptions would be granted based on kinship.

During this period, there were individuals who had committed severe transgressions against Islam, some even having apostatized or betrayed trust. Among them was an individual who had served as a scribe for the Prophet (s) but had then apostatized and fled, even altering divine rev-

elations as he transcribed them. This individual was specifically among those for whom the Prophet (s) had ordered execution upon entry into Mecca. However, he was brought before the Prophet (s) by Uthman ibn Affan (r.a.), who interceded on his behalf. The Prophet (s) remained silent for a long moment, then eventually assented to his plea and pardoned the individual, allowing him to accept Islam once more. When asked by companions why he had remained silent, the Prophet (s) indicated that he had hoped one of them would carry out the *hadd* (prescribed punishment) for such a severe transgression. When they asked if he would have signaled, the Prophet (s) famously replied, "**A prophet does not kill by signaling.**" This incident demonstrated the Prophet's (s) immense magnanimity and reluctance to inflict punishment, preferring mercy even for those who had committed grave offenses, setting an unparalleled example of forgiveness.

The Prophet (s) reiterated the core Islamic principles throughout his addresses: that all Muslims are brothers and sisters, their blood is sacred, and they are like a single hand against external threats. He emphasized that the honor of one Muslim is tied to the honor of another, and injustice against one is injustice against all. Every individual, regardless of their past sins, was to be accorded respect as a human being and a Muslim.

It is perhaps in reflection of these profound principles of justice, mercy, and brotherhood that later historians and scholars contemplated the future challenges to these ideals, particularly the injustices that would befall the Prophet's (s) own *Ahlul Bayt*. The events surrounding the martyrdom of Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.), the beloved daughter of the Prophet (s), stand as a testament to the endurance of these principles in the face of profound adversity. Her *sabr* (patience) in the face of immense suffering and the sorrow of Imam Ali (a.s.) upon her passing, as evidenced by his unprecedented display of grief and appearance in public, underscore the heavy burden of injustice borne by the Prophet's (s) household, yet

always within the framework of divine wisdom and patience. These are the burdens that were borne by those who stood firm on the principles of justice and *taqwa* which the Prophet (s) so emphatically proclaimed in Mecca, ensuring that the legacy of true Islam would continue through their unwavering resolve.

Chapter 137

Justice and Mercy: Fates at the Conquest of Mecca

The triumphant entry into Mecca was a testament to the Prophet Muhammad's (s) profound vision of mercy and peace. While the city itself was largely spared violence, a specific list of individuals, notorious for their relentless animosity, prolonged persecution, and slander against Islam and the Prophet (s) himself, had been compiled. For these few, the Prophet (s) had initially decreed that they were to be apprehended and brought to justice, even if found clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah. Yet, even among this specific group, the Prophet's (s) unparalleled magnanimity shone through, offering clemency to many who sought it, while ensuring justice for those whose crimes necessitated it.

One of the most striking instances of the Prophet's (s) forgiveness involved **Habbar ibn al-Aswad**. This individual had committed an atrocity against the Prophet's (s) beloved daughter, Sayyidah Zaynab (r.a.), years earlier. During her migration to Medina, Habbar had attacked her, causing her to fall from her camel while pregnant, which tragically led to a miscarriage and, ultimately, contributed to her martyrdom. Despite this

grave offense, Habbar, upon realizing the inevitability of the Muslim conquest, directly approached the Prophet (s), expressed deep remorse, and embraced Islam. In an astonishing display of mercy, the Prophet (s) pardoned him, demonstrating that no personal injury, however profound, could eclipse the spirit of forgiveness upon sincere repentance.

Among those initially marked for apprehension were several prominent figures known for their vehement opposition. **I'krimah ibn Abi Jahl**, the son of the Prophet's (s) most bitter enemy, Abu Jahl, had fled towards Yemen. However, his courageous wife, Umm Hakim, sought and obtained a pledge of safety for him from the Prophet (s). She then traveled to Yemen, brought I'krimah back to Mecca, and he too, despite his fierce past, embraced Islam under the Prophet's (s) compassionate gaze. Similarly, **Wahshi ibn Harb**, the Abyssinian slave who had tragically martyred Sayyiduna Hamza (r.a.) at the Battle of Uhud, also fled Mecca. Yet, upon receiving the message of divine forgiveness and hope from the Qur'an, he too returned, confessed his past, accepted Islam, and was granted pardon, living out his life as a Muslim.

A number of poets and satirists, who had relentlessly insulted the Prophet (s) and Islam through their verse, were also on the list. These included individuals like **Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh**, two sons of Abu Lahab (**Uqbah** and **Muqaffal**), and a renowned Arab poet, **Ibn Zubair**. Despite their malicious provocations, when they came forward, humbled and repentant, the Prophet (s) pardoned them. Ibn Zubair, in particular, was so moved by the Prophet's (s) clemency that he composed an ode in praise of the Prophet (s), receiving the blessed cloak of the Prophet (s) as a mark of honor. One of the two slave girls who used to sing satirical songs for Abdullah ibn Khatal was also pardoned. Another slave girl, a singer belonging to Umm Hani, who was known for her satirical songs, had been ordered to be killed. However, Umm Hani hid her, and she eventually fled Mecca, dying later in Najran, thus not being killed by the Muslims

during the Conquest.

While mercy was extended broadly, certain individuals were brought to justice due to their persistent defiance, treacherous apostasy, or unpardonable crimes. **Miqyas ibn Sababah** was one such case. His brother, a Muslim, had been mistakenly killed by a Muslim soldier in a prior engagement. Miqyas, though initially appearing to embrace Islam, was driven by a thirst for revenge. He feigned acceptance of Islam, killed the soldier who had killed his brother, apostatized, and fled to Mecca. His act was a deliberate betrayal of faith and an act of murder. During the Conquest, he was apprehended and executed, as his crime was not one of past enmity, but of willful treachery and bloodshed after supposedly embracing Islam.

Another stark example was **Abdullah ibn Khatal**. A former Muslim who had been entrusted with collecting *zakat* funds, he committed a heinous act of murder against his Muslim companion over a trivial dispute regarding food. Following this, he apostatized, fled to Mecca with the *zakat* money, and engaged two slave girls to sing satirical songs against the Prophet (s). His defiance and betrayal were flagrant. The Prophet (s) had issued a specific decree for his execution wherever he was found. During the entry into Mecca, Abdullah ibn Khatal was discovered clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah, believing its sanctity would protect him. However, his crimes were beyond the general amnesty, and he was justly executed by Sa'id ibn Hurayth (or possibly Ammar ibn Yasir) within the sacred precincts of the Ka'bah. One of the slave girls who sang for him was also executed, while the other was pardoned.

Two other notorious satirists, **Harith ibn Nufayl ibn Wahb** and **Hawras (or Khuras)**, who had continued their verbal assaults against the Prophet (s), also faced justice. Unlike those who sought repentance, these two remained defiant. They were pursued and killed by Imam Ali (a.s.), en-

suring that justice was served for their persistent and malicious slanders.

The events surrounding the Conquest of Mecca showcased the Prophet Muhammad's (s) unparalleled wisdom, where profound mercy coexisted with unwavering justice. The vast majority of Meccans were pardoned, and even many of the most virulent enemies received clemency upon repentance. However, for those whose crimes involved deliberate murder, gross treachery, or unrepentant and persistent aggression against the sacred, justice was meted out, drawing a clear line between the spirit of forgiveness and the necessity of upholding social order and divine law.

Chapter 138

The Bay'at of Women and the Unyielding Scale of Justice

The triumphant entry into Mecca continued to unfold as a testament to the Prophet Muhammad's (s) unparalleled mercy and his profound commitment to justice. Having addressed the cases of several prominent male adversaries who had either repented or faced deserved retribution, the focus now turned to a few remaining individuals marked for execution, among whom were several women notorious for their deep-seated enmity and malicious actions against Islam and the Prophet (s).

Among these was Hind bint Utbah, the wife of Abu Sufyan. Her past was stained by the brutal mutilation of the blessed body of *Sayyid al-Shuhada*, Hamza (r.a.), at the Battle of Uhud. Yet, in a moment of profound transformation, she approached the Prophet (s) at *Mount Safa*, humbly expressing her desire to accept Islam. The Prophet (s), in his boundless magnanimity, pardoned her. She then pledged allegiance, famously confessing to past evils and seeking forgiveness, showcasing a remarkable shift from fierce animosity to sincere submission. Similarly, two slave girls, Sarah and Qaribah, who had engaged in satire against the Prophet

(s), and another woman named Aqtal, were also among those who received clemency and accepted Islam, demonstrating the profound transformative power of the Prophet's (s) compassion.

As the purified Ka'bah stood witness, a pivotal moment occurred: the *adhan* was called. By the Prophet's (s) command, Bilal ibn Rabah (r.a.), the former Abyssinian slave, ascended the rooftop of the sacred House. His powerful, resonating call to prayer echoed through the valley, a sound that symbolically dismantled the pillars of *Jahiliyyah*—racism, tribal pride, and social hierarchy. It was a profound statement that in Islam, *taqwa* was the sole criterion for honor, not lineage or skin color. Even Meccan leaders, newly embraced into Islam, such as Abu Sufyan, initially struggled with the sight of Bilal, a former slave, in such a prominent position. Yet, this act solidified the revolutionary equality Islam championed.

Following the initial period of establishing order, the Prophet (s) convened an assembly at *Mount Safa* to receive the allegiance (*Bay'at*) of the women of Mecca. This was a crucial step in formalizing their acceptance of the new Islamic order. The Prophet (s) recited the conditions of their pledge, as revealed in **Surah Al-Mumtahanah (60:12)**:

"O Prophet! When believing women come to you to take the oath of allegiance to you, that they will not associate anything with Allah, and will not steal, and will not commit adultery, and will not kill their children, and will not fabricate a falsehood which they have forged between their hands and feet, and will not disobey you in what is right, then accept their allegiance and ask Allah to forgive them. Indeed, Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful."

The Prophet (s) meticulously explained each condition. During this *Bay'at*, he did not physically shake hands with the women, a practice consistent with the Islamic principles of modesty. Instead, he would place his hand in a vessel of water, and the women would then place their hands in

the same water, signifying their pledge. This respectful method demonstrated the Prophet's (s) adherence to divine guidance while also facilitating the women's sincere acceptance of Islam.

Among the women present, Hind bint Utbah, who had already accepted Islam, courageously engaged with the Prophet (s) during the pledge, asking questions about the conditions. When the Prophet (s) mentioned not to kill their children, she wryly remarked that they had nurtured their children only for them to be killed by Muslims in battle, a poignant reference to the past conflicts. The Prophet (s) patiently clarified that the condition referred to the pre-Islamic practice of infanticide. She then pledged her allegiance fully. Others present also had questions, but ultimately, all accepted the terms of the *Bay'at*.

The unwavering principle of justice was further highlighted during this period when an incident of theft occurred. A woman from a prominent family of Quraysh was found guilty of stealing. Her relatives, seeking to spare her the prescribed punishment of amputation, approached Usamah ibn Zayd (r.a.), who was beloved by the Prophet (s), to intercede on her behalf. Usamah (r.a.) hesitantly presented their plea to the Prophet (s).

The Prophet (s)'s reaction was one of immense displeasure. He stood before the people and delivered a powerful sermon, emphasizing the absolute equality of all before God's law. He condemned the practice of previous nations who would punish the weak while excusing the noble, stating that such discrimination led to their destruction. Then, in a declaration that reverberated through history and exemplified the core of Islamic justice, he proclaimed: **"By Allah, if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, were to steal, I would cut off her hand!"**

This statement, uttered by a father who held his daughter, Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.), in the highest esteem and love, unequivocally established that the law of Allah transcended all personal relationships, status,

or lineage. It affirmed that justice was to be applied universally, without exception or favoritism. The Prophet (s) clearly conveyed that any act of injustice, particularly against his beloved daughter, would incur divine displeasure. He emphasized that **"Allah is displeased by Fatima's displeasure, and Allah is angered by Fatima's anger,"** underscoring her profound spiritual status and the grave consequences of causing her any distress or injustice. This principle served as a stark warning and a foundational precept for the nascent Islamic state.

The Prophet (s) remained in Mecca for approximately two weeks, consolidating the Islamic order, cleansing the Ka'bah, and teaching the Meccans the principles of their new faith. His time in Mecca concluded with a complete establishment of justice, mercy, and *taqwa*, laying the groundwork for a society founded on divine principles.

Chapter 139

The Battle of Hunayn: A Divine Lesson in Trust and Steadfastness

Following the triumphant and largely peaceful Conquest of Mecca, the burgeoning Islamic state faced a new and formidable challenge from the Hawazin and Thaqif tribes. These powerful Bedouin confederacies, residing in the mountainous region east of Mecca, harbored deep animosity towards Islam and were apprehensive of the Muslims' recent successes. Fearing that their turn for subjugation was imminent, they resolved to pre-emptively confront the growing Muslim power. They gathered a substantial army, including their women, children, and livestock, signifying their determination for a decisive, all-or-nothing engagement, and positioned themselves in the valley of Hunayn, a strategic location on the road to Ta'if.

The Muslim army, bolstered by the new converts of Mecca and reinforced by the *Ansar* and *Muhajirun*, numbered an impressive twelve thousand strong—the largest force ever assembled under the Prophet Muhammad's (s) banner. This numerical strength, however, inadvertently sowed the seeds of a dangerous complacency among some. A sense of self-admiration,

or *'ujb*, crept into their hearts, leading some to believe that their overwhelming numbers guaranteed victory and that they no longer needed to rely solely on divine assistance. This nascent pride, as the **Glorious Qur'an** would later reveal, was a grave miscalculation.

The Prophet (s) led his army into the Hunayn valley, known for its treacherous terrain and concealed paths. As the Muslim vanguard advanced in the pre-dawn hours, they were ambushed by the Hawazin archers, who had strategically positioned themselves on the surrounding hills. The sudden and intense volley of arrows caught the Muslims off guard. Panic ensued, and the vast army, previously so confident in its numbers, broke ranks and scattered. The Qur'an vividly describes this moment: **"Allah has certainly given you victory in many battlefields and on the day of Hunayn, when your great numbers delighted you, but they did not avail you anything, and the earth, with all its vastness, seemed to shrink for you, and you turned your backs and fled."** (**Surah At-Tawbah, 9:25**). The earth, despite its spaciousness, felt constricted, and the Muslim lines dissolved into a desperate flight.

In this moment of profound disarray, while most of the army fled in panic, the Prophet Muhammad (s) stood firm, an embodiment of unwavering resolve. He held his ground, calling out to the fleeing Muslims with a resounding voice, **"O people, to me! I am the Messenger of Allah! I am Muhammad, the son of Abdullah!"** Around him, a small band of loyal companions, including Imam Ali (a.s.), Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (r.a.), Abu Bakr (r.a.), Umar (r.a.), and others from the *Ahlul Bayt* and steadfast *Muhajirun* and *Ansar*, stood steadfast. It was then that divine intervention manifested. As the Qur'an continues: **"Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and He sent down hosts which you did not see, and He punished those who disbelieved. And that is the recompense of the disbelievers."** (**Surah At-Tawbah, 9:26**). Allah sent down *sakinah*—a profound sense of peace

and tranquility—upon the Prophet (s) and the steadfast believers, along with unseen hosts of angels who reinforced the Muslim lines.

Inspired by the Prophet's (s) fortitude and the renewed divine assistance, the scattered Muslims gradually returned to the battle. The tide dramatically turned. The Hawazin and Thaqif were overwhelmed, their resistance crumbled, and they were decisively defeated. The Battle of Hunayn, though initially a moment of severe trial, ultimately concluded in a resounding victory for the Muslims.

This battle served as a profound lesson, etching into the hearts of the believers the paramount importance of humility and absolute reliance on Allah. The initial setback was a direct consequence of *'ujb*, the self-admiration that led to a momentary lapse in absolute trust in the Almighty. It reiterated the wisdom previously imparted during the Battle of Uhud: true victory comes not from numbers, material strength, or human strategy alone, but from unwavering faith, obedience to Allah and His Messenger, and sincere humility.

In the aftermath of Hunayn, the defeated tribes retreated to their fortified city of Ta'if. This necessitated a subsequent siege, during which the Prophet (s) and his companions demonstrated a pragmatic approach to warfare and knowledge acquisition. At this juncture, the expertise of Salman al-Farsi (r.a.) came to the fore, as he advised the use of a *manjaniq* (catapult)—a technology then alien to the Arabs but known in his native Persia—to breach the formidable defenses of Ta'if. This willingness to adopt effective tools and knowledge, even from non-Muslim civilizations, underscored Islam's embrace of wisdom from all sources, provided it aligned with righteous principles.

The Battle of Hunayn, therefore, stands as a pivotal event in the history of Islam, not merely for its military outcome but for the spiritual and psychological lessons it imparted. It was a stark reminder that true power

resides with Allah, and that human pride, no matter how subtly it manifests, can lead to grave consequences. It reinforced the foundation of faith as ultimate trust in the Divine, irrespective of outward circumstances, and solidified the Prophet's (s) leadership as an exemplar of steadfastness and reliance on God.

Chapter 140

The Battle of Hunayn: A Lesson in Divine Reliance and Humility

Following the momentous Conquest of Mecca, a new and significant challenge emerged for the burgeoning Islamic state. The triumph in Mecca, though primarily peaceful, did not signify the end of external threats. Two powerful and ancient Arab tribes, the Hawazin and Thaqif, perceived the fall of Mecca as a direct challenge to their own standing and an opportunity to fill the power vacuum in the Arabian Peninsula. These tribes, who had long viewed themselves as peers, if not rivals, to Quraysh, began two years prior, after the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, to consolidate their forces. They aimed to prevent the complete dominance of Islam and assert their own authority. They viewed the Muslims' peaceful return from Hudaybiyyah as a sign of Quraysh's weakness, and now, with Mecca under Muslim control, they felt it was their duty to "save the honor of Arabia."

As the Prophet (s) and the Muslim army prepared to depart Mecca, the Hawazin and Thaqif had already mobilized. Their youthful and zealous leader, Malik ibn Awf, dismissed the wisdom of the aged and ex-

perienced Durayd ibn al-Simmah, who advised against taking women, children, and livestock to the battlefield. Malik, in his youthful overconfidence, insisted on bringing entire families, believing it would force his men to fight with greater resolve, preventing any thought of retreat. This decision, as history would prove, was a grave error.

The Prophet (s), ever vigilant and aware of the spiritual state of his army, began to notice a dangerous sentiment emerging among some of the Muslims. With a force of twelve thousand—ten thousand who had marched from Medina and an additional two thousand new converts from Mecca, known as *Tulaqa'*—a sense of self-admiration, or *'ujb*, began to creep into their hearts. Some remarked, "We will not be defeated today due to our numbers!" The Prophet (s) knew that true victory lay not in numerical superiority but in absolute reliance on Allah, a lesson powerfully taught at Badr when the Muslims were few yet triumphed. This burgeoning pride would soon be tested. As Allah Almighty states in **Surah At-Tawbah (9:25)**: **"Indeed Allah has assisted you on many battlefields, and on the Day of Hunayn, when your multitude pleased you, but it availed you naught, and the earth, with all its vastness, became strait for you, then you turned back in flight."**

Even before the battle, two significant incidents occurred, serving as immediate spiritual warnings. As the army marched, they passed a large, ancient tree known as *Dhat al-Anwat*, where pre-Islamic Arabs would hang their weapons for blessings. Some of the new Muslims, still clinging to remnants of their past beliefs, requested the Prophet (s) to designate a similar tree for them. The Prophet (s) responded with dismay, stating, **"You are saying what the people of Musa said to Musa: 'Make for us a god just as they have gods.' Indeed, you are an ignorant people."** This moment underscored the ongoing struggle against *shirk* and the need for purification of faith.

Shortly after, the army passed an ancient grave. The Prophet (s) remarkably identified it as the tomb of Abu Righal, an ancestor of the Thaqif tribe, who had betrayed his people in ancient times. He informed them that a slab of gold had been buried with him. Upon excavating the grave, a large slab of gold, weighing twenty *mann* (approximately 160 pounds), was indeed found, confirming the Prophet's (s) truthfulness and miraculous knowledge. This was another powerful sign, a testament to his divine connection, yet even after witnessing such a miracle, many would soon falter.

The Muslim army advanced into the Hunayn valley, a narrow pass flanked by steep mountains, approximately eleven miles east of Mecca. Unbeknownst to them, Malik ibn Awf had meticulously prepared an ambush, stationing his archers and warriors on the high ground overlooking the pass. As the Muslims entered the confined valley, they were suddenly assailed by a hail of arrows, stones, and spears from all directions. The surprise attack caused immediate panic and disarray. The vast Muslim army, overwhelmed by the sudden onslaught, broke ranks and fled in all directions. The earth, despite its vastness, seemed to shrink around them, as described in the Qur'an.

Amidst the chaos and the rout, Prophet Muhammad (s) remained utterly steadfast. Mounted on his white mule, *Duldul*, he held his ground, a beacon of unwavering courage. He called out to the fleeing Muslims, urging them to return: **"To where, O people? I am the Messenger of Allah! I am Muhammad ibn Abdullah!"** Only a handful of individuals remained by his side: Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), Abu Sufyan ibn Harith (the Prophet's cousin, holding the reins of *Duldul*), Umm Ayman (the Prophet's wet nurse), Fadl ibn Abbas, and a few others. Their numbers were so few, some narrations citing as low as four or seven.

It was Imam Ali (a.s.) who, with unparalleled valor, stood like a fortress

against the advancing enemy. Wielding his sword, **Dhul-Fiqar**, he single-handedly confronted and held back the onslaught of the Hawazin and Thaqif forces, preventing them from reaching the Prophet (s). His sword flashed like lightning, pushing back the entire four thousand-strong enemy contingent. Abbas and his son Fadl, witnessing this awe-inspiring display, marveled at Ali's (a.s.) might, acknowledging that his sword was the very reason the enemy was halted, keeping the Prophet (s) safe. During this intense struggle, Ayman, the son of Umm Ayman, bravely fought and was martyred near the Prophet (s).

Seeing the dire situation, the Prophet (s) invoked Allah, raising his hands in supplication, similar to his prayer at Badr: **"O Allah, to You I complain of my weakness and my lack of means, and my helplessness before the people."** He then commanded his uncle, Abbas, who had a powerful and resonant voice, to call out to the Muslims. Abbas cried out, **"O Ansar! O people of the tree (referring to Bay'at al-Ridwan)! O people of Surah al-Baqarah!"** These calls, invoking their past pledges and achievements, began to stir the hearts of the fleeing Muslims, filling them with shame and renewed determination.

Allah then sent down His *sakinah* (tranquility) upon His Messenger and the believers, and unseen hosts (angels) descended to aid them, though they could not be seen. The scattered Muslims began to return, regrouping around the Prophet (s). The tide of the battle dramatically turned. The Muslims, now fighting with renewed resolve and divine assistance, overwhelmed the Hawazin and Thaqif. The enemy, who had brought their entire families to the battlefield, now fled in utter disarray, abandoning their women, children, and vast possessions.

The Battle of Hunayn resulted in an immense victory for the Muslims. The spoils of war were unprecedented, including six thousand captives (women and children), twenty-four thousand camels, forty thousand sheep,

and four thousand *awqiyah* of silver and gold. The defeated tribes, the Hawazin and Thaqif, retreated, the Hawazin to Awtas, and the Thaqif to their fortified city of Ta'if.

Hunayn served as a profound lesson for the Muslim community. It painfully demonstrated that true strength and victory come solely from Allah and from complete reliance on Him, not from numerical superiority or worldly pride. The initial setback, caused by a moment of *'ujb*, was a stark reminder that even after momentous victories like the Conquest of Mecca, the struggle against internal weaknesses and Shaytan's whispers is ongoing. It reiterated the absolute necessity of *Tawhid*—absolute monotheism—in all aspects of life, including battle.

Hunayn also emphatically underscored the indispensable role of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) in preserving Islam. His heroic stand, almost single-handedly holding back a massive enemy force, was a pivotal moment that prevented a catastrophic defeat and safeguarded the Prophet (s). As a powerful anecdote narrated by the Umayyad Caliph Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz highlights, when asked by his son why he praised Ali (a.s.) so much, he explained that without Ali's valor, particularly at Hunayn, there would be no mosques, pulpits, or even Islam itself. The Battle of Hunayn, though marked by an initial rout, ultimately solidified the Muslim state's military supremacy in Arabia and served as one of the last major battles where swords were truly wielded, leading to future conquests.

Chapter 141

The Siege of Ta'if: Unwavering Principles and a Glimpse of Karbala

Following the momentous triumph of the Conquest of Mecca and the subsequent victory at Hunayn, the formidable tribes of Hawazin and Thaqif retreated to the heavily fortified city of Ta'if. The Prophet Muhammad (s), observing their flight, saw the need to consolidate the nascent Islamic state's security and resolve this persistent threat. He therefore led the Muslim army towards Ta'if, a city renowned for its strong defenses and the fierce resolve of its inhabitants.

The Prophet's (s) stay in Mecca after its conquest had stretched for nearly three months, effectively making it a temporary administrative center for Islam. During this period, the Prophet (s) was not only engaged in the Hunayn campaign but also dispatched numerous smaller detachments (*Sarayas*) and led other significant expeditions (*Ghazawat*). This period was a testament to the dynamic and expanding nature of the Islamic movement, laying the groundwork for its dominance across the Arabian Peninsula.

Upon reaching Ta'if, the Muslims encountered a formidable challenge.

The city was ringed by sturdy walls, and its defenders were well-prepared. The people of Ta'if, traditionally rivals of Mecca, were known for their resilience and deep-rooted traditions. The siege of Ta'if introduced advanced military tactics to the Arabian battlefield, with the Prophet (s) employing the *manjaniq* (catapult) to breach the city's walls and the *dabbabah* (a mobile, fortified wooden structure akin to an ancient tank) to protect soldiers approaching the ramparts. These innovative siege engines, possibly introduced or refined through the wisdom of Salman al-Farsi (r.a.), were deployed to overcome Ta'if's strong defenses.

However, the siege proved challenging. The defenders showered the Muslims with arrows and even heated iron, making progress difficult. The Prophet (s) then issued a proclamation: any slave who descended from the fortress and accepted Islam would be granted freedom. This wise policy led to several slaves escaping Ta'if and joining the Muslim ranks, further demoralizing the defenders. The Prophet (s) also declared that the orchards and vineyards outside the fortress walls would be cut down or burnt if the siege continued, a strategic move aimed at pressuring the inhabitants without violating the sanctity of the city itself.

As the siege dragged on, the people of Ta'if, facing dwindling resources and mounting pressure, sought negotiations. Their representatives approached the Prophet (s) with a series of requests, primarily asking for exemptions from performing **Salat** (obligatory prayers) and paying **Zakat** (obligatory charity). They wished to embrace Islam but on their own terms, seeking to avoid these fundamental pillars.

The Prophet Muhammad (s) responded with unwavering firmness. He declared that Islam was not a religion of convenience or compromise. He made it abundantly clear that **Tawhid**—the absolute Oneness of Allah—could not be truly embraced without the practical submission embodied in **Salat** and **Zakat**. He stated that true faith demands complete obedi-

ence to divine commands, and there could be no Islam without these core duties. This steadfastness highlighted the Prophet's (s) commitment to the pure and unadulterated form of Islam, ensuring its principles would never be diluted for political expediency.

During this period of intense military and political activity, a profoundly significant declaration regarding succession and leadership emerged. When questions arose about who would lead the Muslim community after the Prophet (s), or "to whom Islam would be given," the Prophet (s) took the hand of Imam Ali (a.s.) and declared, **"This is the one who will never falter against the enemies of Allah, and he cares not for the blame of blamers."** This powerful pronouncement further cemented Imam Ali's (a.s.) unparalleled position and unequivocally designated him as the true successor and guardian of Islam, demonstrating his absolute resolve and adherence to divine truth.

Adding another layer of profound spiritual foresight to this period, the narrative recalls the poignant vision of Umm Salamah (r.a.), one of the Prophet's (s) revered wives. While the Prophet (s) was on his extended journey from Medina to Mecca and then to Ta'if—a journey that stretched for nearly three months—Umm Salamah (r.a.) remained in Medina, adhering to the Qur'anic injunction for the Prophet's (s) wives to remain in their homes. One day, as Imam Husayn (a.s.) was preparing to depart Medina, Umm Salamah (r.a.) was granted a heart-wrenching vision of the future tragedy of Karbala.

In her vision, she saw a desolate battlefield strewn with fragmented bodies. She saw a tiny, mutilated body, which she recognized as that of Qasim, Imam Husayn's nephew. Then, a young man with a spear piercing his chest appeared, whom she identified as Ali al-Akbar, Imam Husayn's son. Overcome with grief, she then witnessed Imam Husayn (a.s.) himself, covered in blood, attempting to provide water to his infant son, Ali

al-Asghar, only to be struck by an arrow. The final, agonizing sight was that of Lady Zaynab (a.s.), the Prophet's (s) granddaughter, crying out in immense distress, calling upon her grandfather. This vivid and tragic foreshadowing served as a stark reminder of the immense sacrifices yet to be made by the **Ahlul Bayt** for the preservation of Islam, linking the Prophet's (s) absence from Medina to the future journey of his beloved grandson and the ultimate sacrifice of Karbala. The siege of Ta'if thus not only marked a pivotal military engagement but also unveiled deeper spiritual realities, foretelling the tribulations and triumphs that would shape the future of Islam.

Chapter 142

Compassion and Submission: The Aftermath of Hunayn and the Wisdom of Ta'if

The triumphant entry into Mecca and the subsequent Battle of Hunayn marked a pivotal moment in the Prophet Muhammad's (s) mission. With the primary external enemies largely subdued, the focus of the nascent Islamic state began to shift, revealing new internal challenges and the gradual completion of divine ordinances. The period immediately following the Conquest of Mecca, leading up to the Prophet's (s) passing, though relatively short—approximately two and a quarter years—was laden with profound significance. It was a time when the community had to contend with the complexities of managing internal dissent and fully embracing the spirit of submission, a necessary preparation for the Prophet's (s) imminent departure from this world.

The journey initiated for the Conquest of Mecca, which encompassed the Battle of Hunayn and the subsequent Siege of Ta'if, was unexpectedly prolonged, extending from the beginning of Ramadan to the end of Dhul-

Qadah. This nearly three-month expedition was unlike any other in the Prophet's (s) life. It involved multiple engagements, numerous minor incidents, and, remarkably, a unique emphasis on the virtues of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.). While other historical events became more widely known, the full import of this extended journey, particularly among younger generations, remained somewhat underappreciated, despite its crucial role in establishing many principles that would govern the Muslim *Ummah* after the Prophet's (s) demise.

Notably, during this expedition, particularly around the events of Ta'if and Hunayn, the virtues of Imam Ali (a.s.) were highlighted by the Prophet (s) on multiple occasions. These pronouncements were so significant that Imam Ali (a.s.) himself would later cite two specific instances from this very journey during the *Shura* consultation after the Prophet's (s) passing, attesting to his unique relationship with the Messenger of Allah (s). One such instance involved a prolonged private conversation between the Prophet (s) and Imam Ali (a.s.) during the siege of Ta'if, which astonished many. Another occurred when the Prophet (s), frustrated by the Ta'ifis' initial refusal to accept Islam, declared that if they continued to resist, he would send a person to them who was "a never-erring arrow of Allah" and who would mete out divine justice to the defiant. This divine arrow, as later confirmed, was none other than Imam Ali (a.s.). These affirmations underscored Imam Ali's (a.s.) unparalleled spiritual standing and his unwavering commitment to Islam.

The journey also brought to the fore the profound concept of **submission** (***Tasleem***) to the Prophet's (s) rulings and desires. The Qur'an states in **Surah An-Nisa' (4:65)**: **"But no, by your Lord, they will not believe until they make you judge concerning that which has been in dispute between them, and then find no discomfort in their souls concerning what you have decided, and submit with full submission."** This verse, and a similar one in **Surah Al-Ahzab (33:56)** regarding sending blessings

and peace upon the Prophet (s) (**"Salloo alayhi wa sallimoo tasleema"**), underscore that true faith requires not merely verbal assent but also a complete, heartfelt surrender to the Prophet's (s) wisdom and judgment, without any internal reservation or discomfort.

Following the initial Muslim victory at Hunayn, the defeated Hawazin and Thaqif tribes retreated to Ta'if, a heavily fortified city. The Prophet (s) pursued them, initiating the Siege of Ta'if, which lasted for about twenty days. The Muslim forces employed siege weaponry like the *manjaniq* (catapult) and *dabbabah* (armored mobile shelter). However, after observing the Ta'ifis' staunch resistance and understanding their eventual inclination towards Islam, the Prophet (s), demonstrating profound wisdom, decided to lift the siege without a forceful conquest. He knew that forcing their submission would be counterproductive, as the ultimate goal was their sincere conversion. This strategic decision was initially met with some consternation by younger, more zealous Muslims who perceived it as a retreat or a failure to achieve full victory. The Prophet (s) patiently explained his rationale, assuring them that divine guidance would eventually bring the Ta'ifis into the fold of Islam—a prophecy that indeed materialized a year later.

During this period, a subtle yet significant aspect of Islamic legislation was revealed. An incident occurred involving the brother of Umm Salamah (r.a.), one of the Prophet's (s) wives, and a *mukhannath* (an effeminate male) during the siege. This incident, while unusual, served as the direct occasion for the completion of the *hijab* (veiling) injunction. Previously, in the fourth year after the Hijrah, the *hijab* was mandated for women in front of non-mahram men. However, the ruling regarding *mukhannath* individuals had not yet been explicitly clarified. As a result of this incident, the Prophet (s) received a divine instruction, leading him to explicitly command Muslim women to observe *hijab* even in front of individuals who are neither conventionally male nor female, thus completing the

comprehensive scope of the *hijab* injunction. This also brought about the general principle that Muslim women should observe *hijab* in the presence of non-Muslim women if there is a concern that their physical descriptions might be relayed to non-Muslim men. This demonstrates how divine laws, though predestined, often find their specific revelation tied to particular events, serving as a reminder of Allah's (SWT) wisdom in guiding His creation step by step.

After the Siege of Ta'if was lifted, the Prophet (s) returned to Ji'ranah, where the vast spoils from Hunayn—including 6,000 captive women and children, 24,000 camels, 40,000 sheep, and a significant amount of silver—were gathered. This was one of the largest accumulations of war booty in early Islamic history. The Prophet (s) delayed the distribution of these spoils for over a month.

While at Ji'ranah, a delegation from the Banu Hawazin tribe arrived, seeking the return of their captive women and children. This delegation included a woman who was a foster sister to the Prophet (s) and even Sayyidah Halimah, his foster mother, demonstrating their deep familial connection. The leader of the delegation, Zu'air, appealed to the Prophet's (s) compassion and his familial ties through Sayyidah Halimah. He eloquently pleaded for the return of their families, asserting that their relationship to the Prophet (s) superseded any claim on them as war spoils.

The Prophet (s), displaying his boundless mercy and magnanimity, replied that while the spoils had not yet been fully distributed, he could only guarantee the return of his own share and that of Banu Hashim. He then made an extraordinary offer: he would forgo his and his family's share of the captives, and encourage the Muslims to do the same, if the delegation would publicly choose between their families and their material wealth. They chose their families.

The Prophet (s) then addressed the entire Muslim army after the *Dhuhr*

prayer, declaring that he and Banu Hashim had relinquished their share of the captives and invited others to follow suit. While many of the *Sahaba* readily agreed, deeply moved by the Prophet's (s) generosity and compassion, some initially hesitated, having already claimed their portions. This moment highlighted the difference between what was legally obligatory and what was spiritually elevated—the complete submission (*tasleem*) to the Prophet's (s) compassionate suggestion, even if it meant foregoing personal gain. The Prophet (s) patiently explained that anyone who wished to return their captives would be rewarded by Allah (SWT), and those who were not willing to do so should state it publicly, upon which they would be compensated from the next spoils. This approach ensured justice while upholding the moral imperative of compassion. Ultimately, the vast majority of the captives were returned, a testament to the Prophet's (s) influence and the growing spiritual maturity of the community.

After completing the distribution of spoils and addressing these crucial matters, the Prophet (s) prepared to return to Medina. The approach of the sacred months—Dhul-Qadah, Dhul-Hijjah, and Muharram—during which warfare was traditionally prohibited, made it imperative for him to return to the capital. This strategic timing allowed for a period of peace and consolidation, essential for the continuing spread of Islam and the management of internal affairs. The journey back to Medina marked the conclusion of an intense, transformative period that deeply impacted the fledgling Muslim *Ummah*, preparing it for the challenges and responsibilities that lay ahead.

Chapter 143

The Embrace of Islam: Poetic Redemption, Profound Loss, and Divine Signs

Upon the conclusion of the campaigns of Hunayn and Ta'if, as the Muslim army, led by the blessed Prophet (s), began its journey back towards Medina, a temporary administrative center was established in **Ji'ranah**, a location approximately fourteen to fifteen days' journey from Mecca. This served as a vital hub for the distribution of spoils, addressing the concerns of the *Ansar*, and receiving delegations from various tribes before the final return to the illumined city of Medina.

It was during this period, or shortly thereafter, that a pivotal figure, **Urwah ibn Mas'ud al-Thaqafi**, came to the Prophet (s). Urwah was a prominent chieftain of the Thaqif tribe from Ta'if, highly respected even by the Quraysh of Mecca, who regarded him as a leader of immense standing. His name had surfaced earlier during the **Treaty of Hudaybiyyah**, where he had been dispatched by Quraysh to negotiate with the Prophet (s). Witnessing the profound devotion of the companions to the Prophet (s), Urwah had returned to Mecca deeply impressed, advising Quraysh to accept the Prophet's (s) terms. Despite this earlier encounter, he had re-

mained neutral during the subsequent conflicts.

Now, with the military engagements concluded, Urwah ibn Mas'ud approached the Prophet (s), announcing his acceptance of Islam. His conversion was significant; he chose not to declare his faith during the distribution of war spoils at Ji'ranah, avoiding any suspicion that he was motivated by worldly gain. Instead, he sought permission to return to his people in Ta'if to invite them to Islam. The Prophet (s) expressed concern, knowing the fierce nature of his tribe, but Urwah, with unwavering resolve and a profound desire for martyrdom, insisted. He declared that his life was inconsequential if it served the cause of Allah.

Upon his return to Ta'if, Urwah bravely ascended to a high vantage point to call his people to faith. However, the Thaqif, still reeling from the recent siege and their unyielding resistance, responded with hostility. They showered him with arrows, and the great chieftain, Urwah ibn Mas'ud, fell as a martyr. His final words echoed his profound conviction, as he praised the blessed nature of his death, saying, "How blessed is this death, for which Allah's Messenger (s) is pleased with me!" His martyrdom, far from silencing the call to Islam, had a profound impact. It shattered the arrogance and resistance of the Thaqif. Within a month, the very leaders of Ta'if who had resisted Islam, now filled with remorse and regret, journeyed to Medina to declare their allegiance, witnessing the truth that Urwah had sacrificed his life for. Urwah ibn Mas'ud's legacy lived on, particularly through his son Abu Hurayrah, and through his progeny, which includes figures like Umm Kulthum, the mother of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.).

Another remarkable transformation during this period involved **Ka'b ibn Zuhayr**, one of the most celebrated poets of the pre-Islamic era. His father, Zuhayr, was among the seven most renowned poets whose *qasidahs* (odes) were considered so sublime that they were inscribed in gold and

hung on the Ka'bah, known as the *Mu'allaqat*. Ka'b inherited this poetic genius but initially used his art to lampoon Islam and the Prophet (s). After the Conquest of Mecca, while a general amnesty was declared, certain individuals known for their extreme hostility and offensive acts, including Ka'b, were specifically exempted from this pardon, and their blood was declared forfeit.

Ka'b fled, living in hiding, while his brother, Bujayr ibn Zuhayr, who had already embraced Islam, advised him to seek the Prophet's (s) forgiveness, emphasizing the Prophet's (s) merciful nature. Recognizing the ultimate triumph of Islam after the fall of Quraysh and the Thaqif, Ka'b resolved to approach the Prophet (s). He arrived in Medina disguised, during the first week of Dhu al-Hijjah, a time when many new visitors were coming to the city. Early one morning, as the Prophet (s) completed the Fajr prayer in Masjid an-Nabawi, Ka'b approached him. He humbly requested permission to ask a question, and when granted, he inquired if a great sinner who repented sincerely could be forgiven. The Prophet (s) affirmed that Allah accepts sincere repentance. Ka'b then revealed his identity, saying, "I am Ka'b ibn Zuhayr!" and sought forgiveness.

The Prophet (s), demonstrating his boundless mercy and compassion, granted him full pardon and security. Overwhelmed with joy and sincere remorse, Ka'b immediately recited his now-famous ode, **"Banat Su'ad"** (Su'ad has departed), a masterpiece of Arabic poetry. This *qasidah*, also known as *Qasidah Burdah* (Ode of the Mantle) or *Qasidah Lamiyyah* (due to the rhyming letter 'Lam'), glorified the Prophet (s) and expressed his deep regret for his past antagonism. As Ka'b concluded his poem, the Prophet (s), moved by his sincerity and the beauty of his verse, removed his own blessed striped mantle (*burdah*) and placed it on Ka'b's shoulders as a mark of honor and acceptance. This act enshrined Ka'b ibn Zuhayr's *qasidah* as one of the most sacred and revered poems in Islamic history, symbolizing the transformative power of faith and the Prophet's (s) all-

encompassing forgiveness.

In the final months of the 8th year of *Hijrah*, a profound personal event occurred in the Prophet's (s) life: the birth of his son, **Ibrahim**, from Sayyidah Mariyah al-Qibtiyyah. Sayyidah Mariyah had been sent as a gift to the Prophet (s) by the ruler of Egypt, Muqawqis, in response to the Prophet's (s) invitation to Islam in 7 AH. Ibrahim was born in Dhu al-Hijjah of 8 AH, bringing immense joy to the Prophet's (s) household. The Prophet (s) named him after his noble ancestor, Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), and performed the traditional rites of *aqeeqah* (sacrifice) and shaving the baby's head, giving charity equivalent to the weight of the hair in silver.

However, this joy was short-lived. Just as Sayyidah Khadijah's (a.s.) children had passed away in their tender years, Ibrahim also passed away in his infancy, at the age of approximately fourteen or eighteen months. His passing occurred in the same month of Dhu al-Hijjah, two years after his birth. The Prophet (s) was deeply grieved by the loss of his beloved son. His eyes welled up with tears, and his heart was heavy with sorrow, a testament to his profound human emotions and tender love for his child.

Coinciding with Ibrahim's passing, a solar eclipse occurred. In pre-Islamic Arabia, there was a prevalent superstition that celestial phenomena like eclipses were signs related to the life or death of great individuals. Witnessing the eclipse at the time of Ibrahim's death, some companions began to murmur, believing it was a sign of the earth grieving for the Prophet's (s) son. The Prophet (s), immediately recognizing the potential for this misconception to revert to pagan beliefs, addressed the people. With a heavy heart, he declared, **"Indeed, the sun and the moon are two signs among the signs of Allah. They do not eclipse for the death or life of anyone. When you see them, pray to Allah and supplicate Him."** This profound statement debunked superstition, redirecting people's focus from celestial events as omens to their true purpose: signs of Allah's

grandeur and power, inspiring worship and remembrance.

The Prophet (s) personally participated in the funeral rites of Ibrahim. He instructed Imam Ali (a.s.) in the washing and shrouding of the child's body. The Prophet (s) himself performed the funeral prayer for Ibrahim, even though a child of such young age is not obligated to perform daily prayers. He walked with the funeral procession to the graveyard of Baqi', where his beloved companion Uthman ibn Maz'un (r.a.) was buried. The Prophet (s) instructed Imam Ali (a.s.) to descend into the grave to place Ibrahim's body. Observing the scene, some people wondered why the Prophet (s) did not descend himself. The Prophet (s) explained that while it is not forbidden, he discouraged it for a father to descend into his child's grave, to prevent overwhelming grief from leading to utterances displeasing to Allah, which might nullify the reward of patience. He emphasized that true patience means enduring affliction without despair or complaint against divine decree, ensuring the spiritual reward of *sabr* is preserved. He then instructed that the grave should be slightly elevated from the ground, about a hand's breadth, and made firm. He personally smoothed the earth over Ibrahim's grave.

Through these events, the Prophet (s) provided invaluable lessons: the boundless mercy of Islam in accepting sincere repentance, the importance of dedicating one's talents to the truth, the human depth of sorrow in the face of loss, and the steadfast reliance on divine truth over popular superstition. His tears for Ibrahim were an expression of his natural human emotions, while his words emphasized absolute submission to Allah's will. This powerful blend of human emotion and divine guidance served as a timeless model for his community.

Chapter 144

The Path of Submission: Internalizing Faith and Following the *Ahlul Bayt*

The Prophet's blessed life, from its profound initial moments to the establishment of the nascent Islamic state and its subsequent triumphs, continues to unfold as a timeless testament to divine guidance and human potential. Having witnessed the victory at Hunayn and the compassionate resolution of the Ta'if siege, and having experienced the personal grief of his son Ibrahim's passing, the community was now continually called to reflect on the deeper dimensions of their faith and the profound implications of absolute submission to Allah's Messenger.

The events that transpired, particularly the divine intervention during the Battle of Hunayn, underscored a crucial lesson: victory and tranquility (*sakinah*) stem not from numerical superiority or worldly might, but from unwavering faith and complete reliance on Allah. This theme resonates deeply with the teachings found in **Surah al-Anfal**, which speaks to the distribution of spoils, but more profoundly, to the ultimate source of power and assistance. The battle served as a stark reminder that self-admiration (*'ujb*) can lead to peril, while humility and steadfastness, even

amidst scattering, invite divine aid.

The Prophet (s) continuously illuminated the path to true Islam, emphasizing that its essence lies not in superficial adherence or mere declarations, but in a profound internal transformation. He taught that a true *muhajir*, one who emigrates for the sake of Allah, is not merely someone who changes physical location, but rather **"one who abandons sins."** This spiritual *hijrah* is an ongoing journey, a continuous striving to purify the soul from all that displeases Allah, freeing oneself from the chains of worldly attachments and desires.

Central to this journey was the imperative of complete obedience to the Prophet (s). He gently, yet firmly, guided his companions, cautioning them against excessive questioning or seeking out matters that might burden them. He would implore them, "Do not trouble me." This was not a dismissal of genuine inquiry, but a profound directive against needless speculation or demands that could lead to hardship, or stray from the core principles of faith and action. The wisdom lay in trusting his prophetic guidance and acting upon it with sincerity and readiness, recognizing that true knowledge often unfolds through submission rather than exhaustive human reasoning alone.

The Prophet (s) further highlighted the indispensable role of his *Ahlul Bayt* in guiding the *Ummah* after him. He declared, in the profoundly significant **Hadith al-Kisa**, that his *Ahlul Bayt* were purified by Allah from all defilement, establishing their unparalleled spiritual sanctity. He likened them to **"Noah's Ark,"** affirming that whoever embarks upon it will be saved, and whoever lags behind will perish. This profound analogy underscored their position as the divinely appointed ark of salvation, a means of navigating the turbulent waters of worldly trials and intellectual confusion, ensuring adherence to the authentic teachings of Islam. The appointment of Imam Ali (a.s.) as the *Imam* and leader, frequently

emphasized by the Prophet, solidified this path of continuous, divinely guided leadership.

The Prophet's teachings continually directed the believers towards a deeper understanding of *taqwa* – God-consciousness – which transcends outward appearances. The physical purification required for prayer, for instance, is merely a gateway to spiritual purification, a prerequisite for a true connection with the Divine. The call to prayer (*adhan*) and the prayer itself (*salat*) were not mere rituals but profound means of establishing a tangible link with Allah and preparing the soul for its ultimate return to Him on the Day of Judgment.

Thus, the journey of faith is one of constant self-reflection, sincere repentance, and unwavering submission to the Prophet (s) and his purified *Ahlul Bayt*. It is a path where one becomes a **"subscriber"** to the Prophet's message, accepting his guidance wholeheartedly and embodying the true essence of Islam – a spiritual *hijrah* from sin, an embrace of tranquility through reliance on Allah, and a profound commitment to the divinely ordained guides.

Chapter 145

Ghazwah Tabuk: The Final Expedition and the Unveiling of Hearts

The ninth year of the *Hijrah* dawned upon an Arabian Peninsula profoundly transformed. The resounding fall of Makkah and the subsequent defeat of Ta'if's leadership had sent ripples of awe and respect across the land. No longer was Islam viewed as a nascent movement confined to Medina; it was now an undeniable force, a power that even the mighty Quraysh and the steadfast Thaqif of Ta'if had been compelled to acknowledge. The news of these triumphs spread with remarkable speed, leading to a new era where Arab tribes, previously hesitant or hostile, began dispatching delegations to Medina. These envoys arrived, not with swords, but with a profound desire to understand Islam, now free from the fear of military reprisal or economic obstruction.

The Prophet Mohammad (s) received these delegations, initiating them into the foundational pillars of the faith: *Salat* (prayer) and *Zakat* (charity). These two obligations were immediately incumbent upon new converts. With the establishment of *Zakat*, the Prophet (s) dispatched representatives across Arabia to collect the prescribed alms, further cementing

the nascent Islamic state's administrative reach. During this period, as new converts and curious tribal leaders sought direct interaction with the Prophet (s), divine guidance was revealed, establishing proper etiquette for addressing him. Verses were revealed to teach the believers how to speak to him with reverence, how loud their voices should be, and the importance of waiting for him rather than calling him out of his chambers.

Amidst this burgeoning expansion, an event of monumental significance unfolded: the **Ghazwah Tabuk**. This expedition, undertaken in Rajab of 9 AH, holds a unique place in Islamic history as the *last ghazwah*—the final military campaign personally led by the Prophet Mohammad (s). Though smaller detachments would be sent out afterward, the Prophet (s) himself never again led an army out of Medina. A distinctive feature of this *ghazwah* was the absence of Imam Ali (a.s.). He was not ordered to participate, a decision that carried profound strategic and spiritual implications, which would be fully revealed later as a testament to his unique role as the Prophet's **vicegerent**.

The objective of the Tabuk expedition was to confront the burgeoning threat from the Byzantine Empire, specifically the Ghassanid Arabs on the Syrian border, who were vassals of Rome. A year prior, in 8 AH, the Muslim army had clashed with Byzantine forces at Mu'tah, a battle where three Muslim commanders, including Ja'far al-Tayyar, were martyred. The Prophet (s) had divinely narrated the events of Mu'tah in real-time in Medina, recognizing the tactical retreat led by Khalid ibn al-Walid. This previous encounter left the Muslims vigilant, anticipating a stronger Roman response.

Intelligence arrived in Medina via a returning trade caravan from Syria, bearing dire news: the Byzantine emperor, Heraclius, was reportedly amassing a formidable army, bolstered by allied Arab tribes along the

Syrian-Arabian border, and was marching towards Medina. This news sparked understandable concern, but the Prophet (s) acted with characteristic resolve. He declared that the Muslim army would march to meet the enemy at their borders, rather than wait for them to reach Medina—a strategic shift from earlier battles like Badr, Uhud, and Khandaq, where the enemy was met near Medina. This was akin to the proactive campaigns of Khaybar and the Conquest of Makkah.

The journey to Tabuk was arduous, covering approximately 400-450 miles through desolate desert terrain, placing it roughly midway between Medina and Damascus. However, despite the immense preparations and the challenging march, no actual battle occurred. The reports of a massive Roman advance proved to be exaggerated. The Muslim army reached Tabuk, waited for several days, and finding no enemy, returned to Medina.

Yet, despite the lack of direct combat, Ghazwah Tabuk is considered one of the most pivotal events in early Islam. Its true purpose was not military engagement but a profound test and revelation. As the Prophet's (s) blessed life was nearing its end (it was 9 AH, and he would pass in 11 AH), it became imperative to distinguish between sincere believers and the *munafiqin* (hypocrites) whose presence in Medina had been tolerated since the *Hijrah*. The Prophet (s) had often exercised leniency towards the *munafiqin* during times of crisis and external threats. However, with Islam's unprecedented strength and the diminishing external threats, the time had come to strip away the veil of hypocrisy. It was crucial for the Prophet (s) himself to expose these individuals, as it would be far more difficult for anyone after him to gain universal acceptance for such declarations. This *ghazwah* also served to emphasize the absolute obedience required towards Allah and His Messenger, and to highlight human weaknesses that could impede faith, even among the sincere.

The conditions for the expedition were extraordinarily harsh, adding layers to this divine test: 1. **Severe Drought and Famine:** Medina was gripped by a prolonged drought, with some accounts suggesting no rain for four months, others a full year. Crops withered, and water was scarce. 2. **Date Harvest Season:** It was the season for harvesting dates, a critical economic period for many farmers. Leaving meant abandoning their livelihoods at a crucial juncture. 3. **Extreme Heat:** The summer heat was unprecedented, making travel and even daily life incredibly difficult. 4. **Long and Dangerous Journey:** The sheer distance through the desert presented immense challenges in terms of water, food, and endurance.

Faced with these hardships, the Prophet (s) took an unusual step for a military campaign: he publicly announced the distant destination and the formidable enemy they intended to confront. This removed any ambiguity, ensuring that every individual understood the immense challenge and could make their decision fully aware of the stakes. This explicit declaration was part of the trial.

Many *munafiqin* seized this opportunity to shirk their duty and undermine the expedition. They resorted to various tactics: * **Discouraging others:** They actively tried to dissuade sincere believers from joining, sowing seeds of doubt and fear. * **Mockery:** They mocked the idea of confronting the mighty Roman Empire, suggesting that the Muslims, who had only defeated the Makkans and people of Ta'if, were delusional to think they could stand against the world's superpower. * **Infamous Excuses:** The Qur'an records some of their brazen excuses. When told to march in the scorching heat, they scoffed, "Do not go forth in the heat!" To this, the Qur'an responded with a powerful rebuke: **"Say, 'The Fire of Hell is hotter!' "** (**Surah At-Tawbah, 9:81**). Another shocking excuse came from Jadd ibn Qays, who boldly told the Prophet (s), "O Messenger of Allah, grant me exemption and do not put me into trial. Indeed, I know that if I see women, I will not be able to control myself." He claimed the

beauty of Roman women would be an unbearable temptation for him, and thus he preferred to stay home rather than risk sin. The Qur'an exposed his true state: **"Have they not already fallen into trial? And indeed, Hell will encompass the disbelievers."** (**Surah At-Tawbah, 9:49**) These verses, and indeed a significant portion of **Surah At-Tawbah**, were revealed specifically in connection with the events of Tabuk, underscoring its profound significance.

While the *munafiqin* brazenly refused, a different, more nuanced category of people also failed to join: three sincere and respected believers—**Ka'b ibn Malik**, a renowned poet; **Hilal ibn Umayyah**, and **Murarah ibn Rabi'**, both participants in the Battle of Badr and early residents of Medina who had welcomed the Prophet (s) from Makkah. These were not hypocrites; their faith was genuine. However, their actions were swayed by worldly attachments. They delayed their departure, reasoning that they could catch up with the army later, preoccupied with their ripe date harvests and other financial matters. They intended to join, but procrastination, fueled by the love of wealth and worldly comfort, led them astray.

Upon the army's return to Medina, the Prophet (s) initiated a severe social boycott against these three sincere individuals. Unlike the *munafiqin*, whom he often treated with leniency (a pattern seen after Hunayn, where new converts received more spoils than veteran companions), these three were subjected to a harsh trial of faith. The Prophet (s) did not speak to them, and he ordered all Muslims to cut off all ties: no greetings, no conversations, no transactions. Even their wives were instructed to separate from them, allowing only essential household duties like cooking and cleaning, but no marital relations. This blanket ostracism was designed to cleanse them and serve as a profound lesson for the entire community.

For **47 agonizing days**, Ka'b, Hilal, and Murarah lived in utter isolation. They were shunned by everyone, unable even to speak to their closest rel-

atives. Ka'b recounts how he tried to greet his cousin, who simply turned away. In their desperation, they left Medina and resided on a mountain outside the city (near the site of Khandaq), isolated from the community. It was during this period that Ka'b faced an even more profound test of his loyalty: a messenger from the Ghassanid Christian king arrived, bearing a letter inviting Ka'b to his court, promising him wealth, honor, and a respected position. The letter implied that the Prophet (s) had disgraced him and he was no longer welcome in Medina. Ka'b, understanding the immense temptation and the underlying test of his faith, immediately consigned the letter to the flames. This act reaffirmed their unwavering loyalty despite their immense suffering.

As the 47th day drew to a close, a realization dawned upon them: perhaps their continued conversations among themselves, even in isolation, were hindering the acceptance of their repentance. They resolved to stop speaking to each other as well. On the **50th day**, while the Prophet (s) was in the chamber of Umm Salamah, the divine revelation arrived. **Surah At-Tawbah, 9:118-119** was revealed, announcing the acceptance of their repentance and Allah's immense mercy upon them: **"And [He also accepted the repentance of] the three who were left behind [and regretted their error] to the point that the earth, vast as it is, seemed constrained to them, and their souls became constricted upon them, and they were certain that there is no refuge from Allah except in Him. Then He forgave them so that they could repent. Indeed, Allah is the Acceptor of repentance, the Most Merciful."**

The Prophet (s) immediately emerged from his chamber and announced the good news. People rushed to inform the three men. They descended from the mountain, still refraining from speaking to anyone until they could receive confirmation from the Prophet (s) himself. When they finally stood before him and offered their greetings, the Prophet (s) responded with a joyful smile, affirming their forgiveness. Overcome with

relief and gratitude, they embraced each other.

This episode conveyed profound lessons: the severity of procrastination, especially in matters of religious obligation, and the consequences of prioritizing worldly affairs over divine commands. It demonstrated that even sincere believers could fall prey to such weaknesses. The swift and severe punishment of the social boycott was a purification, distinguishing them from the true *munafiqin* and emphasizing that Allah tests the sincere to elevate them, while hypocrites are often given rope in this world.

The speaker contrasted this with the unwavering, unblemished loyalty of Imam Husayn's (a.s.) companions on the night of Ashura. When Imam Husayn (a.s.) expressed his concern about their potential wavering in the face of trial, as seen in the past, his companions, like Muslim ibn Awsajah and Habib ibn Mazahir, drew their swords and offered their lives, demonstrating an unparalleled level of obedience and devotion to their Imam, an example of perfect **subscribers** to divine will. This absolute fidelity stands as a beacon for all believers, a testament to the purity of purpose that is the hallmark of the true followers of the *Ahlul Bayt*.

Chapter 146

The Prophet's Enduring Counsel: Preparing for Tabuk

As the ninth year of *Hijrah* unfolded, bringing with it a tide of tribal delegations embracing Islam, the Muslim *Ummah* under the Prophet Mohammad (s) entered a new phase of its blessed journey. This period culminated in the final expedition personally led by the Prophet (s), the **Ghazwah Tabuk**. This momentous event, distinct in its characteristics, unfolded with profound lessons for all generations.

Tabuk, strategically located between Medina and Syria, near what is today the border of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, was the destination of this arduous expedition. Unlike previous engagements, the primary objective of Tabuk was not a direct confrontation, but rather a profound divine test designed to expose the *munafiqin* (hypocrites) within Medina and to purify the sincere believers. The Prophet's (s) impending passing was drawing near, and this expedition served as a pivotal moment for establishing the spiritual succession and further clarifying the tenets of faith.

One of the most striking features of Ghazwah Tabuk was the unprecedented hardship involved. The journey itself was the longest the Prophet

(s) had ever led for an expedition, spanning approximately 450 miles from Medina. This distance dwarfed previous journeys, such as the 60 miles to Khaybar or even the 300 miles to Mecca. Compounding the challenge were the prevailing conditions: scorching heat, severe drought, and the critical timing during the date harvest season, a vital source of livelihood for the Medinans. Such was the intensity of these circumstances that, departing from his usual strategic secrecy, the Prophet (s) openly declared Tabuk as their destination, allowing Muslims to prepare for the extraordinary demands ahead.

The preparations for Tabuk also unveiled the entrenched presence and growing audacity of the *munafiqin* in Medina. This was tragically highlighted by their construction of *Masjid al-Dirar* (the Mosque of Harm) at the very time Muslims were gearing up for the expedition. This act underscored their desire to create a rival center of influence, even after the Islamic state had consolidated its power. The latter parts of **Surah At-Tawbah** would later be revealed, extensively exposing their true nature and actions.

Before embarking on this challenging journey, the Prophet (s), recognizing the immense difficulties and the need for spiritual fortification, delivered a powerful and comprehensive sermon (*khutbah*) to the assembled Muslims. This address was not merely a call to arms but a profound spiritual discourse, setting the moral and ethical framework for the *Ummah* and addressing the societal ills that still lingered, even among those who had outwardly embraced Islam.

He began by emphasizing the foundational truth: **"Indeed, the best speech is the Book of Allah."** He then spoke of the ties of kinship, declaring that **"among the relatives, some have closer ties than others,"** a subtle yet profound reference to the *Ahlul Bayt*—the purified Household whose rights and closeness to him had been affirmed through numerous divine

declarations. The Prophet (s) proclaimed **"the strongest rope is the word of *taqwa*"** (God-consciousness), anchoring believers in the divine.

He continued, asserting that **"the best of faiths is the faith of Ibrahim"** and **"the best of traditions (*Sunan*) is the tradition of Muhammad,"** firmly establishing his path as the ultimate standard. This pronouncement was especially pertinent in a society where many new converts, despite accepting Islam, still clung to ancestral customs and tribal traditions, often prioritizing them over divine injunctions. The Prophet (s) was unequivocally declaring that true adherence to Islam meant following his *Sunnah* in all aspects of life, from the smallest actions to the grandest principles, challenging the remnants of *Jahiliyyah* (ignorance) that sought to intertwine with Islamic practice.

The Prophet (s) then moved to illuminate profound spiritual truths: **"The noblest of talk is the remembrance of Allah." "The best of narratives is the Quran,"** for its stories are truthful and imbued with lessons of wisdom and guidance. He warned against innovations in religion, stating, **"The worst of affairs are their innovations,"** emphasizing the purity of the revealed faith. **"The best of guidance is the guidance of the Prophets,"** underscoring the universal nature of divine guidance. On the subject of death, he declared, **"The noblest killing is the killing of martyrs,"** acknowledging the unparalleled honor of sacrifice in the path of Allah. However, he also cautioned against recklessly seeking death, distinguishing true martyrdom from suicidal acts or foolish endeavors, stressing that *jihad* must be undertaken with wisdom and divine permission.

The Prophet (s) highlighted a most critical spiritual ailment: **"The greatest blindness is deviation after having been guided."** This profound statement served as a stark warning to those who, having tasted the light of faith, might regress into heedlessness or misguidance. He affirmed,

"The best of deeds are those that bring benefit after death," and that **"the best of guidance is that which is followed,"** emphasizing that true faith transcends mere intellectual acceptance to manifest in action and adherence. The worst spiritual malady, he clarified, was **"the blindness of the heart,"** which prevents one from perceiving truth even when it is evident.

Further, he spoke of generosity, stating, **"The upper hand (that gives) is better than the lower hand (that takes)."** He advised contentment, saying, **"What is little but suffices is better than what is much but distracts from Allah,"** urging believers to prioritize spiritual well-being over worldly accumulation. He underscored the gravity of spiritual accountability: **"The worst apology is that made at the time of death,"** when repentance might be too late, and **"the worst regret is the regret on the Day of Judgment,"** for it will be of no avail.

Addressing common societal flaws, the Prophet (s) declared, **"The greatest error of the tongue is lying,"** cautioning against this widespread sin. He extolled the virtue of inner sufficiency: **"The best of wealth is contentment of the soul."** The ultimate provision, he taught, is **"piety (*taqwa*),"** and true wisdom springs from **"the fear of Allah."** Crucially, he proclaimed, **"The best treasure placed in a believer's heart is certainty (*yaqin*),"** and starkly contrasted it with **"doubt (*irtiyab*) from disbelief (*kufr*),"** reminding them that even wavering in faith could lead one away from the path.

The Prophet (s) clarified the distinction between genuine mourning and pre-Islamic practices: **"Wailing (*nawh*) is from the actions of *Jahiliyyah*,"** referring to the exaggerated displays and hiring of professional mourners common in the era of ignorance, which lacked true sincerity and connection to the deceased. This was not a condemnation of genuine grief but a rejection of performative rituals devoid of spiritual meaning.

He warned against severe sins, stating, **"Deceit and treachery (*ghulul*) are from the embers of Hell,"** and **"intoxication (*sukr*) is from the fire of Hell."** He declared **"alcohol (*khamr*) is the mother of all evils,"** for it encompasses and leads to countless transgressions. The Prophet (s) also cautioned against distractions, remarking that **"idle poetry is from Iblis"** and that **"women are Iblis's snare,"** a metaphorical warning against their misuse as temptations or means of diversion from righteousness, not a denigration of women themselves. He also spoke of the impulsiveness of youth, stating, **"Youth is a branch of madness."**

He then condemned economic injustices: **"The worst of earnings is *riba* (usury),"** and **"the worst of food is eating the wealth of an orphan,"** highlighting the severe implications of exploiting the vulnerable. The Prophet (s) praised those who learn from the misfortunes of others: **"Happy is he who takes admonition from another's misfortune,"** and condemned those who sin for worldly gain: **"Miserable is he who commits sin for worldly gain."**

In a powerful concluding point, he stated, **"Indeed, actions are judged by their conclusions,"** emphasizing that a good beginning must be matched by a good ending, and perseverance in righteousness is paramount. He stressed the importance of **"seeking forgiveness from Allah"** and **"forgiving one another."** He concluded by seeking Allah's forgiveness for himself and the entire *Ummah*.

This profound sermon had an immediate and palpable impact. It ignited a wave of enthusiasm in Medina, inspiring many who had previously hesitated to now eagerly prepare for the expedition. So great was the turnout that the Prophet (s) eventually had to tell some volunteers to return, as he lacked the logistical means to transport them all. The spiritual and moral guidance provided in this address was critical in steeling the resolve of the believers for the challenges of Tabuk and beyond, marking a signif-

icant moment of internal purification and strengthening of the Islamic community.

Chapter 147

The Expedition of Hardship: Unveiling Sincerity and the Deeper Meanings of Sacrifice

The ninth year of *Hijrah* continued to unfold with events that further cemented the foundations of the nascent Islamic state and purified the ranks of believers. The **Ghazwah Tabuk**, a pivotal and final expedition personally led by the Prophet Mohammad (s), stands as a testament to the early Muslim community's resilience, faith, and the profound wisdom embedded in divine trials. This expedition, though it saw no actual battle, bore immense significance, serving as a crucible for the faithful and an exposer of the hypocrites.

The expedition to Tabuk is known by two prominent names in Islamic history. It is called *Ghazwah Tabuk* because the Prophet (s) himself led the army to the town of Tabuk, near the borders of ancient Syria and Arabia. Any military campaign led by the Prophet (s) is termed a *Ghazwah*. However, it is also widely referred to as **Jaysh al-Usrah** (The Army of Hardship or Distress), a name derived from the Qur'an itself, highlighting the

immense difficulties faced by the Muslims. The conditions were exceptionally harsh: a severe drought had gripped Medina for a year, making sustenance scarce. The expedition was called at the height of summer, a time of scorching heat, and precisely when the date harvest, crucial for Medina's economy, was due. These combined factors made the decision to march incredibly arduous, testing the commitment of even the most steadfast believers.

Adding to the psychological strain was a pervasive rumor, meticulously spread by the *munafiqin* (hypocrites), that the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius had gathered a formidable army and was marching towards the Muslim lands from Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), having reached Homs (modern-day Homs, Syria) and preparing to advance towards Damascus. Furthermore, five Arab tribes inhabiting the Arab-Syrian borders—Ghassan, Tanukh, Sulayh, Banu Lakhm, and Banu Judham—were rumored to have allied with the Romans. This created an atmosphere of grave apprehension, suggesting a final, decisive confrontation with the world's then-superpower. While Allah and His Messenger (s) knew the rumors were false and no such confrontation would occur, the perception of an imminent, overwhelming threat served as a perfect divine test.

In the face of such a formidable perceived enemy, the Prophet (s) adopted a strategic approach that departed from earlier defensive battles like Khandaq. Instead of waiting for the enemy to reach Medina, he decided to advance towards their borders. This proactive strategy was rooted in profound wisdom: confronting a powerful enemy on their own turf or at their borders minimized the risk of widespread devastation to the Muslim capital should a defeat occur. It allowed for a strategic retreat and regrouping if necessary. This principle, later echoed by Imam Ali (a.s.) in *Nahj al-Balaghah* regarding confronting a global superpower, remains pertinent even today when facing "invisible" enemies that threaten faith and values, such as corrupting media or satellite influences. The wisdom

~~dictates that it is better to prevent their infiltration than to allow them into~~ one's home and then attempt to curb their harm.

The expedition to Tabuk served as a comprehensive test. It was not merely a test for individuals but also for the numerous tribes that had recently embraced Islam after the Conquest of Mecca. For many, it was the first opportunity to prove their sincerity and commitment to the nascent Islamic state. To underscore the severity and importance of this test, the Prophet (s) initiated an unprecedented fundraising appeal, delaying the army's departure until sufficient contributions were gathered. Unlike previous expeditions where provisions were quickly assembled, this time, the Prophet (s) explicitly demanded financial sacrifice from every Muslim. This demonstrated the immense emphasis placed on both financial and physical participation in this divine trial.

During this fundraising drive, a poignant incident unfolded that highlighted the true essence of sincere devotion. Women, too, contributed generously, donating their jewelry—a rare occurrence in earlier campaigns where donations were primarily in weapons, horses, and camels. Amidst this torrent of donations, a poor Ansar companion, **Abu Aqil al-Ansari**, approached the Prophet (s) with a small bag. He had spent the entire night watering a garden in exchange for two *sa'* of dates. With his children fasting, he divided the meager earning: half for his family, and the other half, a mere one and a half kilograms of dates, for the expedition. His face bore the marks of exhaustion and shyness as he presented his humble offering.

The *munafiqin*, ever watchful for opportunities to sow discord, immediately ridiculed Abu Aqil's contribution, remarking, "Look at this man! He claims to be giving charity! He only brought a handful of dates to show off!" They also derided the wealthy who donated large sums, accusing them of ostentation. However, the Prophet (s) recognized Abu Aqil's

profound sincerity. He ordered that all the collected donations—gold, silver, jewelry, and even Abu Aqil's humble dates—be spread out. Then, he declared Abu Aqil's dates to be the most beloved and accepted offering in the sight of Allah, for they were given with absolute sincerity and sacrifice, outweighing even mountains of gold given without such purity of intention. This event led to the revelation of **Surah At-Tawbah, 9:79**: **"Those who ridicule the charitable believers concerning their freewill offerings, and those who find nothing to offer except their little earnings, and they scoff at them; Allah will scoff at them, and for them is a painful punishment."**

The Qur'anic verse's pronouncement that "Allah will scoff at them" prompted questions among the companions. Imams have explained that Allah's "scoffing" is not like human mockery involving physical gestures or insults. Rather, it manifests as divine justice: granting abundance to the undeserving at inappropriate times, or stripping wealth from them when they need it most, such as when their loved ones fall ill and all their resources are depleted. On the Day of Judgment, this divine "mockery" might involve leading them to Paradise briefly before casting them into Hell, a painful consequence for their ridicule of sincere believers. This principle teaches that judging and ridiculing others' deeds, especially acts of piety, is a grave sin. As an Imam once said, in the End of Times, people will find fault no matter what one does: if one speaks, they are accused of pride; if silent, of arrogance; if one gives charity, of showing off; if one does not, of being stingy; if one prays, of hypocrisy; if one doesn't, of being neglectful.

The call for participation in *Jaysh al-Usrah* also brought forth another group of sincere believers: ten poor men who passionately desired to join the expedition but lacked mounts. They rushed to the Prophet (s), pleading for a ride, but he had none left. They turned away, their eyes overflowing with tears, overcome by grief and longing to participate in the path of Al-

lah, as described in **Surah At-Tawbah, 9:92**: **"Nor upon those who, when they came to you that you might provide them with mounts, you said, 'I can find no mounts for you,' they turned back, their eyes overflowing with tears out of grief that they could not find anything to spend [for the cause of Allah]."** Their sorrow was not for their poverty itself, but for the inability to contribute to the divine cause. This highlights the true essence of devotion: a burning desire to serve Allah, even when material means are absent.

The Tabuk expedition also clarified principles related to charity and the broader understanding of sacrifice. **Ka'b ibn Malik**, one of the three companions whose repentance was divinely accepted after lagging behind, was overjoyed. In his ecstasy, he approached the Prophet (s), offering to donate all his wealth in charity. However, the Prophet (s) advised him against it, allowing him to donate only one-third, reserving two-thirds for his family. This established a critical Islamic legal precedent for wills and charity: while one may donate all their wealth during their lifetime, after death, only up to one-third can be willed away, ensuring that families, especially children, are not left destitute. The Prophet (s) emphasized that leaving one's heirs wealthy is better than leaving them dependent and begging. This teaching balanced emotional generosity with the rights and needs of the family, preventing ill-advised acts that could harm future generations.

Perhaps the most profound lesson from Tabuk, however, came through the story of **Abdullah Dhul Bijadayn** (meaning "the man of two coarse garments"). His tribe was located about 50 miles from Medina. After his father's early death, his uncle became his guardian, diligently managing his inheritance (gardens, land, wealth, and slaves) and raising him well. However, as Abdullah grew older, reports of Islam reached him, resonating with his pure nature. He knew his uncle, though kind, was rigid in his pagan beliefs. After the Conquest of Mecca, when Islam was widely

accepted, Abdullah could no longer wait. He approached his uncle, expressing his desire to embrace Islam. Enraged, his uncle threatened to disinherit him and cast him out of the tribe. Abdullah, demonstrating incredible conviction, replied that wealth was fleeting; if his uncle didn't take it, death would. He gave up everything—his inheritance, his clothes, and walked to Medina, covering himself with only two coarse pieces of an old blanket.

In Medina, Abdullah sought refuge at the *Suffah*, a platform outside the Prophet's (s) mosque designated for homeless immigrants. He was profoundly devoted, spending nights in prayer and loud recitation of the Qur'an, sometimes even disturbing others. When some companions complained, the Prophet (s) protected him, saying, **"Leave him, for he has migrated to Allah and His Messenger."** This highlights that sincerity of intention and devotion are paramount, even if external expressions differ.

As the Tabuk expedition approached, Abdullah, yearning for the highest form of devotion, approached the Prophet (s) and earnestly requested to be martyred in the path of Allah. The Prophet (s), aware that there would be no actual battle, made a unique prayer: **"O Allah, make his blood forbidden upon the disbelievers."** Abdullah was perplexed, having sought martyrdom, but the Prophet (s) clarified that martyrdom is not limited to death in battle. During the arduous journey to Tabuk, Abdullah fell severely ill with a fever. One night, as his condition worsened, the Prophet (s) visited him, and Abdullah passed away. The Prophet (s) personally descended into his grave, assisted by Bilal (r.a.) who held a lamp, to bury him. The Prophet (s) then declared that Abdullah had attained the rank of *shahadah* (martyrdom) through his death by fever.

This profound incident expanded the understanding of *shahadah*. Islam defines martyrdom broadly: it includes not only those who die in battle for Allah's cause but also those who die from a plague (*ta'un*), drowning,

~~fire, childbirth, defending their property, or while serving their families~~ and fulfilling their responsibilities. The Prophet (s) taught that *shahadah* is a divine blessing, an honor bestowed by Allah, contrasting it sharply with suicide, which is a grave sin.

The phenomenon of *ta'un* (plague) was also clarified: for disbelievers, it is a form of divine punishment, but for believers, it is an opportunity for *shahadah*. Regarding fleeing a plague, Islamic jurisprudence clarifies that fleeing a plague-stricken city is not forbidden like fleeing a battlefield during wartime, where desertion is a grave sin. However, for a believer, patiently enduring a plague with faith can elevate them to the rank of *shahadah*.

Ultimately, the most profound example of averting divine wrath through sacrifice and patience, a higher spiritual manifestation of the lessons taught in Tabuk, is seen in the tragedy of Karbala. Imam Husayn (a.s.), through his immense sacrifice, effectively held back a catastrophic divine punishment that would have befallen the entire *Ummah*. His sister, Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.), epitomized this supreme patience. Despite unimaginable suffering and provocation, even when led past the gate of Kufa which reminded her of her father Imam Ali's (a.s.) immense *ghayrah* (protective honor) regarding the hijab and modesty of his daughters, she restrained herself from cursing. This was in adherence to her brother's earlier counsel to never raise her hands in imprecation. Her remarkable fortitude in the face of such immense trials stands as an eternal testament to submission to divine will, ensuring that even when the ultimate injustice was committed, the *Ummah* was spared a crushing divine retribution, a profound mercy initiated by the sacrifices of the *Ahlul Bayt*.

Chapter 148

Tabuk: A Test of Sincerity, Sacrifice, and the Prophetic Ethic

The ninth year of *Hijrah* brought forth *Ghazwah Tabuk*, an expedition unique among the Prophet's (s) military campaigns. Unlike the major confrontations at Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, or Khaybar, Tabuk did not culminate in direct combat with the enemy. Yet, its significance in Islamic history is profound, representing a pivotal moment for the burgeoning Muslim state. It occurred during a time when Islam had largely solidified its presence across Arabia, and the overt opposition of Quraysh in Mecca had ceased. However, with the external threat diminishing, a more insidious danger emerged: internal hypocrisy (*nifaq*).

Ghazwah Tabuk was primarily a divine test, designed to expose the *munafiqin* (hypocrites) within the Muslim ranks and to purify the sincere believers. The Quran, particularly in **Surah At-Tawbah**, dedicates an unprecedented number of verses (from **9:61** to **9:121**) to describing the circumstances of this expedition. These verses do not dwell on the battlefield specifics but rather detail the attitudes and actions of the *munafiqin*—their various excuses, their reluctance to join, and their attempts to dis-

courage others from participating. This extensive divine commentary underscores Tabuk's crucial role in differentiating genuine faith from mere outward conformity.

Allah's profound mercy was bestowed upon the Prophet (s), the **Muhajirin**, and the **Ansar** who demonstrated unwavering resolve in the face of severe hardship. The Quran itself refers to this expedition as **"sa'at al-usrah"** (the hour of hardship/distress), a testament to the extreme conditions of scorching heat, drought, and scarcity that afflicted the Muslim army. This period of intense difficulty served as a crucible for faith, revealing the depth of conviction of those who endured it.

The expedition also brought forth a fundamental Islamic principle: the concept of ultimate sacrifice. As stated in the Qur'an, **"Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties in exchange for Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed"** (**Surah At-Tawbah, 9:111**). This verse, revealed in the context of Tabuk, establishes a divine covenant where paradise is the recompense for sacrificing both one's life and wealth in the path of Allah. It is not an optional offering but a fundamental aspect of true belief, signifying that believers are not merely individuals but partners in a divine transaction. This profound message echoed throughout history, inspiring countless acts of selfless devotion.

While the sincere companions wept at their inability to join due to lack of resources, the hypocrites rejoiced at remaining behind. They rationalized their inaction by pointing to the intense heat, saying, "Do not go forth in the heat." The Quran swiftly rebuked them, proclaiming, **"Say, 'The fire of Hell is more intense in heat,' if only they could understand"** (**Surah At-Tawbah, 9:81**). This divine response highlighted the fleeting nature of worldly discomfort compared to the eternal torment awaiting those who prioritize ease over duty. The lesson was clear: genuine patience (*sabr*) in

the face of worldly hardship secures salvation from far greater suffering.

Another significant revelation regarding the Prophet's (s) character emerged during Tabuk. The *munafiqin* mocked him, labeling him an **"udhun"** (an ear), implying he was naive or easily deceived, readily believing whatever he heard. The Quran, however, countered this derogatory remark by affirming that the Prophet's (s) quality of listening and accepting others' words, even when their sincerity was questionable, was in fact **"khayrun lakum"** (better for you) (**Surah At-Tawbah, 9:61**). This was not a sign of gullibility but a manifestation of his boundless mercy and compassion (*Rahmatul lil 'Alameen*). The Prophet (s) chose to protect the dignity and privacy of individuals, refraining from publicly shaming them even when aware of their falsehood, unless the integrity of Islam or the welfare of the *Ummah* necessitated otherwise. This ethical stance showcased his exemplary *akhlaq* (morals) and profound wisdom, demonstrating that true leadership often involves preserving outward harmony and providing a path for repentance, rather than immediate public condemnation.

The lessons of *Ghazwah Tabuk* extend beyond the historical event to the very philosophy of *shahadah* (martyrdom). Death is an inescapable reality for every soul. The choice, then, lies not in escaping death but in determining its manner. To embrace martyrdom in the path of Allah is to transform an inevitable end into an eternal reward, fulfilling the divine contract of exchanging life for Paradise. This principle finds resonance in the teachings of Imam Ali (a.s.), who consistently urged believers not to fear the pain of battle when the pain of death was awaiting them regardless. The suffering of martyrs, while a cause of grief for their families and communities, is simultaneously a source of immense honor and spiritual triumph.

The ultimate embodiment of sacrifice, particularly a mother's sacrifice, is exemplified in the life of Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra (a.s.). While any

parent's love for their child is immense, a mother's bond is uniquely profound, as attested by the Prophet's (s) repeated emphasis on the mother's greater right. To offer one's child in the path of Allah is thus considered an unparalleled act of devotion. Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.), despite her profound grief and physical suffering, lived a life of unwavering commitment to Allah's cause, setting an unparalleled example of patience (*sabr*) and sacrifice.

Furthermore, Sayyidah Fatimah's (a.s.) life illuminated the paramount importance of *hijab* (the veil) and modesty. Even in the final moments of her life, her concern for preserving her *hijab* was paramount. She instructed that her funeral procession be carried out discreetly at night and in a specific manner to ensure no unauthorized gaze fell upon her blessed body. This profound concern for modesty, even after death, serves as a powerful testament to the spiritual significance of *hijab* in Islam. The pain she endured for the sake of this principle, including the tragic assault on her door that led to the martyrdom of her unborn son, Muhsin (a.s.), became a source of profound sorrow for the *Ahlul Bayt* and continues to be a point of distress for the Imam of the Age (a.s.). It is narrated that the Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) expresses deep grief over the neglect of *hijab* by some of his followers, seeing it as a fresh wound upon his grandmother, Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.). Thus, the *Ghazwah Tabuk*'s lessons of sacrifice and sincerity resonate deeply with the enduring legacy of the Prophet's (s) family, especially Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.), underscoring that true faith demands not only external adherence but also an internalized commitment to divine values and virtues.

Chapter 149

The Tabuk Expedition: Trials on the Path to Truth

As the formidable Muslim army, under the direct leadership of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s), set forth from Medina towards the vast, arid plains of Tabuk, the journey itself began to unfold as a profound test of faith, a crucible that would expose the true nature of hearts. The long preparations in Medina, spanning several previous chapters, had revealed the insidious machinations of the *munafiqin* (hypocrites) and the unwavering devotion of the sincere believers. Now, on the arduous path, these spiritual realities would manifest with even greater clarity.

The strategic decision to leave Imam Ali (a.s.) in Medina had initially provided a fertile ground for the *munafiqin*'s insidious whispers, suggesting he was deemed unworthy or a burden. Yet, this very act unveiled the profound spiritual connection and prophetic foresight. As the Prophet (s) had earlier proclaimed to Imam Ali (a.s.) in Medina, the timeless *Hadith al-Manzilat* resonated once more: "**Are you not pleased that your position to me is like the position of Harun to Musa, except that there will be no prophet after me?**" This declaration, which had been previ-

ously mentioned, now gained deeper theological significance.

The Holy Qur'an, particularly in **Surah Ta-Ha**, vividly recounts the dialogue between Prophet Musa (a.s.) and his brother Harun (a.s.). While Musa (a.s.) was on Mount Tur for forty days, his people, the Children of Israel, succumbed to the temptation of the golden calf created by the Samiri. Upon his furious return, Musa (a.s.) confronted Harun (a.s.) for not preventing their deviation. Harun (a.s.) replied, as quoted in **Surah Ta-Ha, 20:94**: **"O son of my mother! Do not seize me by my beard or my head. Indeed, I feared that you would say, 'You caused a division among the Children of Israel, and you did not observe my word.'"** Harun (a.s.)'s silence and inaction, in that critical moment, were not due to weakness but a profound concern for preserving unity and preventing a schism within the nascent community. The Qur'an's endorsement of Harun's (a.s.) reasoning – through Musa's (a.s.) subsequent silence and acceptance – establishes a divine precedent. This same principle, the preservation of the *Ummah*'s unity at all costs, would later define the remarkable patience and calculated silence of Imam Ali (a.s.) in the face of immense adversity after the Prophet's (s) passing, drawing a direct parallel between his and Harun's (a.s.) roles as vicegerents. The Prophet (s) was subtly conveying that Ali's (a.s.) seemingly passive stance at certain junctures would be for the greater good of preserving Islam from fragmentation.

The *munafiqin*, however, were driven by worldly ambition. Believing that with the Prophet (s) and Imam Ali (a.s.) gone from Medina, the city would be ripe for a takeover, they hatched a two-pronged conspiracy: one group in Medina to assassinate Imam Ali (a.s.), and another, accompanying the Prophet (s), to attempt to kill him en route to Tabuk. Yet, the divine connection between the Prophet (s) and his Vicegerent was unbreakable. Imam Ali (a.s.), after foiling the assassination attempt in Medina, knew instinctively that the Prophet (s) was aware of his predicament.

Miraculously, the Prophet (s) also received divine intelligence about the conspiracy against himself, even without any physical communication. He gathered his loyal companions and declared, "**Remember, just as an assassination attempt was made on Ali in Medina, which Allah frustrated, these people intend to attack me tonight.**" This stark declaration, baffling the *munafiqin* who overheard it, solidified the believers' trust in the Prophet's (s) divine knowledge and Allah's protection.

Another striking manifestation of the Prophet's (s) *ilm al-ghayb* (knowledge of the unseen) occurred during the journey when his own camel went missing. The *munafiqin* immediately seized this opportunity to mock him. "**Look at him!**" they whispered among themselves, "**He claims to be a Prophet and knows about the Day of Judgment and the unseen, yet he cannot even locate his own camel!**" Hearing their derision, the Prophet (s) emerged from his tent. He addressed the assembly, asserting, "**Indeed, I do not possess knowledge of the unseen on my own, save what Allah reveals to me.**" He then precisely described the camel's location: "**By Allah, I know nothing but what Allah teaches me. And at this very moment, my camel is in such and such a valley, with its halter caught on a thorn tree.**" Messengers were dispatched, and they found the camel exactly as the Prophet (s) had described, its halter indeed tangled in a tree branch. This incident served as a potent rebuttal to the *munafiqin*'s skepticism, affirming the Prophet's (s) divine connection and discrediting their attempts to sow doubt.

The Tabuk expedition thus became a sorting ground, distinguishing three types of individuals: the hypocrites, the truly sincere believers, and a third group—those whose faith was genuine but whose resolve in action was initially weak, yet who were capable of profound repentance.

Among the latter was Abu Khaythamah. A sincere Muslim, he had initially lingered behind in Medina, drawn by the comfort of his lush or-

chard and the cool shade, while the Prophet (s) and the army braved the scorching desert heat. As he relaxed in his garden, enjoying cool water and delicious food prepared by his two devoted wives, a profound realization struck him. He spontaneously exclaimed, "**Subhanallah!** (Glory be to Allah!) **And Rasulullah!** (The Messenger of Allah!) **While Allah has forgiven his past and future sins, he is enduring the scorching sun and the intense heat, carrying his weapons on his shoulders, while I, Abu Khaythamah, sit in cool shade, enjoying delicious food with two beautiful wives! This is not justice!**" Overcome by immediate remorse, he instantly resolved, "**By Allah, I shall not speak a single word to either of you, nor will I enter this shade, or partake of this food or drink, until I join the Prophet!**" He abandoned his comfort, mounted his camel, and set off alone, enduring the desert's hardships to catch up with the army. When he eventually appeared, the Prophet (s), with his divine insight, remarked, "**O Abu Khaythamah! You were destined for destruction, but you saved yourself at the very last moment!**" Abu Khaythamah's journey became a powerful lesson that the door of repentance is always open for those who sincerely reflect and act upon their convictions.

Another profound example of unwavering dedication was that of Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (r.a.). Despite his meager resources and a weak camel, he was consumed by an unshakeable desire to join the Prophet (s). When his camel, exhausted by the arduous journey, eventually collapsed and died, Abu Dharr (r.a.) made a momentous decision. Although he was now on foot, and the Prophet (s) had initially advised those without adequate mounts to remain in Medina, Abu Dharr (r.a.) chose to interpret the spirit of the command. He slung his meager belongings onto his back and pressed on, alone and on foot, across the harsh desert. His water supply dwindled, and thirst gnawed at him.

The Muslim army, meanwhile, halted at a water source that the Prophet (s) had miraculously identified. As the companions quenched their thirst,

someone spotted a solitary figure in the distance. The Prophet (s), recognizing him with his *ilm al-ghayb*, smiled and declared, "**O companions, save some water for him, for he is coming, and he is very thirsty.**" As Abu Dharr (r.a.), gaunt and parched, finally reached the camp, the Prophet (s) warmly invited him close. He handed Abu Dharr (r.a.) a vessel of the cool water. Abu Dharr (r.a.) drank, then pulled out his own waterskin, still containing a small amount of water. He presented it to the Prophet (s), saying, "**O Messenger of Allah, I brought this for you.**" The Prophet (s) gently inquired, "**O Abu Dharr, did you have water, yet remained thirsty?**" Abu Dharr (r.a.) replied, "**Yes, O Messenger of Allah. On the way, I found a small puddle of rainwater between some stones. Though I was thirsty, my heart told me that my Prophet, who is journeying through this desert, might be even thirstier. So, I preserved it for you, preferring to endure thirst myself rather than see you thirsty.**"

Deeply moved, the Prophet (s) smiled and, in an astonishing display of his *ilm al-ghayb*, prophesied about Abu Dharr's (r.a.) future: "**May Allah bless you, O Abu Dharr! You shall live alone, die alone, be resurrected alone, and enter Paradise alone. And a group of people from Iraq will come, wash your body, perform your funeral prayer, and bury you.**" This prophecy came to pass many years later, in the year 32-33 AH, when Abu Dharr (r.a.), exiled to Rabathah, passed away in solitude, and a caravan from Iraq, including figures like Malik al-Ashtar, discovered his body and fulfilled the Prophet's (s) words, burying him with utmost reverence. Abu Dharr's (r.a.) story became a timeless testament to the boundless rewards of selfless love and unwavering devotion to Allah and His Messenger, reminding the *Ummah* that true contribution to the *deen* is not limited by one's material means.

The Tabuk expedition thus reinforced critical lessons: the omnipresence of hypocrisy, the enduring power of sincerity, the open door of repentance, and the Prophet's (s) divinely bestowed knowledge. It was a rigor-

ous training ground, preparing the Muslim community for the challenges that lay ahead, particularly the preservation of unity and faith.

In a poignant reflection on patience and suffering, the speaker drew a parallel to the ultimate test endured by Imam Ali (a.s.) and the *Ahlul Bayt*. The Imam's patience, akin to Harun's (a.s.) choice for unity, was exemplified throughout his life, even in the face of profound personal tragedies. The speaker recounted the harrowing night of Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra's (a.s.) secret burial, performed by Imam Ali (a.s.) at midnight to honor her dying wish, known only to a few loyal companions. As Imam Ali (a.s.) began to carry her blessed body out, he heard the cry of his young daughter, Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.), just six years old, who had seen her mother's coffin being moved. The Imam (a.s.) returned to console his daughter, reminding her that her father was still alive and would not tolerate her leaving the house unveiled. This deeply emotional scene underscores the *Ahlul Bayt*'s profound commitment to *hijab* and modesty, even in the darkest hours.

Imam Ali (a.s.) endured immense personal suffering: the loss of his beloved wife, the martyrdom of his son Muhsin in his mother's womb, the burning of his house, and the rope placed around his neck. Yet, his hand remained off his sword, Dhul-Fiqar, for the sake of preserving the *Ummah*'s unity. However, the limit of his patience was reached when, after the burial of Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), some individuals announced their intention to exhume her grave, claiming they had not offered her funeral prayers. Upon hearing this, Imam Ali (a.s.) emerged, bareheaded and barefoot, his eyes red with fury, clutching Dhul-Fiqar. He sat by the grave, declaring that he had tolerated everything, but if anyone dared to lay a hand on Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) grave, Ali's Dhul-Fiqar would not be restrained. This raw display of divine wrath halted their audacious attempt, reminding them of the Prophet's (s) declaration: "**No one should confront Ali!**"

This profound historical tragedy, the speaker concluded, resonates deeply with the grief carried by the Imam of our Age, Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Just as Imam Ali (a.s.) bore the desecration of his beloved's dignity, the Imam of our Age bears witness to the demolition of the sacred shrines in *Jannatul Baqi'*—the resting places of his blessed ancestors. The enduring sorrow of the *Ahlul Bayt* and their followers, generations later, remains a testament to their unparalleled sacrifice and the profound spiritual legacy they embody.

Chapter 150

Tabuk: Divine Exposure and the Enduring Station of Ali

The arduous expedition to Tabuk, undertaken in the ninth year of *Hijrah*, continued to unfold as a profound divine test, not merely of physical endurance but of the sincerity of faith. The prolonged discourse on the actions of the *munafiqin* (hypocrites) during this period, while perhaps seeming extensive, served a crucial divine purpose: to unveil their deep-seated malice and insidious plots. Indeed, **Surah At-Tawbah**, which addresses the Tabuk expedition, meticulously details their conspiracies, revealing Allah's wisdom in exposing them through specific events.

Even as the Prophet (s) prepared his army, reports from his intelligence network revealed the audacious extent of the *munafiqin*'s machinations within Medina itself. One such report exposed a dangerous hub of conspiratorial activity in a Jewish house in the Jawasu quarter. Though the major Jewish tribes had been expelled or had left Medina, some individuals remained under Muslim protection, having accepted the system of *jizya*. However, this particular house, owned by a Jew named Suwaylim, had become a clandestine meeting place where influential *munafiqin* gath-

ered day and night to plot harm against Islam, Muslims, and the Prophet (s).

Upon receiving this critical intelligence, the Prophet (s), demonstrating the principles of just governance, immediately dispatched a small contingent led by Talha ibn Ubayd Allah. Their mission was clear: raid the house and set it ablaze. This was not an act of indiscriminate violence but a decisive strike against an active, internal threat during a state of emergency. The command was carried out swiftly; the house was surrounded and set on fire. While those inside were allowed to escape, a clear message was sent. History records that no one perished in the fire, though one individual, Ziad ibn Khalifah, who jumped from the roof, broke his leg and arm. This incident underscored the Islamic government's resolve to neutralize internal threats, especially when they took the form of organized centers of sedition. It was a potent warning to all who plotted against the nascent Islamic state.

More alarmingly, another, even more dangerous center of deception was being established: *Masjid al-Dirar* (the Mosque of Harm). This mosque, built with the assistance of the Roman emperor by a man named Abu Amir al-Rahib—a former ascetic and respected figure in Medina who had fled to Rome after the Battle of Uhud due to his intense jealousy of the Prophet (s)—was not intended for prayer but for malevolent purposes. The Qur'an explicitly states its objectives: "**And [there are] those who took for themselves a mosque for harming and disbelief and** disunity** among the believers and as a station for whoever had fought Allah and His Messenger before. And they will surely swear, 'We intended only good.' But Allah testifies that they are liars.**"** (Surah At-Tawbah, 9:107**)

These *munafiqin* approached the Prophet (s) just before his departure for Tabuk, feigning sincerity. They explained that they had built the mosque to provide a convenient place of worship for those who lived far from

Masjid an-Nabawi and *Masjid Quba*, especially during harsh weather. They earnestly requested the Prophet (s) to consecrate it with his prayer. Despite knowing their true, malicious intent, the Prophet (s), in his profound wisdom and to avoid creating a new crisis on the eve of a major expedition, politely deferred. He stated that he was about to depart for Tabuk, but upon his return, he would pray in their mosque "if Allah wills." This seemingly common phrase, "**insha'Allah**," carried a deeper meaning, implying that divine permission would be conditional upon their true intentions. As the Prophet (s) mounted his mule to depart, it miraculously refused to move towards the *Masjid al-Dirar*, and even his horse and his very feet seemed unwilling to proceed towards it when directed, further emphasizing the divine disapproval of their deceptive endeavor. This subtle yet powerful sign was a clear message to those who were aware of the *munafiqin*'s true nature.

The unique and perilous internal situation in Medina, with its burgeoning *munafiqin* presence, dictated a strategic decision unprecedented in Islamic history: the Prophet (s) would leave Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) behind in Medina. Unlike previous battles where Imam Ali (a.s.) was always at the forefront, the Prophet (s) deemed it crucial for a figure of Ali's (a.s.) stature and authority to protect the capital from internal subversion and external threats. This decision was revealed by the Archangel Jibra'il to the Prophet (s), signifying its divine decree.

The *munafiqin*, however, seized upon Ali's (a.s.) retention in Medina, interpreting it as a sign of his unimportance, or even the Prophet's (s) displeasure with him. They launched a venomous propaganda campaign throughout Medina, spreading rumors that the Prophet (s) had left Ali (a.s.) behind because he was a "burden," or because better and braver men had joined the expedition, implying Ali's (a.s.) unsuitability for combat. Their aim was to undermine Ali's (a.s.) standing and create discord.

Upon hearing these malicious whispers, Imam Ali (a.s.), understanding the insidious nature of the propaganda and its potential long-term impact on the community, immediately rode out to the Prophet (s), who was with the army at *Jurf*, about three miles from Medina. Ali (a.s.) expressed his concern about the damaging rumors being spread against him. It was at this pivotal moment, before the entire army of thirty thousand companions, that the Prophet (s) delivered a momentous declaration that would forever seal Ali's (a.s.) unique status.

Addressing Ali (a.s.) and the assembled army, the Prophet (s) proclaimed the renowned **Hadith al-Manzilat** (Tradition of Position): "**O Ali, are you not pleased that you are to me as Harun was to Musa, except that there will be no prophet after me?**" This declaration was not an isolated incident; the Prophet (s) had pronounced this exact hadith on at least six prior occasions: during the establishment of brotherhood among the Muslims in Mecca; again during the establishment of brotherhood in Medina; when all doors leading to *Masjid an-Nabawi* were ordered shut except for his own and Ali's (a.s.); at the time of the Conquest of Mecca concerning the guardianship of Lady Hamza's (r.a.) daughter; in the presence of Umar and a group of companions; and at the home of Umm Salama (r.a.). The widespread narration of this Hadith by numerous companions across various historical contexts, documented in major Sunni and Shia hadith collections (including *Sahih Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Tirmidhi*, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, and *Musnad Ahmad*), attests to its authenticity and profound significance. The proclamation at Tabuk, made before an army of thirty thousand, served as a powerful, public reaffirmation of Ali's (a.s.) permanent and universal position as the Prophet's (s) vicegerent, brother, minister, and successor, not merely a temporary appointment for the duration of the expedition.

With this divine mandate and the clear instruction to return to Medina, Imam Ali (a.s.) turned back. However, the *munafiqin*, whose plots had

been thwarted, were not deterred. They devised a sinister plan to assassinate Ali (a.s.) on his return journey. They dug a vast, deep pit, approximately twenty-five *dhira'* (cubits) wide, on his path, covering it with sacks and a thin layer of earth, and concealed themselves nearby with stones to collapse the pit once Ali (a.s.) fell in.

As Imam Ali (a.s.) approached the treacherous spot, his horse suddenly halted and refused to move forward, communicating its awareness of the impending danger. Ali (a.s.), endowed with divine knowledge, acknowledged the horse's concern and commanded it to proceed, stating that he too was aware of the trap. Miraculously, the horse, by Allah's will, walked over the flimsy covering of the pit as if it were solid ground, crossing it safely to the other side. The astonished *munafiqin* emerged, feigning surprise and welcome, claiming they were there to greet their ruler. Imam Ali (a.s.) simply smiled, his expression conveying his full knowledge of their failed conspiracy, a testament to the divine protection afforded to the *Ahlul Bayt*.

This incident, often overshadowed by the well-known assassination attempt on the Prophet (s) during his return from Tabuk, highlights the constant peril faced by Imam Ali (a.s.) and the *Ahlul Bayt* from the forces of hypocrisy. This divine protection and knowledge echo through history, finding resonance in the events of Karbala. Just as Ali's (a.s.) horse hesitated before the hidden pit, Imam Hussain's (a.s.) horse, Duldul, also hesitated before taking him to the battlefield, a moment where the innocent voice of Sayyidah Sakina (a.s.) pleaded with the animal not to take her father to his martyrdom. The suffering and steadfastness of the *Ahlul Bayt* are deeply intertwined, their lives serving as continuous reminders of their sacred mission and the spiritual battles they endured.

Chapter 151

Tabuk's Unveiling: Hypocrisy, Divine Justice, and Profound Devotion

The arduous expedition to Tabuk continued to serve as a profound crucible, testing the sincerity of hearts and exposing the true nature of the *munafiqin*. Throughout this challenging journey, the Prophet (s) faced repeated acts of mockery and defiance from those who feigned faith, yet Allah's divine wisdom ensured that their plots and true intentions were unveiled, often through immediate revelations.

One such incident involved Jilas ibn Suwayd. After repeatedly hearing the Prophet's (s) sermons about the Tabuk expedition and the impending confrontation with the Byzantines, Jilas publicly mocked the divine origin of the Prophet's (s) messages. He implied that the Prophet's (s) pronouncements were driven by personal gain, not divine guidance. This resonated with the earlier defiance by Harith ibn Nu'man at Ghadir, who had similarly questioned the divine command regarding Imam Ali's (a.s.) succession. Musayyib ibn Umayr, a friend of Jilas, overheard this blasphemous statement. Despite their friendship, Musayyib could not bear the insult to Islam and the Prophet (s). He immediately went to the Prophet

(s) and reported Jilas's words.

When summoned by the Prophet (s), Jilas, in a characteristic display of hypocrisy, vehemently denied having uttered such words, even swearing a false oath by Allah. However, the truth could not be concealed from divine knowledge. Immediately, Surah At-Tawbah, **9:74** was revealed, confirming Jilas's falsehood: **"They swear by Allah that they said nothing, but they did utter the word of disbelief and disbelieved after their Islam, and they purposed that which they did not attain."** Confronted with this undeniable divine revelation, Jilas ibn Suwayd broke down, realizing the futility of his denial. He sincerely repented, acknowledging his error and expressing remorse. In an act of compassion, the Prophet (s) accepted his repentance and, to mark his transformation, changed Jilas's name to Abdul Rahman, signifying "the servant of the Most Merciful" and one who submits to the truth. Abdul Rahman's sincerity was further manifested when he later sought martyrdom. During the Battle of Yamamah, he participated and was seen falling in battle, but his body was never found, a testament to Allah's acceptance of his heartfelt prayer for a death that would leave no trace.

Another instance of the *munafiqin*'s brazen mockery occurred during the march itself. A group of individuals, walking behind the main army, began to ridicule the Prophet (s) and the Islamic mission. One of them jested that the Prophet (s) and his companions would soon be bound by ropes before the Roman emperor, implying their inevitable defeat. When confronted by a fellow Muslim who cautioned them against such talk, they dismissed it as mere jesting to pass the time on a long journey, claiming they had no serious intention to mock. However, Allah revealed Surah At-Tawbah, **9:64-65**, which directly addressed their actions: **"Say, 'Is it Allah and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?' Make no excuse; you have disbelieved after your belief. If We pardon a party of you, We will punish another party because they**

were criminals." This revelation underscored that even seemingly lighthearted mockery of Allah, His revelations, or His Messenger amounted to disbelief. It also indicated that while some among them might be forgiven for their sincere repentance, others, who persisted in their arrogance, would face punishment. Faced with this divine condemnation, some of them repented, including one named Mukhtar, who was also given the name Abdul Rahman by the Prophet (s) as a mark of his sincere conversion. Others, however, continued to justify their actions, refusing to acknowledge their grave error.

Beyond these individual acts, the Tabuk expedition also laid bare the entrenched hypocrisy of prominent leaders. Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the notorious leader of the Khazraj tribe, initially joined the army with his followers, creating the impression of support. However, after the army had proceeded some distance, he dramatically withdrew with his contingent, returning to Medina. He openly discouraged others by emphasizing the immense power of Rome and predicting utter annihilation for the Muslim army. Similarly, Jadd ibn Qays, a chieftain from the Banu Salima tribe, refused to join the expedition, citing the scorching heat and expressing fear of being tempted by the beauty of Roman women. He openly questioned the Prophet's (s) command, asserting that going to Tabuk would only lead to destruction. His own son, Abdullah, a devout and sincere Muslim, confronted his father, begging him to cease his malicious propaganda. In a shocking display of contempt, Jadd ibn Qays physically struck his son with his shoe, dismissing his pleas. These leaders' actions vividly illustrated their deep-seated animosity towards Islam and their readiness to undermine the Muslim community even in times of extreme hardship.

However, the trials of Tabuk also illuminated the profound sincerity and unwavering devotion of the true believers. In a striking display of sacrifice, the women of Medina, despite the severe poverty and hardship of the

time, brought forth their precious jewelry—bracelets, anklets, necklaces, earrings, and rings—and laid them before the Prophet (s) as donations for the expedition. This act of selflessness, given when their men were absent and their families vulnerable, highlighted their deep commitment to the cause of Islam.

Among the companions, there were also those known as the "Crying Ones" (**Baka'un**), mentioned in Surah At-Tawbah, **9:92**. These were sincere individuals who presented themselves to the Prophet (s), begging for mounts and provisions to join the army. When the Prophet (s), lacking resources, had to turn them away, they departed with tears streaming from their eyes, overcome with grief at being unable to participate in the sacred *jihad*. Their profound sorrow was a testament to their pure intentions and fervent desire to serve Allah and His Messenger. Among them were fortunate individuals like Abdullah ibn Mughaffal and Abdul Rahman ibn Ka'b, who were later able to join the expedition after a compassionate companion, Jamel, shared his single camel with them, riding it alternately.

Perhaps one of the most poignant examples of devotion was that of Ali ibn Zayd (or Ali ibn Ubayd). This companion, possessing no wealth or mount for the expedition, spent the entire night in fervent prayer, weeping and pleading with Allah. In his profound sincerity, he offered two extraordinary vows: first, that all future wealth he might acquire would be dedicated to the *mujahideen* in the path of Allah; and second, that Allah would take his life and grant health and well-being to the warriors of Tabuk. The Prophet (s), informed by divine inspiration of Ali ibn Zayd's sincere prayer, praised his devotion. He too was later martyred in the Battle of Yamamah, and his body could not be found on the battlefield, fulfilling his unique supplication.

The events of Tabuk underscored critical lessons for the Muslim commu-

nity. It demonstrated that leniency, while a core Islamic principle, has its limits, especially when exploited by those seeking to harm the faith. The Prophet's (s) decisive actions and Allah's immediate revelations taught the community the importance of discernment—distinguishing between sincere repentance and feigned piety, and understanding when to conceal a private sin versus exposing a threat to the collective well-being of the Islamic state. Above all, Tabuk affirmed that true devotion and sincerity of intention, even when physical participation is impossible, holds immense value in the sight of Allah, often surpassing the external actions of those who join with impure motives. These trials further solidified the foundations of the nascent Islamic state, purifying its ranks and preparing it for future challenges.

Chapter 152

The Manifestation of Divine Power During Tabuk

The **Ghazwah Tabuk** was a journey fraught with immense hardship, a true test of faith that exposed the deepest layers of sincerity and hypocrisy within the nascent Muslim community. The path to Tabuk, spanning vast and arid distances under the scorching Arabian sun, was a severe trial. The army faced acute shortages of water, food, and even suitable mounts, pushing many to their limits. Yet, in these moments of extreme duress, Allah (SWT) chose to manifest His boundless power and mercy through a series of awe-inspiring **miracles** (***mu'jizat***) performed by His Messenger (s). These divine interventions not only provided succor to the beleaguered believers but also served as undeniable proofs against the incessant mockery and doubt sown by the *munafiqin*.

As the expedition advanced, the dire conditions intensified, and the *munafiqin* continued their insidious campaign of undermining the Prophet's (s) leadership. One incident that highlighted their malice and the Prophet's (s) **divine knowledge** (***ilm al-ghayb***) concerned a lost camel. While the army was encamped, a camel belonging to the Prophet (s) went miss-

ing. The *munafiqin* seized this opportunity to mock him, questioning how he could claim divine knowledge and guidance from Allah (SWT) if he could not even locate his own camel. With a serene and confident demeanor, the Prophet (s) turned to them and declared, "By Allah, I know nothing except what Allah teaches me. And Allah has indeed informed me that my camel is in such-and-such a valley, tied to a tree by its rope." He then precisely described the valley's features and the exact location of the tree. When a party was sent to the designated spot, they found the camel exactly as the Prophet (s) had described. This miraculous revelation utterly shamed the hypocrites and reaffirmed the believers' conviction in the Prophet's (s) divinely bestowed *ilm al-ghayb*.

The scarcity of water posed another grave threat to the army. Many, parched and weary, began to despair. In one instance, only a small quantity of water remained in a meager container, barely enough for a few individuals. The Prophet (s) approached the container, placed his blessed hand into the water, and invoked Allah's (SWT) blessings. Instantly, the water began to gush forth, flowing in such abundance that the entire army, numbering in the tens of thousands, was able to quench their thirst, perform ablution, and even fill their water skins. This miraculous outpouring of water, in the middle of a desert, was a profound testament to Allah's (SWT) power and His Messenger's (s) exalted status. In another similar instance, when the army encamped near a well, its water was insufficient. The Prophet (s) performed ablution and then poured the remnant of his ablution water into the well, causing its water to swell and provide for everyone.

Similarly, the challenge of food shortage was overcome by divine intervention. On one occasion, when hunger gripped the army, only a small amount of food was available. The Prophet (s) instructed that it be gathered. He then placed his hands over it and recited **supplications** (***du'a***) and **blessings** (***salawat***). Before the eyes of the astounded companions,

the meager provisions multiplied manifold, enough to feed the entire army to their satisfaction. They ate until they were full, and still, there was food remaining. Such instances solidified the faith of the sincere and highlighted the Prophet's (s) unique connection to the Divine.

Beyond the vital needs of survival, nature itself responded to the Prophet's (s) command, manifesting even more extraordinary *mu'jizat*. As the army proceeded, a small bird's nest with eggs was inadvertently disturbed or left exposed by the movement of the troops. Observing this, the Prophet (s), in his boundless **mercy to all the worlds** (***Rahmatul lil 'Alameen***), called upon the bird. He commanded it to spread its wings and provide shade for a large portion of the marching army. The bird, in an astonishing display of obedience, flew overhead and unfurled its wings, casting a miraculous canopy of shade that covered approximately two thousand to two thousand five hundred soldiers, shielding them from the relentless sun.

In another awe-inspiring event, the Prophet (s) addressed a palm tree and commanded it to approach him. To the astonishment of all witnesses, the tree uprooted itself and moved towards him, standing obediently before him. After receiving his instructions, it returned to its original place. Similarly, when the army encountered a mountain, the mountain itself responded to the Prophet's (s) presence, either by moving or yielding to his command, allowing the army to proceed or revealing a path.

These repeated manifestations of divine power served a dual purpose: they provided immediate relief and sustenance to the suffering army, strengthening their resolve and conviction, and simultaneously served as irrefutable evidence of the Prophet's (s) truthfulness and unique spiritual authority. The *munafiqin*, despite witnessing these undeniable signs, remained in their disbelief, their hearts hardened by arrogance and envy. Their continued mockery, including calling the Prophet (s) an *'udhun*

(ear) for listening to everyone, only further exposed their internal corruption, a fact that the Qur'an affirmed was a blessing, for it meant he heard all, good and bad.

The events of Tabuk profoundly underscored the lesson that true victory and protection come from unwavering faith and sincere reliance on Allah (SWT). The Prophet (s) continually demonstrated that his *ilm al-ghayb* was not a claim to personal divinity but a gift from Allah (SWT), enabling him to guide and lead the community through even the most formidable challenges. The miraculous events during this arduous journey cemented the believers' understanding that they were under divine protection, guided by a Messenger whose every action was imbued with Allah's (SWT) power and mercy.

Chapter 153

Tabuk's Timeless Warnings: The Fate of Ad and Thamud

The arduous journey to Tabuk, the Prophet's (s) final military expedition, traversed a land not merely defined by its scorching heat and challenging terrain, but by an even more profound historical and spiritual significance. This region was a living museum of divine judgment, a place where the ruins of ancient, once-mighty civilizations lay as stark reminders of Allah's (SWT) power and the ultimate consequences of defiance. As the Muslim army marched through these historic valleys, the Prophet (s) illuminated for them the deeper lessons embedded in the very ground they trod.

This was the land where the nations of Prophet Hud (a.s.), known as *Ad*, and Prophet Saleh (a.s.), known as *Thamud*, had flourished and subsequently perished. The **Qur'an** explicitly details the fates of these two nations, offering specific narratives of their downfall, unlike many other communities whose stories are mentioned without explicit identification. The Prophet (s) emphasized that this distinction was a profound warning, especially for his *Ummah*.

The people of *Ad*, mentioned in **Surah al-Fajr**, were renowned for their unparalleled architectural feats, building "Iram of the Pillars, the like of which had never been created in any land" (**Qur'an 89:7-8**). Their technological advancement and material wealth were staggering, yet their arrogance and rejection of divine guidance sealed their fate. Similarly, the people of *Thamud* were masters of engineering, famously carving magnificent dwellings out of mountainsides in the valley, as described in **Surah al-Fajr** (**Qur'an 89:9**) and elsewhere. Their intricate rock-cut architecture, remnants of which still inspire awe today, speaks to a civilization that believed itself invincible. Yet, despite their ingenuity and power, they too succumbed to divine wrath due to their persistent disbelief and disobedience.

The story of Prophet Saleh (a.s.) and the *Naqa* (she-camel) is particularly resonant. The people of *Thamud*, in their obstinacy, demanded a miraculous sign from Allah (SWT) through Prophet Saleh (a.s.). In response, a magnificent she-camel emerged from a solid rock, a clear and undeniable **miracle** (***mu'jizah***) from Allah (SWT). This **Naqa** was a living sign, endowed with unique blessings, and a specific injunction was given: no one was to harm it, and its designated share of water from the well was to be respected. Despite this clear divine command and the miracle they themselves had requested, the *Thamud* ultimately conspired and cruelly slaughtered the *Naqa* and its offspring. This act of ultimate defiance brought about their swift and utter destruction. The **Qur'an** refers to this she-camel as an **"Ayat Allah"** – a **Sign of Allah** – a term also used for the Prophet (s) and the Imams, underscoring its profound spiritual significance.

As the Muslim army passed through these desolate ruins, the Prophet (s) issued strict instructions, emphasizing the solemnity of the occasion. He forbade them from pausing to gaze upon the remains with curiosity or taking anything from the land, as one would during a sightseeing

tour. Instead, he commanded his companions to hasten through these areas, to cover their faces, and to do so with weeping and profound reflection, seeking Allah's (SWT) refuge from similar fates. He highlighted that these were places of divine retribution, meant for *ibrah* (lesson) and not for entertainment or curiosity. The Prophet (s) even instructed them not to drink water from the wells of *Thamud* and to use their own provisions, lest they be afflicted by a similar fate. This comportment contrasted sharply with the attitude of the *munafiqin* (hypocrites), who mocked these historical warnings and showed no reverence.

The Prophet's (s) teachings in Tabuk underscored vital principles for believers. The fate of *Ad* and *Thamud* served as a timeless warning against arrogance, ingratitude for divine blessings, and rejection of prophetic guidance. He particularly drew a profound parallel between the slaying of Prophet Saleh's *Naqa* and the human tendency to reject or harm the very signs and leaders they claim to await. Just as the *Thamud* demanded a sign only to destroy it, the Prophet (s) implied, some who claim to await the Imam of their time might, by their actions or lack thereof, turn against him or his divine mission when he appears. He cautioned against the hypocrisy of those who outwardly express a longing for their Imam but are unprepared to face the challenges and sacrifices that accompany his advent.

The expedition to Tabuk, therefore, was not merely a military endeavor but a spiritual journey through the annals of divine history. It was a rigorous test that separated the sincere believers from the *munafiqin*, demonstrating the immense value of humility, repentance, and unwavering faith. While past nations faced immediate and devastating punishments, the Prophet's (s) **Ummah** was granted extended grace and opportunities for repentance due to his **Rahmatul lil 'Alameen** (Mercy to all creation). This journey served as a profound reminder that true victory lies not in material strength or worldly achievements, but in complete submission

to Allah (SWT) and unwavering obedience to His Messenger (s) and the divinely appointed spiritual guides.

Chapter 154

Tabuk's Grand Conclusion: Divine Signs and Enduring Wisdom

The arduous expedition to Tabuk, a profound test of faith and loyalty, was drawing to its culmination. As the final chapters of this monumental journey unfolded, the Prophet Muhammad (s) continued to reveal divine signs and impart timeless lessons, further exposing the hypocrites while fortifying the faith of the believers. This was the Prophet's (s) last expedition leading an army out of Medina, a significant juncture in his blessed life that continued to offer profound insights into the nature of faith, sincerity, and divine providence.

Throughout the journey, the *munafiqin* persisted in their mockery and undermining efforts. Their skepticism, however, only served to highlight the Prophet's (s) miracles (*mu'jizat*). When the army faced severe water scarcity, nearing desperation to the point of contemplating sacrificing their camels for the water in their stomachs, a companion approached the Prophet (s) and appealed for divine intervention. The Prophet (s) dismounted his camel and, as tradition relates, a continuous stream of clouds gathered, pouring down rain so copiously that the immediate wa-

ter crisis was resolved for the entire army at Tabuk. This event, despite its clear miraculous nature, was once again met with cynical remarks from the *munafiqin*, who dismissed it as mere coincidence or an act of nature, mirroring the disbelief of figures like Abu Jahl in Mecca. This unwavering obstinacy, even in the face of incontrovertible proof, underscored their hardened hearts, a spiritual affliction that remained unchanged over years of prophethood.

The journey brought the army to a plain in the vicinity of Tabuk, a desolate and uninhabited area at the time, starkly different from the bustling city it is today. Here, another extraordinary event unfolded, emphasizing the Prophet's (s) unique connection to all of creation. As the army approached, a terrifying serpentine creature, massive in size, emerged from the wilderness. Its form was so imposing that it instilled fear in many companions, causing some to retreat. However, the Prophet (s) remained steadfast. The creature approached him, and to the astonishment of the onlookers, a dialogue ensued between them. The Prophet (s) later revealed that this was a *jinn* who had believed in him during his Meccan period, one of the nine *jinn* who had heard the Qur'an recited by the Prophet (s) and subsequently embraced Islam, returning to their people as callers to faith. This remarkable encounter underscored the Prophet's (s) universal prophethood, extending even to the *jinn*, and his role as a mercy to all creation (*Rahmatul lil 'Alameen*). The *jinn* sought the Prophet's (s) blessing and presented their needs, to which the Prophet (s) responded with compassion. The *jinn* then awaited the Prophet's (s) *salam*, for a reply to a *salam* is an obligation in Islam. Upon receiving the Prophet's (s) *salam*, the *jinn* departed, leaving the companions in awe.

Further enhancing the miraculous nature of the expedition, the Prophet (s) gave an instruction to the army that they would soon reach a specific spring in Tabuk, but warned them not to use its water before his arrival. Upon reaching the designated spot, some advance elements of

the army, disregarding the Prophet's (s) command, had already used the water, which was barely trickling. The Prophet (s) expressed his displeasure, reinforcing the importance of obedience to divine command. He then collected the small amount of water from the spring into a vessel, washed his hands and face with it, and poured the blessed water back into the spring. Immediately, the spring gushed forth abundantly, providing sufficient water for the entire thirty-thousand-strong army for the twenty days they encamped at Tabuk. This miraculous multiplication of water was a clear divine sign. Looking upon the now-flowing spring, the Prophet (s) made a profound prophecy: he foretold that this desolate land, devoid of water, would one day become so fertile and prosperous that gardens and orchards would flourish, a prophecy that has been fulfilled, as Tabuk is now a verdant and thriving region.

While at Tabuk, the Prophet (s) also engaged in diplomatic interactions with powerful figures of the time. Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor, who had previously been extended an invitation to Islam, sent a representative to the Prophet (s) with specific signs to test his prophethood. These signs included features like the Prophet's (s) acceptance of gifts, but not charity (sadaqah), and other characteristics of a true prophet. The Prophet (s) displayed these signs, and Heraclius, convinced in his heart of the truth of Islam and the prophethood of Muhammad (s), desired to embrace the faith. However, influenced by the strong opposition of his ministers, courtiers, and especially the powerful priests, he publicly refrained from accepting Islam, fearing the loss of his throne and authority. He sent another letter to the Prophet (s), expressing his inner conviction but citing the pressures that prevented his public declaration. The Prophet (s) left Heraclius's matter to Allah, observing that the influence of Islam had touched even the heart of the world's greatest ruler, highlighting the power of truth over worldly power.

The expedition also secured alliances with various tribes in the region,

particularly those inhabiting the territories between Medina and Syria. The leaders of Ayla, Jarba, and Adhruh, mostly Christians, came to the Prophet (s) and sought peace treaties based on *jizya* (tribute). They agreed to pay annual tribute and provide safe passage and hospitality for Muslim travelers, especially along the crucial trade routes. This secured the northern border and solidified Islamic influence.

A notable encounter occurred with Ukaydir, the Christian ruler of Dumat al-Jandal, a powerful and strategically fortified region further north of Tabuk, known for its formidable fortress. Ukaydir refused to come to the Prophet (s) for a peace treaty. Recognizing the strategic importance of Dumat al-Jandal in securing the route to Syria, the Prophet (s) dispatched a detachment of 400 horsemen, including Khalid ibn al-Walid, with specific instructions to capture Ukaydir alive, emphasizing his importance for future alliances. The journey to Dumat al-Jandal was treacherous, especially under moonlight, as the fortress was well-guarded. The Prophet (s) taught them a special invocation—reciting **Salawat** upon himself and his family and holding the conviction that Allah would illuminate them to bypass the guards. This divine assistance allowed the Muslim detachment to reach the fortress unseen.

Ukaydir, meanwhile, was reveling with his wives, engaging in hunting and feasting. Suddenly, a herd of wild animals, driven by an unseen force, stampeded towards his fortress, their voices echoing loudly. Despite the warnings of one of his wives who suspected a divine hand, Ukaydir, a skilled hunter, yielded to his passion and went out with his brother. As they hunted, they were suddenly ambushed by the Muslim forces, who had appeared as if from nowhere. Ukaydir's brother was killed, and Ukaydir himself was captured. He submitted to the Muslims on the condition that he would only speak to the Prophet (s) himself and that his fortress would not be damaged. Ukaydir was brought before the Prophet (s), wearing a magnificent garment woven with gold threads. When the

companions expressed awe at its richness, the Prophet (s) reminded them of the impermanence of worldly wealth, stating that a single thread from the garments of paradise is far more valuable than all the treasures of this world. Ukaydir then embraced Islam and agreed to pay tribute, securing peace for his domain, though he later apostatized after the Prophet's (s) demise.

As the army began its return journey to Medina, the *munafiqin* launched their most desperate and heinous plot. Terrified by the Prophet's (s) continued successes and the growing strength of Islam, they sought to assassinate him on a difficult mountain pass. They planned to dislodge his camel, causing him to fall into a ravine, making it appear as an accident. This conspiracy, mentioned in **Surah At-Tawbah, 9:74**, involved a group of fourteen to twenty-four hypocrites, who concealed their faces and hid along the treacherous path.

The Prophet (s), through his **divine knowledge (*ilm al-ghayb*)**, was fully aware of their plot. He instructed the main army to take an easier, wider path around the mountain, while he, accompanied only by Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman (r.a.) and Ammar ibn Yasir (r.a.), ascended the narrow, dangerous pass. Hudhayfah (r.a.) led the Prophet's (s) camel, while Ammar (r.a.) walked behind, pushing it. As they approached the hidden *munafiqin*, the Prophet (s) commanded Hudhayfah (r.a.) to strike the ground with his stick. Upon hearing the command, the fourteen plotters, startled and exposed, scattered in fear. The Prophet (s) then identified each of them by name to a astonished Hudhayfah (r.a.), who had not even seen their faces clearly due to the darkness. Hudhayfah (r.a.) sought permission to punish them immediately upon arrival in Medina, but the Prophet (s) refused, stating he did not wish for it to be said that Muhammad killed his own companions once he gained strength. He left their matter to Allah, and Hudhayfah (r.a.) thus became known as the "Keeper of the Prophet's Secrets," specifically regarding the identities of

the hypocrites. This wisdom was so profound that Caliph Umar (r.a.) would consult Hudhayfah (r.a.) about attending funerals, knowing that if Hudhayfah (r.a.) abstained, the deceased was likely one of the hypocrites.

The Tabuk expedition, though without direct combat with the Byzantine army, yielded immense benefits for the Muslim community: 1. **Expansion of Islamic Influence:** The Prophet's (s) journey to Tabuk, a region previously outside the sphere of Islamic influence, projected the power and reach of Islam to the northern borders, paving the way for future conquests and conversions in Christian and Jewish territories. This led to the "Year of Delegations" (*'Am al-Wufood*) in 9 AH, where numerous tribes came to Medina to embrace Islam. 2. **Military Training and Preparedness:** The demanding march to Tabuk, through challenging terrain and conditions, provided invaluable training for the Muslim army, preparing them for future confrontations with the formidable Byzantine Empire. 3. **Unveiling of Hypocrisy:** The expedition served as a crucial test, clearly distinguishing sincere believers from the *munafiqin*, whose true intentions and cowardly nature were exposed. This allowed the community to identify and manage internal threats more effectively. 4. **Emphasis on Succession and *Ahlul Bayt***: The appointment of Imam Ali (a.s.) as the Prophet's (s) vicegerent in Medina, coupled with the **Hadith al-Manzilat** ("O Ali, you are to me as Harun was to Musa, except that there is no prophet after me"), further underscored his unique status and spiritual succession, a cornerstone for the future of Islam. 5. **Spiritual Lessons on Intention and Humility:** The Prophet (s) taught that those who intended to join the expedition but were prevented by genuine necessity would receive the same reward as those who participated. Conversely, he cautioned against arrogance arising from good deeds, reminding believers that true reward depends on sincerity and humility. He taught that the sincerity of intention can compensate for physical inability to perform a

good deed.

The journey back to Medina was swift and uneventful, a stark contrast to the challenges faced on the outward journey. The *munafiqin*, disheartened by the failure of their plots and the undeniable strength of Islam, could only watch as the triumphant army returned.

The legacy of Tabuk, however, echoes through time, carrying prophetic reverberations far beyond its immediate events. The Prophet's (s) journey to the land of Shaam and his return laid a blueprint for future generations. Yet, a poignant reflection arises: years later, a descendant from his pure lineage, his beloved granddaughter Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.), would also embark on a journey to Shaam. But her journey would not be as a triumphant commander of an army, but as a captive, leading a procession of the Prophet's (s) household, bound in chains, accompanying the severed heads of her martyrs, including that of her brother, Imam Husayn (a.s.).

A powerful spiritual account describes Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.) arriving at a place in Shaam, recognizing it as the very spot where the heads of her martyrs were displayed on trees. Overwhelmed with grief, she called out to her brother, Husayn (a.s.), recognizing the trees from which their heads were suspended. She fell to the ground in a faint, collapsing into a water channel dug by a local. The local, mistaking her for a mere passerby, struck her with a spade, tragically causing her martyrdom. This heart-wrenching account, though not a historical event of Tabuk, serves as a powerful spiritual reminder of the immense sacrifices and suffering endured by the Prophet's (s) *Ahlul Bayt*, linking the distant past of Tabuk with the tragic future of Karbala and Shaam. The journey to Tabuk was an act of divine protection and triumph; the subsequent journey of the *Ahlul Bayt* to Shaam was a testament to their enduring sacrifice in preserving the message of Islam.

Chapter 155

The Architect of Deceit: Abu Amir and Masjid al-Dirar

The arduous expedition of Tabuk, which had unfolded as a series of profound tests for the burgeoning Muslim community, concluded with a final and most intricate challenge: the unveiling of **Masjid al-Dirar** (The Mosque of Harm). This incident, far from being a mere historical footnote, served as the ultimate touchstone of sincerity, designed by the *munafiqin* (hypocrites) to shake the very foundations of faith and obedience to the Prophet (s). Its revelation, divinely orchestrated, carried timeless lessons for all generations of Muslims, especially those living in later times marked by confusion and deceit.

The Qur'an, in its profound wisdom, does not narrate history for history's sake. Rather, it presents events, characters, and struggles as a means to convey essential Islamic principles, to guide human conduct, and to foster true understanding of divine decree. As Allah states in **Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:21**: "**Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often.**" The life of the Prophet (s), therefore, is a living model, and

every incident within it, including the saga of *Masjid al-Dirar*, is replete with enduring lessons.

At the heart of the *Masjid al-Dirar* affair lay a cunning attempt to exploit the sanctity of a mosque for insidious purposes. It was a calculated move by the hypocrites to undermine the Prophet's authority by casting doubt on his divinely guided decisions, particularly his command to destroy what outwardly appeared to be a house of worship. This act, seemingly contradictory to the reverence held for mosques, was a perfect weapon in the hands of those seeking to sow discord and disillusionment among less firm believers. It aimed to create a narrative that the Prophet (s), God forbid, was acting against sacred norms, thereby alienating people from his leadership.

This profound test of obedience is powerfully underscored by a pivotal Qur'anic verse in **Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:56**: "**Indeed, Allah and His angels send blessings upon the Prophet: O you who believe! Send blessings upon him, and salute him with a becoming salutation (complete submission).**" (**Inna Allaha wa mala'ikatahu yusallūna 'ala an-Nabiyy. Ya ayyuha alladhīna amanu sallū 'alayhi wa sallimū taslīma.**). This verse contains two distinct, yet equally critical, commands for believers: *sallū 'alayhi* (send blessings upon him) and *sallimū taslīma* (salute him with complete submission). While the former, sending *salawat* (blessings), is widely understood and practiced, the latter, *taslim*, often remains neglected or misunderstood. *Taslim* signifies absolute, unquestioning submission to the Prophet's (s) every command and decision, even when logic or personal inclination might seem to dictate otherwise. It demands not just outward compliance, but also an internal acceptance without any resentment or doubt. This profound meaning of *taslim* is further reinforced by **Surah An-Nisa, 4:65**: "**But no, by your Lord, they will not believe until they make you, O Muhammad, judge in all disputes between them, and then find no resistance in their souls against your decisions**

and accept them with full submission." Thus, the incident of *Masjid al-Dirar* served as a stark demonstration of what true *taslim* entailed.

The primary architect behind the construction of *Masjid al-Dirar* was a figure named Abu Amir, known as "ar-Rahib" (the Monk). His story is a poignant testament to the complex interplay of knowledge, ego, and ultimate rejection of divine truth. Abu Amir belonged to the *Banu Khazraj*, one of Medina's prominent tribes. Initially a pagan, he had embraced Christianity and become a revered monk, well-versed in the scriptures of the Torah and the Injeel.

Before the advent of Prophet Mohammad (s), Abu Amir was a prominent voice in Medina, actively prophesying the arrival of a final messenger from Mecca. He eloquently spoke of **Tawhid** (monotheism), the **Akhirah** (Afterlife), **Jannah** (Paradise), and **Jahannam** (Hell), concepts that were then alien to the local Arab populace. He would gather his people and explain that a Prophet was destined to come who would bring these profound truths, which he had gleaned from the scriptures. This early advocacy even led many of his people to anticipate and readily accept the Prophet (s) upon his *Hijrah*. One such example was Hanzalah, who would later be known as **Ghaseel al-Mala'ikah**.

However, a chilling paradox emerged when the Prophet (s) finally arrived in Medina. Despite Abu Amir's meticulous preparations and accurate predictions, he became one of the Prophet's (s) fiercest adversaries. His initial attempts to undermine the Prophet (s) and his growing influence within Medina proved futile. Faced with the undeniable truth and the increasing numbers of converts, his pride and perhaps his desire to maintain his own religious authority (*kursi-e-mazhabi*) led him to an escalating path of enmity.

When his efforts in Medina failed, Abu Amir fled to Mecca, where he actively incited the Quraish against the Prophet (s). He was a key instigator

of the **Battle of Uhud**, urging the Meccan polytheists to seek revenge for Badr. Even after the Prophet's (s) triumphant **Conquest of Mecca**, Abu Amir's hatred persisted. He fled to Ta'if, continuing his machinations and attempting to rally its inhabitants against Islam. When Ta'if too eventually submitted, he fled further afield, seeking refuge and support from the Byzantine emperor in Syria (Shaam). It was from Syria that Abu Amir conceived the plot of *Masjid al-Dirar*, sending a message to his hypocrite allies in Medina, instructing them to build this mosque as a base for espionage and division, promising to return with an army to overthrow the Islamic state.

The motivation behind Abu Amir's relentless animosity was not the pursuit of political power, unlike figures such as Abdullah ibn Ubayy, who aspired to kingship in Medina. Rather, it was a profound envy rooted in his spiritual authority, a desire to be the preeminent religious leader. This pattern of individuals using a facade of religious authority to oppose divine leadership is a recurrent theme throughout history, paralleled by figures like Pharaoh (political power), Qarun (wealth), and Haman (religious leadership) in the Qur'an.

Yet, perhaps the most striking and ironic aspect of Abu Amir's story is the fate of his own son, Hanzalah. While Abu Amir dedicated his life to opposing the Prophet (s), his son, Hanzalah, embraced Islam with unwavering sincerity and devotion. During the **Battle of Uhud**, Hanzalah was newly married. On his wedding night, the call to arms resonated through Medina. Without a moment's hesitation, and even before he could complete his *ghusl* (ritual purification bath), Hanzalah rushed to the battlefield. He fought valiantly and achieved martyrdom. After the battle, the Prophet (s), in a miraculous revelation, declared that the angels had performed the *ghusl* for Hanzalah, bestowing upon him the unique honorific title of "**Ghaseel al-Mala'ikah**" (one bathed by the angels).

This stark contrast between a father, a bitter enemy of Islam, and a son, a revered martyr, serves as a powerful reminder that faith and righteousness are personal choices, transcending lineage and familial environment. It demonstrates that Allah's guidance can penetrate even the most hostile of households, leading individuals to the path of truth and submission, as seen in the life of Hanzalah, the son of Abu Amir, the architect of *Masjid al-Dirar*. This paradox also foreshadowed the ongoing challenges faced by the **Ahlul Bayt**, where structures or positions seemingly associated with piety would later be used to oppose divine spiritual leadership. The story of *Masjid al-Dirar* thus stands as a timeless lesson on discerning true faith from hypocrisy, and authentic submission from mere outward compliance.

Chapter 156

Divine Revelation and the Demolition of the Mosque of Harm

The ninth year of *Hijrah* unfolded as a truly momentous period in the life of Prophet Mohammad (s) and the nascent Islamic *Ummah*. It was a year characterized by a series of profound tests and pivotal events, perhaps more than any other, signaling both the nearing completion of the Prophet's (s) earthly mission and the critical arrangements for the future leadership of Islam. The events of this year, particularly the **Ghazwah Tabuk** and the incident of *Masjid al-Dirar*, served to unequivocally unmask the *munafiqin* (hypocrites) and lay bare the deep-seated divisions they sought to sow within the Muslim community.

As the Prophet (s) and his companions prepared for the expedition to Tabuk, a seemingly innocuous request was brought before him. A group of individuals, outwardly claiming concern for the elderly and infirm among them, sought permission to construct a new mosque outside Medina. They argued that their dwellings were distant from *Masjid al-Nabawi* and that inclement weather made it difficult for the frail to attend congregational prayers, thus they needed a separate place of worship. The

Prophet (s), based on their stated intent, granted them permission. This incident underscores a crucial principle: the response to a question depends entirely on the nature of the question itself. Had they revealed their true malicious intentions, the answer would have been starkly different.

Unbeknownst to many, this request was a carefully orchestrated plot, the mastermind of which was an individual named Abu Amir. In the pre-Islamic era, Abu Amir had been a prominent religious leader in Medina, revered by many as a *rahb* or "monk" due to his ascetic lifestyle and outwardly pious demeanor. He wore coarse clothes, ate dry bread, and lived a life seemingly detached from worldly pleasures. However, when the Prophet (s) arrived in Medina, Abu Amir's true colors emerged; he became a bitter enemy of Islam, finding his authority challenged by the divine message.

It is a striking historical detail that the Prophet (s) changed the names of only two individuals in his lifetime: Abu Jahl, the staunch enemy from Mecca, whose original name was Amr ibn Hisham (or Abul Hakam, meaning 'father of wisdom', a title he earned for his supposed sagacity), was renamed Abu Jahl, meaning 'father of ignorance'. Similarly, Abu Amir, the Medinan hypocrite, was explicitly renamed Abu Amir al-Fasiq (the transgressor) by the Prophet (s), who forbade his companions from referring to him as *rahb*. This transformation of titles was deeply symbolic. It conveyed that outward piety and asceticism, if not rooted in sincere devotion to Allah and His Messenger and instead used to oppose truth, were nothing but transgression and misguidance. True *taqwa* (God-consciousness) is in alignment with divine will; anything purporting to be piety but serving falsehood is *fisq* (transgression).

After the Conquest of Mecca and the Battle of Hunayn, when the last hopes of the polytheists were shattered, Abu Amir fled to Syria and sought

alliance with the Byzantine (Roman) Emperor. He proposed a strategy to destabilize the Islamic state from within. His plan was to establish a central base in Medina, disguised as a mosque, which would serve as a hub for espionage and a rallying point for hypocrites to support a future Roman invasion.

The hypocrites, under Abu Amir's distant command, built their mosque with unusual haste, their eagerness fueled by the anticipation that the Prophet (s) might not return from the arduous Tabuk expedition. They even extended an invitation to the Prophet (s) to pray in their new mosque before he departed, hoping to legitimize it in the eyes of the Muslim community. The Prophet (s) deferred, stating that he would visit it upon his return to Medina, if Allah willed.

As the Prophet (s) returned from Tabuk and was about three miles from Medina, divine revelation descended, exposing the insidious plot. **Surah At-Tawbah, Ayat 108 and 109**, were revealed to Prophet Mohammad (s) through Jibra'il (a.s.): **"And [as for] those who took for themselves a mosque for harm and disbelief and division among the believers and as a station for whoever had warred against Allah and His Messenger before. And they will surely swear, 'We intended only good.' And Allah testifies that indeed, they are liars. Do not ever stand [for prayer] therein. A mosque founded on *taqwa* from the first day is more worthy for you to stand in. Within it are men who love to purify themselves, and Allah loves those who purify themselves."**

Upon receiving this divine command, the Prophet (s) immediately dispatched two companions, Malik ibn Khasham and another, instructing them to set fire to *Masjid al-Dirar*. These two companions, who resided in the very locality where the mosque was built, entered it during evening prayers. As the congregants were gathered, they set the structure ablaze with a burning palm frond. The mosque, built with treacherous intent,

was consumed by flames and later, by the Prophet's (s) command, converted into a garbage dump, symbolizing its true nature as a place of impurity and discord.

This incident carries profound lessons for the *Ummah*. Firstly, it unequivocally demonstrates that the value of any act, even the construction of a house of worship, is determined by the sincerity of its intention. An act outwardly righteous but inwardly malicious is condemned by Allah. Secondly, it highlights the importance of unity (*ittihad*) among believers and the grave sin of *tafriqah* (division). A place of worship, meant to foster unity, becomes a tool of destruction if it serves to divide.

Furthermore, the Quranic verses draw a sharp contrast between *Masjid al-Dirar* and a *Masjid al-Taqwa* (mosque founded on piety from the first day), implicitly referring to *Masjid al-Quba* or *Masjid al-Nabawi*. This teaches that while destructive elements must be removed, positive alternatives must simultaneously be provided. Islam is not merely about prohibition but about redirection; for every *haram* (forbidden) path, it offers a *halal* (permissible) alternative. If one avenue is closed due to its corrupting influence, a righteous and beneficial one must be opened. This applies not only to places of worship but to all aspects of societal life: if certain forms of entertainment are forbidden, healthy alternatives must be fostered; if illicit economic practices are prohibited, just and accessible economic systems must be established. This is a collective responsibility of the Muslim *Ummah*.

Finally, the incident of *Masjid al-Dirar* serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring struggle against internal division. Both the Prophet (s) and Imam Ali (a.s.), in their final wills, vehemently emphasized the preservation of unity among Muslims. Imam Ali (a.s.), in his last testament to Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) on the 21st of Ramadan, reiterated this crucial advice: to strive for reconciliation and unity among

believers. The *Ahlul Bayt* (a.s.) themselves endured immense suffering and sacrificed greatly to prevent schism and protect the nascent Islamic state from internal strife, a testament to the supreme importance of cohesion in the face of adversity. The demolition of *Masjid al-Dirar* was not merely the destruction of a building; it was a powerful statement against all forms of hypocrisy and division designed to undermine the core tenets of faith and community.

Chapter 157

Beyond Bricks and Mortar: The Enduring Lessons of Masjid al-Dirar

The Tabuk expedition, a pivotal event in the ninth year of *Hijrah*, concluded with a series of profound lessons that transcended the immediate military and diplomatic outcomes. Among these, the incident of **Masjid al-Dirar** stands as a timeless teaching, one that continues to resonate with the *Ummah* until the very reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.). This was no minor occurrence to be overlooked; rather, it served as a vivid exposition of the intricate conspiracies woven by the enemies of Islam and provided the faithful with an enduring principle to safeguard against such grave deceptions.

At its core, the episode of **Masjid al-Dirar** highlights the dual nature of *rizq* (sustenance) and the paramount importance of spiritual provision. Islam emphasizes two types of *rizq*: the physical, comprising food, shelter, and material needs, and the spiritual, which nurtures the soul and faith. While the physical is undoubtedly important, the spiritual is deemed superior. This is powerfully demonstrated by the Prophet's (s) first act upon arriving in Medina after the *Hijrah*: the construction of

Masjid al-Nabawi. Despite the pressing physical hardships faced by the early Muslims, who often tied stones to their stomachs out of hunger, the Prophet (s) prioritized the building of the mosque—a factory for spiritual sustenance, a source of light for the soul, and a fortress for faith. This initial act underscored Islam's emphasis on spiritual foundations, even as physical challenges awaited resolution.

It was against this backdrop of sacred construction that the sinister plan of **Masjid al-Dirar** unfolded. This structure, outwardly appearing as a mosque, was in reality a hub for harm, disbelief, and division among believers, intended to serve as a base for those hostile to Allah and His Messenger (s). Its mastermind was Abu Amir, who, despite his previous guise as a monk (*Rahib*), was aptly renamed by the Prophet (s) as "Abu Amir al-Fasiq" (the transgressor), signifying that outward piety, when used to undermine truth, is a grave sin. Abu Amir relentlessly incited the Meccans against Islam, and upon the **Conquest of Mecca**, he fled, eventually settling in Syria, where he continued to orchestrate plots against the Prophet (s). Reports indicate that he died a miserable death within forty days of the **Masjid al-Dirar** incident being exposed, afflicted by various physical ailments as his plots came to naught.

The divine revelation (Surah at-Tawbah, 9:108-109) exposed the mosque's malicious intent. The Prophet (s) immediately commanded its demolition and desecration, transforming it into a refuse dump. This action was not merely to destroy a building; it was a profound statement. Unlike other instances where houses used for conspiracy were simply demolished, the Prophet (s) ordered **Masjid al-Dirar** to be *burned* and its remains turned into a place of filth. This was to utterly strip away any lingering reverence for a structure that had been built under the guise of religion but with corrupt intentions. It challenged the common understanding that any place associated with worship, even if built by hypocrites, warranted some respect. The Prophet (s) aimed to uproot such decep-

tive notions from the hearts of the believers, ensuring they understood that even an act as virtuous as building a mosque loses all sanctity—and becomes a source of extreme danger—if the intention behind it is impure or malicious.

The incident of **Masjid al-Dirar** also implicitly illuminated the significance of the **Hadith al-Manzilat**, proclaimed by the Prophet (s) to Imam Ali (a.s.) during the Tabuk expedition: "**O Ali, are you not pleased that you are to me as Harun was to Musa, except that there will be no prophet after me?**" This *Hadith* was not merely about Ali's (a.s.) succession but carried a deeper parallel with the challenges faced by Prophet Harun (a.s.). Just as Harun (a.s.) remained silent and did not directly confront the calf-worshippers in Prophet Musa's (a.s.) absence, choosing to prevent further schism within the community, so too did Imam Ali (a.s.) during the construction of **Masjid al-Dirar**. The Prophet (s) understood that a direct confrontation by Ali (a.s.)—who was from the *Muhajirun*—against the Medinan hypocrites (who were native *Ansar*) could have fractured the nascent Islamic society, leading to an irreparable division. The Prophet (s) never questioned Ali's (a.s.) silence, signifying that Ali's (a.s.) restraint was divinely ordained and a matter of profound wisdom, mirroring Harun's (a.s.) actions to preserve unity.

The Qur'an itself dedicates significant verses to exposing the hypocrites, particularly in **Surah at-Tawbah**, also known as **Surah al-Bara'ah** (Disassociation) or **Surah al-Fadhihah** (The Disgracing). These verses detail the various tactics of the hypocrites, from their refusal to spend in the way of Allah to their mockery of the faithful, culminating in the exposure of **Masjid al-Dirar** as their ultimate stratagem to harm Islam through religious deception. The *Surah* underscores three crucial lessons derived from this incident:

1. **Disgracing Evil in Religious Guise**: It is not enough to simply re-

move evil that masquerades as good. It must be utterly disgraced and stripped of any perceived sanctity to prevent people from harboring residual respect for it, which could allow the evil to resurface.

2. **Providing Righteous Alternatives**: When eradicating something harmful, Islam mandates providing a wholesome alternative. Without a good option, people, out of necessity, may revert to the very wrong that was removed. For instance, if *haram* entertainment is forbidden, *halal* entertainment must be promoted.
3. **The Primacy of Sincere Intention** (***Niyyah***): This incident powerfully clarifies the prophetic saying, "**Verily, actions are by intentions** (*Innama al-a'malu bin-niyyat*)." This *Hadith* means that the *reward* and *acceptance* of a *good* action depend on the purity of its intention. It does *not* mean that a *haram* action can become permissible or acceptable if done with a good intention. A sinful act, regardless of intent, remains forbidden and invalid in the sight of Allah. Just as building a mosque (a good act) became detestable due to evil intent, an evil act cannot be sanctified by good intent.

The lessons of **Masjid al-Dirar** remained profoundly relevant throughout Islamic history. Hypocrisy, sadly, did not vanish with the demolition of the mosque. The Prophet (s) consistently exposed their plots, yet they persisted. This deep-seated danger manifested most tragically at Karbala, where the killing of Imam Husayn (a.s.) was not merely a military act but a profound religious deception, orchestrated by figures like Yazid who utilized fabricated *fatwas* and superficial piety to justify their heinous crime. The silence of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Imam Hasan (a.s.) in their times averted further internal strife. However, the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and the subsequent unparalleled struggle of Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.) were instrumental in tearing away the veil of religious deception, leaving no excuse for those who claimed ignorance or deception by *fatwas*. Sayyidah Zaynab's (a.s.) arduous journey from Kufa to

Syria, and her powerful sermons, ensured that the truth of Karbala was revealed to all, allowing no one to claim ignorance on the Day of Judgment. The tragedy of Karbala, and particularly the immense suffering of Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.) in Syria, continues to serve as a stark reminder of the enduring fight against hypocrisy and the critical importance of discerning truth from religiously cloaked falsehood.

Chapter 158

The Test of Sincerity: The Repentance of the Three Who Remained

The **Ghazwah Tabuk**, the Prophet's (s) final military expedition, concluded not merely as a journey to confront a distant threat, but as a profound divine test, a crucible for the nascent Muslim community. As the Prophet (s) and his companions returned to Medina, the true nature of hearts became evident. The *munafiqin*, those who had feigned belief, approached the Prophet (s) with an array of fabricated excuses for their absence, swearing by Allah to justify their dereliction. Out of divine wisdom, and perhaps to maintain the outward semblance of unity, the Prophet (s) outwardly accepted their explanations, leaving their true judgment to Allah, who knows all hidden intentions.

However, a different ordeal awaited three sincere believers: **Ka'b ibn Malik**, **Hilal ibn Umayyah**, and **Murarah ibn al-Rabi'**. Unlike the hypocrites, these three men did not offer any false pretenses. When they presented themselves before the Prophet (s), they confessed their truth: they had no valid excuse for their absence. They had simply lagged behind, overcome by ease and complacency. The Prophet (s), upon hearing their

honest admission, remained silent, a silence that conveyed a profound gravity. This marked the beginning of their most severe trial.

By divine command, the Prophet (s) instructed the Muslim community to completely boycott these three men. No one was to speak to them, greet them, or interact with them in any way. This was a social ostracism of the highest degree, a profound test of their *iman* and their commitment to Allah and His Messenger. For fifty agonizing days, Ka'b, Hilal, and Murarah lived in utter isolation. The vastness of Medina, once a vibrant hub of community, now felt constricted, as if the very earth had shrunk around them. Each day brought immense psychological and spiritual torment, as they yearned for a glance, a word, a sign of acceptance from their brethren and their beloved Prophet (s).

Ka'b ibn Malik, who possessed considerable wealth and was known for his poetry, vividly described his despair. He had felt confident and capable before the expedition, but upon the Prophet's (s) return, his usual eloquence failed him, and he could only utter the raw truth of his neglect. The boycott weighed heavily upon him. During this period of intense solitude, he even received a letter from the Ghassanid king, inviting him to join his court, implying a desire to exploit his estranged status. But Ka'b, despite his tribulation, remained steadfast, recognizing this as yet another test of his loyalty. He understood that to seek solace or refuge elsewhere would be to abandon the very source of his faith.

The spiritual anguish of these three men reached its peak. They performed their prayers, they sought Allah's forgiveness, and they endured the silence of the community with unwavering patience, knowing that their suffering was a direct consequence of their actions and a pathway to purification. Finally, after fifty days of profound distress, the divine revelation descended, affirming Allah's acceptance of their sincere *tawbah* (repentance). In **Surah At-Tawbah, Ayat 102**, Allah declares: **"And**

[there are] others who have acknowledged their sins. They have mixed a righteous deed with another that was bad. Perhaps Allah will turn to them in forgiveness. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." And in **Ayat 103**: **"Take, [O Muhammad], from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them to increase, and invoke [Allah's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing."** These verses, specifically referring to the acceptance of *tawbah* for those who sincerely confessed their sins, brought immense relief and joy to the three companions and to the entire Muslim community.

This incident profoundly underscored the nature of true *tawbah*: it is not merely expressing regret, but a sincere turning back to Allah, accompanied by genuine remorse and a firm resolve not to repeat the transgression. It highlighted that Allah's forgiveness is boundless for those who approach Him with truthfulness and a purified intention. The immediate acceptance of their *tawbah*, despite the prolonged period of social boycott, demonstrated the paramount importance of sincerity (*niyyah*) in all actions. Unlike the *munafiqin*, whose outwardly accepted excuses masked corrupt intentions, these three companions underwent a severe test for their honesty, a trial that ultimately purified them and elevated their status in the sight of Allah.

The divine emphasis on pure intention and the immediate acceptance of sincere repentance can also be observed in other instances. For example, the case of a woman who approached the Prophet (s) to confess to adultery, insisting upon the prescribed punishment for her purification. Despite being repeatedly sent away by the Prophet (s) until her pregnancy ended and her child was weaned, she persisted in her confession, driven by an overwhelming desire for divine forgiveness. Her unwavering insistence on purification, even to the point of death, ultimately led to her *tawbah* being accepted, and she was later honored with the status

of a martyr. This serves as a powerful testament to the immediate and profound nature of Allah's acceptance when repentance is genuine and intentions are pure.

The lessons from the ordeal of Ka'b, Hilal, and Murarah, and the broader context of the Tabuk expedition, reinforced fundamental Islamic principles: the crucial role of sincerity and intention (*niyyah*), the immense value of truthfulness even in the face of hardship, and the boundless mercy of Allah for those who sincerely seek His forgiveness. This episode served as a lasting reminder that in the journey of faith, trials and tribulations, when met with patience and sincerity, serve as purifying agents, elevating the soul and strengthening the bond with the Divine.

Chapter 159

The Sanctity of Family and the Blessed Birth of Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.)

The ninth year after the *Hijrah* (9 AH) marked a pivotal period in the nascent Islamic state, signaling both the decline of open polytheism in the Arabian Peninsula and the increasing prominence of hypocritical elements within Medina. Beyond these socio-political shifts, 9 AH was profoundly significant for the nearing completion of the *Ahkamat al-Sharia*, the divine laws and ordinances intended to guide the Muslim *Ummah* until the Day of Judgment. The era of foundational beliefs and survival amidst persecution had given way to an established community ready to embrace the comprehensive details of Islamic practice.

Among the crucial aspects of life addressed by these unfolding divine laws was the sanctity of the family—the bedrock of Islamic society. Islam places immense importance on preserving the purity of lineage and the integrity of marital bonds, recognizing the family as a source of profound peace, love, and mercy, as highlighted in **Surah Ar-Rum**, which declares the creation of spouses as a sign of God's existence, fostering affection and compassion. However, a family can also become a source of trial and

tribulation if its divine purpose is neglected.

The gravity of illicit relations (*zina*) and its destructive impact on family purity and societal order was emphasized. Islam's comprehensive framework for family life also addressed sensitive situations that could arise, such as accusations of infidelity. An illustrative incident from this period involved a companion, Harith ibn Umayyah al-Ijlan, who, returning from the **Ghazwah Tabuk**, found his wife pregnant and accused her of infidelity. This grave accusation against a chaste woman (or *qazf ul-muhsanat*) carried severe implications. The Prophet (s), in his wisdom and under divine guidance, intervened to resolve this delicate matter through a specific process known as *li'an* (mutual imprecation). This divine mechanism served not to condemn the woman without proof but to provide a structured way for a husband to resolve such a deeply personal and sensitive issue while safeguarding the lineage of the child and upholding the honor of the accused if no definitive proof was presented. It underscored the paramount importance of preserving family honor, lineage, and ensuring that false accusations did not lead to injustice or chaos within the community. The *Ahlul Bayt* emphasized that the intent behind *li'an* was to preserve the sanctity of lineage and prevent unlawful inheritance.

Beyond specific cases, the Prophet (s) continuously taught the broader principle of safeguarding lineage and ensuring the purity of family lines. This included a deep responsibility for individuals to ascertain the legal paternity of their children, even if it meant seeking clarification from religious authorities, to prevent unjust distributions of inheritance or confusion regarding *mahram* and *non-mahram* relationships. The integrity of the family unit, with clear lines of descent and inheritance, was thus a cornerstone of the divinely ordained social order.

Another significant event during this period demonstrated Allah's immediate responsiveness to the needs of the *Ummah* and the Prophet's (s)

profound connection with the Divine. A group of people approached the Prophet (s), lamenting a severe drought that threatened their crops, livestock, and children. They pleaded with him to pray for rain. The Prophet (s) immediately raised his hands in supplication, and the entire congregation joined in prayer. Within moments, the sky, previously clear, darkened, and rain began to fall in torrents. It rained continuously for a week, so heavily that the people returned to the Prophet (s), now concerned about the intensity of the downpour and fearing damage to their homes and livelihoods. With equal humility and divine guidance, the Prophet (s) once again raised his hands, this time praying for the rain to fall upon the mountains and valleys, for the trees and forests, and not upon the houses, and that it be a blessing rather than a calamity. Immediately, the clouds shifted, and the rain became localized, demonstrating the Prophet's (s) ability to intercede for both immediate relief and holistic well-being, transforming a potentially destructive force into a source of nourishment and mercy.

Among the most profound and miraculous events of this era was the birth of Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.), the beloved daughter of Prophet Muhammad (s) and Sayyidah Khadijah (a.s.). Her birth was preceded by extraordinary divine preparation, highlighting her unique status and purity. For forty days leading up to her conception, Prophet Muhammad (s) entered a period of intense spiritual isolation. He abstained from worldly sustenance and spent his days and nights in heightened worship, prayer, and recitation of the Qur'an. During this period, his sustenance came directly from Paradise, a celestial diet that purified him further, preparing him for the sacred union that would bring forth the Lady of Light.

When Sayyidah Khadijah (a.s.) conceived, she experienced a miraculous pregnancy, unlike any other. On the day of Fatima's (a.s.) birth, four distinguished women from Paradise—Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh; Maryam (Mary), the mother of Prophet Isa (a.s.); Kulthum, the sister of Prophet

Musa (a.s.); and Sarah, the wife of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.)—descended to assist Sayyidah Khadijah (a.s.) during childbirth, a testament to Fatima's (a.s.) unparalleled spiritual standing even before her arrival in this world.

Upon her birth, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) prostrated herself and gave witness to the Oneness of Allah and the prophethood of her father, speaking with wisdom that transcended her infant state. Her name, "Fatima," meaning "she who cuts off" or "separates," was divinely chosen. The Prophet (s) explained that she was named Fatima because through her, Allah would separate her sincere followers from the tribulations of this world and the torments of the afterlife. This underscored her profound role as an intercessor and a guide for her *Shi'a* (followers), contingent upon their sincere adherence to her path and principles.

The circumstances of Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) birth—the Prophet's (s) intense purification, the celestial sustenance, and the assistance of heavenly women—served as a profound lesson for the entire *Ummah*. It emphasized the crucial importance of a pure environment, pure sustenance, and a life dedicated to worship for the upbringing of righteous and blessed children. It highlighted that while Fatima's (a.s.) inherent purity was divinely ordained from eternity, the external preparations further accentuated this purity, offering a model for parents seeking to nurture piety and righteousness in their offspring.

The spiritual depth of Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) was further exemplified on her wedding night to Imam Ali (a.s.). While worldly celebrations often focus on fleeting joys, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), upon entering her new home, was found immersed in profound reflection, her thoughts not on the festivities but on death and the grave. When Imam Ali (a.s.) arrived, her very first request to him was to rise and perform prayers together, to begin their marital life with an act of devotion and worship. This act set an unparalleled example, demonstrating that true happiness and success

in marriage lie in spiritual connection, remembrance of Allah, and striving for His pleasure, providing a timeless model for all Muslim couples. The journey of life, especially that of marriage, finds its true blessing and solace when anchored in piety and awareness of the ultimate return to Allah.

Chapter 160

The Divine Mandate: Sharia, Family, and Kinship

With the legislative framework of Islam nearing completion, the Prophet Muhammad (s) continued to articulate the profound principles that would govern the nascent Islamic society, laying down foundations for a righteous and flourishing *Ummah*. While the core tenets of faith and worship had been established, the **Sharia** was not merely a set of rituals; it was a comprehensive code, a complete way of life encompassing every facet of human existence, from individual spirituality to intricate societal structures. Every aspect of human endeavor, be it in personal conduct, financial transactions, or communal relations, found its perfect guidance within this divine law. The Prophet's (s) entire life, his words, actions, and silent approvals, collectively known as his **Sunnah**, served as the living embodiment of this **Sharia**, making clear that sincere adherence to his example was the ultimate path to salvation and well-being. The emphasis was not on mere outward conformity but on the deep inner sincerity (*niyyah*) and pure intention (*ikhlas*) that underpinned every action.

Central to this comprehensive divine system was the emphasis on the

Khandani Nizam, the family system, and the sacred obligation of **Silat al-Rahim**, maintaining ties of kinship. The Prophet (s) repeatedly stressed that the strength and spiritual health of the *Ummah* were inextricably linked to the well-being of its family units. Marriage was not just a social contract but a profound spiritual bond, a testament to Allah's signs and a foundation for raising righteous generations. Each member within the family had specific rights and responsibilities, all designed to foster love, respect, and mutual support. The nurturing of children, their upbringing in the light of Islamic teachings, and the establishment of a harmonious household were paramount.

Beyond the immediate nuclear family, the concept of **Silat al-Rahim** extended to the broader circle of relatives—parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, cousins, and in-laws. The Prophet (s) illuminated the immense spiritual rewards of upholding these bonds, describing it as a means to earn Allah's pleasure, lengthen one's life, and increase blessings. Neglecting these ties, conversely, was presented as a grave sin, severing not only human connections but also one's link to divine mercy. The very fabric of Islamic society was to be woven with these threads of compassion and connection, ensuring that no individual felt isolated or unsupported.

In this context, the status of women was revolutionary. Islam elevated their position from the degradation of pre-Islamic ignorance, granting them rights, dignity, and respect that were unprecedented in human history. Women were recognized as integral pillars of the family and society, partners in faith and life, and bearers of future generations. The Prophet's (s) teachings emphasized their rights in marriage, divorce, inheritance, and personal autonomy, liberating them from oppressive customs and enshrining their honor within the divine framework.

The Prophet (s) further illuminated the importance of discerning true guidance from misdirection. He clarified that all knowledge and under-

standing, whether pertaining to personal conduct or societal structure, must ultimately stem from divine revelation. This principle underscored the importance of distinguishing between sincere belief and the insidious plots of the *munafiqin* (hypocrites), whose actions, though outwardly pious, were rooted in malicious intent to sow discord and division. The demolition of *Masjid al-Dirar* earlier had served as a stark reminder that even seemingly righteous acts, if born of ill intent, could be tools of evil.

The comprehensive nature of Islam meant that even the act of *Salat* (prayer) was deeply interconnected with social harmony. True prayer, rooted in sincerity, had the power to purify the soul and foster a sense of unity and humility that would naturally extend to one's interactions with family and community. The Prophet (s) taught that a person's inner state of spiritual purification was inextricably linked to their outward conduct, especially in upholding the sanctity of kinship and family.

Indeed, the strength of the *Ummah* was envisioned as a reflection of its strong, cohesive family units, bound by the sacred ties of kinship and guided by the comprehensive **Sharia**. This divine mandate, continually articulated and exemplified by the Prophet (s), ensured that the building blocks of society were established on principles of justice, compassion, and divine love, ensuring not just worldly prosperity but also eternal felicity.

Chapter 161

The Unveiling of Hidden Truths: Prophet's Spiritual Ascent and the Guardians of Knowledge

As the blessed life of the Messenger of Allah (s) neared its earthly completion, his physical state, though at times appearing frail, was in reality a testament to an ever-deepening spiritual connection and an unveiling of profound divine truths. The Prophet (s) endured periods of discomfort, such as coughing and difficulty breathing, which, to an ordinary observer, might have seemed like typical human ailments. Yet, for those with insight, these were not merely physical afflictions but manifestations of an intense spiritual journey and an unparalleled proximity to the Divine.

The Prophet's (s) life served as the living embodiment of the **Holy Qur'an**. Every action, every decision, and every breath of the Prophet (s) was a practical **interpretation** (*ta'weel*) of the divine scripture. This *ta'weel* was not a mere alteration or replacement of verses but a profound unfolding of their true, hidden meanings, a spiritual realization that transcended

literal understanding. The Prophet (s) demonstrated that the verses of Allah were not static pronouncements but living realities, revealing themselves through his blessed existence.

During this profound period, the Prophet (s) further illuminated the pivotal role of his purified household, the ***Ahlul Bayt***. He emphasized that the full realization and accurate preservation of the Qur'anic *ta'weel* would rest with them. Just as Prophet Musa (a.s.) had Harun (a.s.) as his vizier, so too was Imam Ali (a.s.) to the Prophet (s), tasked with safeguarding the integrity of the message. The *Ahlul Bayt* were to be the inheritors of this profound knowledge, capable of discerning the intricate layers of divine revelation and guiding the *Ummah* through its deeper interpretations. Their role was likened to that of a shepherd safeguarding his flock, ensuring that the essence of Islam remained untainted.

The Prophet (s) also addressed the sanctity and importance of the family system (*Khandani Nizam*), reaffirming its foundational role within Islamic society. He clarified various social and ethical norms, reinforcing the principles of purity and the protection of lineage, which are integral to the well-being of the family and the *Ummah*. While some pre-Islamic practices had perverted natural bonds, Islam meticulously restored their honor and purpose, ensuring that human relationships were rooted in divine principles of justice, compassion, and respect.

The Prophet's (s) spiritual state during these final days was a constant source of wonder. He was not merely a recipient of revelation but a living manifestation of its deepest mysteries. His *Miraj*, his ascent to the highest heavens, symbolized this profound connection. For the Prophet (s), the true *ta'weel* of his being was his unparalleled proximity to Allah, a spiritual station that none other could attain. This sacred union was reflected even in his physical discomfort, which was part of a divine process, not a weakness.

The teachings underscored that a path to Allah was inextricably linked to the path of His Messenger and, by extension, to the *Ahlul Bayt*. The Prophet (s) always directed humanity to the divine truth, emphasizing that his mission was to lead people to Allah. The *Ahlul Bayt* would continue this guidance, serving as the torchbearers of true Islamic knowledge and the custodians of the Qur'anic *ta'weel* after him. Their presence ensured that the *Ummah* would always have access to the authentic interpretation and wisdom necessary for both worldly and spiritual success. The Prophet (s) taught that the knowledge (*ilm*) entrusted to him, particularly its deeper meanings, would be carried forward through his progeny, ensuring the enduring purity of the message for generations to come.

Chapter 162

The Prophet's Enduring *Wilayah* and the Living Qur'an

As the blessed life of the Messenger of Allah (s) neared its earthly culmination, his teachings intensified, delving ever deeper into the profound spiritual realities that underpinned Islam. His physical journey, often marked by hardship and profound spiritual states, was not merely a personal experience but a living interpretation (*ta'weel*) of the Holy Qur'an itself, revealing its hidden dimensions and inner meanings. The Prophet (s) continuously illuminated the crucial role of his ***Ahlul Bayt*** as the inheritors and preservers of this profound Qur'anic *ta'weel* and the true wellspring of Islamic knowledge, ensuring the continuous spiritual guidance of the *Ummah*.

The Prophet (s) was not just a messenger of laws but the embodiment of divine *wilayah*—a comprehensive spiritual guardianship and authority bestowed upon him by Allah. This *wilayah* was a boundless blessing and a perpetual source of mercy for humanity, acting as the very pathway to the Divine. It signified that the path to Allah was inextricably linked to the path of His Messenger and, through him, to his purified household.

This profound spiritual connection between the Prophet (s) and his *Ahlul Bayt* was repeatedly emphasized, likening them to the **"Ark of Noah"**—a vessel of salvation in a tumultuous world.

The essence of the Prophet's *nubuwwah* (prophethood) and *wilayah* lay in their enduring nature. While his physical presence would eventually depart, his spiritual guidance and authority were designed to persist through those divinely appointed to carry his legacy. This was the profound implication of the concept of *wasi* (successor) or *Imam*, ensuring that the *Ummah* would never be left without a guiding light, a direct link to the inner realities of the divine message. Just as the Holy Qur'an exists as a **"silent Qur'an"** (*Qur'an-e-Samit*), the *Ahlul Bayt* were destined to be the **"speaking Qur'an"** (*Qur'an-e-Natiq*), elucidating its deeper meanings and safeguarding its pristine truth for all generations.

In this period, the Prophet (s) reiterated the paramount importance of ***sidq*** (truthfulness) and ***ikhlas*** (sincerity) in all aspects of life. He demonstrated that genuine repentance (*tawbah*) and acceptance by Allah were predicated upon a pure intention and an unwavering commitment to truth. He taught that this sincerity was not confined to individual worship but permeated every aspect of human interaction, especially within the sacred framework of the ***Khandani Nizam*** (family system).

The Prophet (s) underscored the profound spiritual bond between spouses, describing it as a connection divinely ordained and rooted in love and mercy. This marital bond was presented as a microcosm of the greater spiritual unity Islam sought to establish within society. The emphasis on ***Silat al-Rahim*** (maintaining ties of kinship) and the strength of the family unit was not merely a social directive but a foundational pillar for the spiritual well-being and collective resilience of the *Ummah*. The Prophet (s) illustrated how divine aid (*Nasr*) and blessings were contingent upon the sincerity and unity of the believers, which in turn fostered

a vibrant and thriving community.

He also provided insight into the distinct levels of understanding divine knowledge, differentiating between the *zahir* (outward, apparent) and the *batin* (inner, hidden) dimensions. While the *zahir* was accessible through the revealed text and the Prophet's explicit teachings, the *batin* required a deeper insight, preserved and transmitted through the *Ahlul Bayt*, who held the unique capacity for its interpretation (*ta'weel*). The Prophet's *Mab'ath* (prophetic mission) was thus understood as an ongoing process of guidance, continually unfolding through the pure lineage he established, ensuring that humanity would always have access to the full spectrum of divine wisdom. This divine selection for spiritual leadership, though beyond ordinary human comprehension, was the most profound and essential manifestation of Allah's mercy for His creation. The Prophet (s), in his boundless compassion, established a legacy of spiritual guardianship that would forever illuminate the path to truth, embodying Allah's *wilayah* as a continuous blessing for all who sought guidance.

Chapter 163

The Sacred Proclamation of Purity and Disavowal

The ninth year of *Hijrah* unfolded, reaching its climax in the sacred month of Dhul Hijjah, the traditional time for the annual pilgrimage. This period marked a pivotal juncture in the Prophet's mission, presenting a profound response to a persistent question that resonated through history: What truly defined the unique and unparalleled connection between the Prophet of Allah (s) and his purified *Ahlul Bayt*? This profound inquiry, posed repeatedly to the Prophet (s) and later to his illuminated successors, found a profound answer not only in their lineage but in the divine actions and proclamations that unfolded during this significant year.

Since the time of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), the Ka'bah had served as a focal point for all Arabs, a sacred house revered irrespective of their individual faiths. Even those steeped in idolatry continued to honor its sanctity and perform the pilgrimage. Following the bloodless Conquest of Mecca in 8 AH, the Muslim community eagerly anticipated performing the Hajj under the direct leadership of the Prophet (s) in 9 AH. This would be the first Hajj with Mecca fully under Islamic control, inspiring immense

enthusiasm.

However, as the time for pilgrimage approached, an unsettling practice of the *Jahiliyyah* (Ignorance) era persisted, deeply distressing the Prophet (s). It was a custom among some pilgrims, particularly the poor, to perform *tawaf* (circumambulation) around the Ka'bah naked, or to wear garments that they would then discard as *sadaqah* (charity) upon completion of their rituals. While the act of charity was commendable, the practice often led to public nudity, a deeply offensive spectacle within the sacred precincts. Initially, this tradition might have stemmed from a misguided notion of piety or genuine poverty, as pilgrims without extra clothes would borrow or rent them from the Quraysh, who had monopolized this rental business. However, over time, it devolved into a deliberate act of naked *tawaf* to avoid rental costs or out of a distorted sense of spirituality, claiming purity through absence of clothing.

Witnessing this desecration of Allah's sacred House, even under Muslim authority, the Prophet (s) was deeply saddened. He declared that he would not participate in the Hajj that year, refusing to perform the pilgrimage as long as such "impurities" and remnants of *Jahiliyyah* continued to mar the sacred rites. This moment marked a divine intervention to purify the sanctuary comprehensively.

In direct response to this situation, a momentous revelation descended upon the Prophet (s): **Surah At-Tawbah** (also known as **Bara'ah**). Specifically, **Ayah 28** declared: **"Indeed, the polytheists are *najis* (unclean), so let them not approach the Masjid al-Haram after this year."** This unequivocal divine command established a definitive separation, asserting the absolute purity of the Ka'bah and its precincts, and explicitly prohibiting polytheists from entering after that Hajj.

This strict decree initially caused concern among some Muslims, particularly merchants, who feared the economic impact of restricting polythe-

ists from entering Mecca. However, Allah's assurance swiftly followed: **"And if you fear poverty, Allah will enrich you from His bounty if He wills. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Wise."** This verse underscored the paramount importance of *tawakkul* (trust in Allah) and highlighted that divine command took precedence over worldly anxieties or material concerns.

The gravity of this revelation was further emphasized by a unique characteristic of **Surah At-Tawbah**: it is the only chapter in the Holy Qur'an that does not begin with the **Basmalah** (**Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim**). The omission of "The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful" at its outset signified the nature of this Surah as a declaration of disavowal and divine wrath against polytheism and treachery, calling for justice and stringent measures rather than mercy at this critical juncture.

The Prophet (s), having declared his decision not to lead the Hajj himself that year, commissioned a delegation to proclaim these divine injunctions and cleanse the pilgrimage of all *Jahiliyyah* practices. Initially, Abu Bakr was entrusted with carrying the verses of **Bara'ah** to Mecca. However, a subsequent divine instruction reached the Prophet (s), stating that this solemn proclamation, this declaration of disavowal, could only be delivered by the Prophet (s) himself or by one from his own household (*Ahlul Bayt*). Recognizing this divine mandate, the Prophet (s) dispatched Imam Ali (a.s.) to catch up with Abu Bakr and assume the sacred duty of delivering the verses of **Surah At-Tawbah**. This appointment was a clear reaffirmation of Imam Ali's (a.s.) unique status, **wilayah**, and inherent spiritual authority as a direct extension of the Prophet's (s) mission.

Upon reaching Mecca, Imam Ali (a.s.) recited the verses of **Bara'ah** to the assembled pilgrims, proclaiming the new divine laws: polytheists were forbidden from entering the **Masjid al-Haram** after that year; those who

had violated their treaties with Muslims would face the consequences after a four-month grace period; and those who had honored their agreements would have their terms fulfilled. The declaration also strongly emphasized the foundational importance of **Salat** (prayer) and **Zakat** (charity) as the true indicators of sincere repentance and adherence to Islam. The Holy Qur'an affirmed: **"But if they repent, establish prayer, and give Zakat, then leave their way free."** This underscored that mere verbal declaration was insufficient; true faith was to be manifest through these fundamental acts of worship and social responsibility.

The profound significance of **Surah At-Tawbah** is further illuminated by prophetic traditions. It is regarded as a "jalali" (majestic and awe-inspiring) Surah. One tradition highlights that whoever recites **Surah At-Tawbah** once a month will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment among the **Shi'a** of Ali (a.s.), linking its recitation directly to the spiritual lineage of the **Ahlul Bayt**. Another remarkable tradition recounts that this Surah was not delivered by Jibra'il alone but was accompanied by 70,000 angels, each emphasizing its immense importance and urgency to the Prophet (s) for his *Ummah*. Its various names, including **Bara'ah** (Disavowal) and **Fadhihah** (Exposer), reflect its role in exposing hypocrisy and distinguishing true believers from polytheists and deceivers.

This chapter in the Prophet's *Sirah* not only solidified the purity and sanctity of the Ka'bah but also set a precedent for the continuous spiritual guardianship of the Prophet's (s) message through his **Ahlul Bayt**. The profound question of their unique connection was answered not only by divine decree but by their unwavering commitment and sacrifice. This was a relationship rooted in divine appointment and spiritual lineage, transcending mere familial ties.

Many generations later, this very question arose in the court of Harun al-Rashid, the Abbasid caliph, who sought to challenge the preeminence

of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.), the seventh Imam from the Prophet's (s) household. Harun, a descendant of the Prophet's uncle Al-Abbas, saw his lineage as equal to that of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.), who descended from the Prophet's (s) other uncle Abu Talib (through Imam Ali and Sayyidah Fatima). Harun questioned what made Imam Musa al-Kadhim's (a.s.) connection to the Prophet (s) more special than his own.

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) delivered a breathtaking and irrefutable response. He asked Harun if he would allow the Prophet (s) to marry his daughter. Harun, startled, responded that it would be the greatest honor imaginable. The Imam (a.s.) then calmly explained the profound difference: "Our daughters are already the daughters of the Prophet (s) through his direct lineage. His blood flows in their veins. We cannot offer our daughters to the Prophet, for they are already his own offspring." This divine bond, a connection through the sacred bloodline and direct spiritual inheritance, rendered the *Ahlul Bayt*'s relationship to the Prophet (s) utterly unique and unmatchable by any other.

This unyielding truth, however, came at a great cost. Harun, enraged by the Imam's (a.s.) undeniable logic and popular reverence, ordered his imprisonment. Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) endured 14 long years of captivity in a dark, confined dungeon, deprived of sunlight, fresh air, and proper sustenance. Even in such a harrowing state, he remained steadfast in his devotion, engaging in constant prayer and thanksgiving, declaring his gratitude to Allah for providing him a secluded place for worship. His physical condition deteriorated to an extreme, becoming so frail that his body was barely discernible beneath his clothes.

Eventually, the Imam (a.s.) was martyred through poison. His pure body, still bound in chains, was taken and displayed on a bridge in Baghdad, in a final attempt by Harun to debase him and sever the people's con-

nection to him. Yet, even in death, the Imam's (a.s.) spiritual authority shone forth. It is narrated that Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.) appeared in a dream to a blacksmith, instructing him to remove the shackles from her son's body. Furthermore, despite the darkness of night and the efforts of Harun's men to incite their horses to trample the body, the animals refused to step on the pure form of the Imam (a.s.), demonstrating a reverence that even brute beasts possessed. The widespread reverence for Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) became clear when masses of people from Baghdad came to mourn and honor his remains, defying Harun's intentions.

The life and martyrdom of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) thus served as a poignant testament to the continuous spiritual guardianship of the **Ahlul Bayt**, their profound sacrifice, and their unparalleled, divinely ordained connection to the Prophet Mohammad (s). Their steadfastness in the face of persecution mirrored the Prophet's (s) own unwavering commitment to Allah's commands, illustrating that the path of divine guidance, purified and preserved, would continue through them, a living embodiment of the Qur'anic *ta'weel* and the Prophet's sacred mission.

Chapter 164

The Pillars of *Iman*: Obedience, Intercession, and Unwavering Submission

The journey through the sacred biography of Prophet Muhammad (s) continues, marking the twelfth year of this profound endeavor. As we embark on this new chapter, let us remember that the *Sirat al-Rasool* is not merely a collection of historical anecdotes or a recounting of past events. It is a living, breathing guide, a profound testament to a life meant to be emulated and internalized in every moment of our existence. If one seeks to witness the **Holy Qur'an** in human form, to perceive its meanings walking among us, one must look no further than the *Sirat al-Rasool*. Indeed, every believer's life should serve as a mirror reflecting the Prophet's (s) blessed path, inspiring others to understand his **Sirah** by observing the conduct of his followers.

At the heart of this understanding lie two pivotal **Ayat** from **Surah An-Nisa**, which succinctly define the intricate relationship between the *Ummah* and its Messenger. **Ayah 64** declares: **"And We did not send any messenger except to be obeyed by Allah's permission. And if, when they had wronged themselves, they had come to you and asked forgiveness of**

Allah and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Accepting of repentance and Merciful." This verse emphatically asserts that the fundamental purpose of sending any Messenger, not just our Prophet (s), is to establish their **obedience** by divine decree. A Messenger is not merely a postman delivering a message; their directives carry the very authority of Allah. Furthermore, the **Ayah** unveils a profound aspect of divine mercy: for those who have wronged themselves, seeking Allah's forgiveness must be coupled with seeking the Prophet's (s) intercession. It is through his blessed mediation that Allah's boundless mercy and acceptance of repentance are fully realized. This highlights the Prophet's (s) unique and indispensable role as a means (*wasilah*) to divine forgiveness.

Following this, **Ayah 65** lays down an even more stringent condition for true faith: **"But no, by your Lord, they will not believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission."** This **Ayah** elevates the standard of **Iman** to an unparalleled level. It asserts, with a solemn oath by Allah, that genuine faith is unattainable until individuals not only accept the Prophet (s) as the ultimate arbiter in all their disputes but also—crucially—find no internal discomfort or hesitation with his judgment. Their submission must be absolute and wholehearted, flowing from an inner conviction rather than mere external compliance. This profound principle transcends mere adherence to rulings; it demands an unwavering trust and complete surrender of the self to the Prophet's (s) wisdom and authority.

This comprehensive vision of **Iman** becomes particularly crucial when considering challenges faced by the *Ummah* in every era. For instance, the contemporary assault on Islam, often targeting the rights and status of women, merits contemplation through the lens of these **Ayat**. Sadly,

many criticisms levied against Islam regarding women's roles are not rooted in the **Qur'an**, the **Sunnah** of the Prophet (s), or the rulings of righteous scholars, but rather stem from the misinterpretations and oppressive practices perpetuated by segments of the Muslim society itself. Paradoxically, even individuals deemed pious may contribute to this oppression by misapplying or exaggerating religious injunctions, leading to restrictions on women's education, employment, and social engagement, or by misrepresenting the conditions surrounding practices like multiple marriages or divorce. These societal injustices, rather than authentic Islamic teachings, provide fodder for critics who claim that Islam fails to protect women's rights. The requirement of **Ayah 65** – to accept divine decrees without inner discomfort – thus becomes a challenge not only for the one receiving the judgment but also for those applying it, ensuring they do so with justice and wisdom.

The profound nature of absolute submission is further illuminated by the *Hadith of Silsilat al-Dhahab* (The Golden Chain), narrated by Imam Reza (a.s.) in Nishapur: **"La Ilaha Illallah (There is no god but Allah) is My fortress, and whoever enters My fortress is safe from My punishment."** However, the Imam immediately qualified this universal truth with a crucial condition: **"But with its conditions, and I am of its conditions."** This emphasizes that mere verbal affirmation of **Tawhid** is insufficient for salvation; it requires adherence to the **wilayah** and guidance of Allah's appointed representatives. Reinforcing this profound connection, the speaker alluded to another inscription at Imam Reza's (a.s.) shrine: **"The love of Ali is My fortress, and whoever enters My fortress is safe from My punishment."** This eloquently clarifies that the Imam, as a condition of salvation, refers to the **wilayah** and love of Imam Ali (a.s.) and the infallible *Ahlul Bayt*—a love that necessitates following their path and submitting to their divinely guided leadership.

This comprehensive trust in the Prophet (s) extends to accepting his com-

mands even when their underlying reasons are not immediately apparent. Just as Allah tested the early believers by changing the *Qibla* from Jerusalem to the **Ka'bah** (**Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayah 142**: **"The foolish among the people will say, 'What has turned them away from their *qiblah* which they used to face?' Say, 'To Allah belongs the East and the West. He guides whom He wills to a straight path.'"**), **the true purpose of this change was not a scientific or economic reason, but a divine test: "...so that We might make evident who follows the Messenger from whoever turns back on his heels."** This illustrates that true **Iman** is not contingent on comprehending the *rationale* behind every command, but on unwavering trust in the Prophet (s) himself. When a believer accepts that pork is forbidden, or alcohol prohibited, or certain games disallowed, it is primarily because the Prophet (s) commanded it, not because they have personally verified its scientific or material harms. Such acceptance, based on absolute reliance on the Messenger, is the hallmark of genuine faith. Over centuries, scientific discoveries have only continued to affirm the truthfulness of the Prophet's (s) sayings, from the "breathing" and "growth" of mountains to profound insights in embryology, further solidifying the intellectual and scientific validity of his divinely inspired pronouncements.

This era of unwavering faith and expanding influence reached its zenith following the **Conquest of Mecca**. While the **Conquest of Mecca** was a momentous triumph, the ultimate declaration of Islam's dominance came precisely one year later, during the Hajj of 9 AH. It was then, by divine command, that Imam Ali (a.s.) was dispatched to publicly recite the opening verses of **Surah At-Tawbah** – a declaration of disavowal against the polytheists. This bold proclamation, delivered with the unique power and awe-inspiring recitation of Imam Ali (a.s.), shattered the back of *kufr* and *shirk* across the Arabian Peninsula. The impact was immediate and profound, leading to the **"Year of Delegations"** (*Sanat al-Wufood* or *Aam*

al-Wufood) in 9 AH, where tribes from all corners of Arabia came, not individually, but in vast multitudes, to embrace Islam. The **Qur'an** itself describes this phenomenon in **Surah An-Nasr**: **"When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest, And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes."**

This pivotal moment underscores Imam Ali's (a.s.) profound legacy. While his unmatched bravery in battles like Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, and Khaybar is renowned for breaking the power of physical *kufr*, his "Jihad of the Tongue" through the recitation of **Surah At-Tawbah** established a permanent spiritual defeat for polytheism, eliminating its resurgence. This spiritual *jihad* of words finds a poignant parallel in the sacred struggle of Imam Ali al-Husayn (a.s.), Imam Sajjad, after the tragedy of Karbala. Through his sermons, supplications, and ceaseless tears, Imam Sajjad (a.s.) waged a *jihad* of truth and emotion, softening hearts hardened by cruelty and prejudice, transforming the perceived defeat of Karbala into a profound victory for divine principles. His unwavering tears and eloquent words became a river of truth that nurtured faith and love for the *Ahlul Bayt* even in the most hostile environments, demonstrating that the mission of truth can be advanced not only through the sword but also through the power of tears and the eloquent tongue. As this phase of the Prophet's (s) **Sirah** unfolds, we anticipate a deep dive into the **Year of Delegations**, beginning with the significant delegation from Najran, which will further illuminate the transformative power of Islam.

Chapter 165

The Era of Delegations: The Unveiling of Truth and Steadfastness

The ninth year of *Hijrah* marked a pivotal phase in the Prophet Muhammad's (s) mission, signaling the imminent completion of his prophetic responsibilities. With his blessed age now sixty-one, and just two years remaining until his passing in the month of Safar of the eleventh year of *Hijrah*, the Divine purpose accelerated. This period was not merely about delivering a message but about firmly establishing a comprehensive Islamic system that would cater to the needs of humanity until the Day of Judgment. The Prophet (s) was not just a messenger (*Rasul*) but also an Imam, tasked not only with conveying the divine message but also with implementing and maintaining the complete system of Islam in practice.

Prior to the seventh year of *Hijrah*, the Prophet (s) was frequently engaged in defensive wars and other pressing affairs, which, while crucial, limited the full implementation of all *Ahkamat al-Sharia* (Islamic laws). However, the decisive victory at Khaybar in 7 AH broke the backbone of both the disbelievers and their Jewish instigators, ushering in a new era. From this point, the Prophet's (s) focus shifted, intensifying his efforts in **Da'wah**

(invitation to Islam) and the systematic establishment of Islamic society.

This period, though marked by diminishing military engagements, also presented unique societal challenges. Wars, inevitably, left behind numerous widows and orphans. The Prophet (s), endowed with divine foresight, understood that the initial fervor of victory would eventually wane, leaving behind natural human needs and social complexities that required careful management. While the Muslim community might not have voiced these concerns immediately, the Prophet (s) recognized the potential for societal issues arising from such large-scale human displacement and loss. The Divine wisdom inherent in the *Sharia* is profound; it provides practical solutions for all human conditions, such as the prohibition of *zina* (fornication/adultery) and the unique provisions like **li'an** (mutual cursing in cases of contested paternity), which safeguard family honor and lineage. Even the seemingly harsh penalty for theft, for example, is nuanced by conditions like famine, highlighting Islam's profound consideration for human hardship and circumstance. The Prophet's (s) mission transcended mere battlefield victories; it encompassed the holistic construction of a just and compassionate society.

With the **Conquest of Mecca** in 8 AH and the strategic impact of the Tabuk expedition in 9 AH, open opposition to Islam virtually ceased across the Arabian Peninsula. This paved the way for the **"Year of Delegations"** (9 AH to the end of 10 AH), during which over 350 delegations from various tribes arrived in Medina, eager to embrace Islam. The Prophet (s) met each delegation with unparalleled grace and **akhlaq** (morality). Even those who had not yet accepted Islam were received with such warmth and hospitality that they departed deeply impressed, becoming silent proponents of Islam among their own people. This ripple effect caused one delegation to inspire ten, and those ten to inspire a hundred, leading to a profound wave of conversions.

This widespread acceptance also brought into sharp relief the misrepresentations propagated by some Christian scholars of the 16th to 18th centuries, who falsely claimed that Islam spread by the sword, depicting the Prophet (s) with "a Qur'an in one hand and a sword in the other." The truth, however, stands in stark contrast. The Prophet (s) resorted to warfare only after fourteen years of severe persecution and only when divinely permitted for self-defense, as revealed in **Surah Al-Hajj, Ayah 39**: **"Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged..."** The Prophet's (s) approach was always tailored to the situation. If an enemy came with a sword, he met them with courage; if they came for a scholarly debate, he engaged them with superior wisdom and kindness. This was evident in the peaceful interactions with the delegation of Najran Christians, who came not to fight but to discuss.

The profound truth of the Prophet's (s) message was often recognized even by those who ultimately rejected it due to worldly attachments. * **The Jewish Chiefs' Recognition:** A poignant account comes from Safiyyah bint Huyayy, who later became a wife of the Prophet (s). While still a young girl in her father's house, she overheard a conversation between her father, Huyayy ibn Akhtab (the chief of the Jews), and his brother. They had just returned from meeting the Prophet (s) upon his arrival in Medina. Safiyyah heard her uncle ask her father if this new arrival was indeed the prophet prophesied in their Torah. Huyayy confirmed, with undeniable conviction, that he was indeed the true Messenger of Allah, bearing all the signs. When his brother asked what their course of action would be, Huyayy confessed that they would oppose him until their last breath, for accepting him would mean relinquishing their leadership, prestige, and wealth. This conversation starkly illustrated how worldly interests could blind individuals to the very truth they recognized. * **The Najran Christian Scholar's Acknowledgment:** Similarly, during the journey of

the Christian delegation from Najran, their chief scholar, Abu Harithah, rode on a mule led by his younger brother. When the mule stumbled, his brother cursed it, saying, "Go to the false prophet!" Abu Harithah immediately interjected, "By Allah, he is not a false prophet. He is indeed the one about whom Prophet Isa (Jesus) spoke." His brother was astonished, asking why, if this was the case, they were going to dispute with him instead of submitting. Abu Harithah replied, revealing his worldly motivations, "Our people have given us so much wealth and honor. How can we easily abandon all of this? If we accept him, our people will turn against us." This episode, like that of the Jewish chiefs, profoundly demonstrated how the lure of status and wealth could hinder the acceptance of divinely revealed truth. * **Abdullah ibn Salam's Prophetic Insight:** The story of Abdullah ibn Salam, a revered Jewish scholar in Medina, further reinforced this reality. When he accepted Islam, the local Muslims were overjoyed, expecting all Jews to follow suit given his immense influence. However, Abdullah ibn Salam cautioned them, explaining that his people respected him only as long as he affirmed their desires and traditions. Once he declared a truth contrary to their vested interests, they would abandon him. To prove his point, he sat behind a curtain while a Jewish delegation was summoned by the Prophet (s). When asked about Abdullah ibn Salam, they extolled his virtues. But the moment he revealed himself and declared his conversion to Islam, their praise turned to vehement denunciation, accusing him of being a liar and corrupt. This demonstrated the universal human tendency to cling to established norms and personal gain, even at the expense of obvious truth.

Against this backdrop of widespread acceptance and hidden resistance, the **Banu Thaqif of Ta'if** played a significant role. Ta'if, a wealthy and naturally fortified city, was second only to Mecca in importance. After the **Conquest of Mecca** and the **Battle of Hunayn**, the Prophet (s) had besieged Ta'if. However, recognizing the stubborn pride of its inhabi-

tants, rather than their malicious intent, the Prophet (s) strategically lifted the siege and returned to Medina. This action, initially puzzling to some Muslims, exemplified the Prophet's (s) farsightedness. He understood that these polytheists, unlike the inherently rebellious Jews of Khaybar, required time for reflection rather than immediate confrontation. He left them to their thoughts, allowing the truth to slowly penetrate their hearts.

Among Banu Thaqif was **Urwah ibn Mas'ud**, a man of immense respect and noble character, so esteemed that even the Quraysh, in their pre-Islamic arrogance, suggested that if the Qur'an were truly divine, it should have been revealed to a "great man" like him in Mecca or Ta'if. Urwah had even played a key role in mediating the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. Witnessing the Muslim army's strength and the fear of the Roman Empire during Tabuk, Urwah recognized the futility of continued opposition. He traveled to Medina and embraced Islam.

Eager to share the truth with his people, Urwah sought the Prophet's (s) permission to return to Ta'if as a **Da'i** (inviter to Islam). The Prophet (s) warned him, "They will turn against you." Urwah, confident in his people's profound respect for him, insisted, believing they would never harm him. Upon his return to Ta'if, Urwah bravely ascended a high place and began to give the call to prayer, the *adhan*. Enraged by his perceived apostasy and the challenge to their ancestral beliefs, his own people attacked him, raining down arrows until he was martyred.

Urwah's martyrdom, though tragic, was not in vain. The Banu Thaqif, now gripped by fear of Muslim retaliation for the death of a messenger, finally sent a delegation to Medina. They recognized the Prophet's (s) steadfastness in avenging the blood of his emissaries, as demonstrated in events like Mu'tah, Bi'r Ma'unah, and Raji', where he swiftly responded to the treacherous killing of his companions and preachers. This fear, coupled with the overwhelming evidence of Islam's triumph across Arabia,

compelled them to seek peace.

The Prophet's (s) journey was one of immense personal sacrifice, a life laden with *masaa'ib* (calamities) so profound that, as Lady Fatima (a.s.) herself would later lament, they could "turn day into night." Fatima's (a.s.) own life was a testament to the continuation of these sufferings. When she was tragically prevented from mourning her father in public, she would take her sons, Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.), to the outskirts of Medina, sitting under a date palm to lament his loss. When even that solace was denied by the cutting down of the tree, Imam Ali (a.s.) built her *Bayt al-Ahzan* (House of Sorrows), which I consider the first *Imambarah*—a dedicated space for mourning. Fatima (a.s.), though only eighteen, was so weakened by her profound grief and suffering that she leaned on a stick to walk, a symbol of the immense burden she carried, much like her grandson, Imam Sajjad (a.s.), would be weakened by the tragedies of Karbala. Her greatest lament to her father, she declared, would be that the *Ummah* denied her the right to mourn him. The *Ahlul Bayt* exemplified unwavering steadfastness and endurance in the face of unparalleled adversity, continuously bearing the torch of truth.

Chapter 166

The Ta'if Delegation: Unyielding Principles and Strategic Wisdom

The ninth year of *Hijrah* continued to be a period of intense *Da'wah*, marked by the arrival of numerous delegations in Medina. Among these, two stood out as particularly significant: the delegation from Banu Thaqif of Ta'if and the Christians of Najran. Their interactions with the Prophet Muhammad (s) were not merely transactional; they unveiled profound principles of Islam that resonate throughout time. The previous chapter touched upon the context of the Ta'if delegation, and their story offers crucial insights into the Prophet's (s) unwavering commitment to divine commands coupled with his strategic wisdom in propagating the faith.

The Banu Thaqif were a prominent Arab tribe, second only to the Quraysh in power and influence, known for their wealth and pride. Despite the fall of Mecca and the widespread acceptance of Islam, they had remained resistant. The Prophet (s) had even besieged Ta'if briefly in the eighth year of *Hijrah*, but their stubbornness prevailed. However, the martyrdom of their revered leader, Urwah ibn Mas'ud, who was killed by his own people after embracing Islam and attempting to preach to them, had shaken

the tribe. This unexpected tragedy compelled them to re-evaluate their stance, leading them to seek terms with the Prophet (s).

The Prophet's (s) profound compassion for humanity and his fervent desire for people to embrace faith is encapsulated in the Qur'anic verse: **"Perhaps you, [O Muhammad], would destroy yourself with grief because they will not be believers."** (**Surah Ash-Shu'ara**, 26:3). This *ayah*, revealed during the Meccan period, highlights the immense personal burden the Prophet (s) carried for the guidance of humanity. It shows that his approach was never one of aggression but of deep concern and profound hope for their salvation. While the enemies of Islam often misrepresented his shift from Meccan-era verbal *Da'wah* to Medinan-era defensive warfare as a transition from "softness" to "harshness," the Qur'an itself reveals the opposite. Meccan *Ayat* often carried stern warnings against *kufr* and *shirk*, whereas Medinan *Ayat*, despite the presence of numerous hypocrites, frequently displayed a strategic leniency and a focus on unity. The Prophet's (s) approach was always calibrated to the specific context, seeking to draw hearts to truth while upholding divine laws.

When the Banu Thaqif delegation set out for Medina, the news caused great excitement. Among the first to learn of their approach was Mughirah ibn Shu'bah, a member of the Banu Thaqif tribe who had already embraced Islam. Overjoyed at the prospect of his tribe's potential conversion, Mughirah raced to be the first to inform the Prophet (s), only to be gently outpaced by Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (r.a.) who wished to convey the glad tidings himself. This anecdote underscores the profound impact of this tribe's potential submission on the early Muslim community.

Upon their arrival, the Prophet (s) received the delegation with utmost honor and respect. He ordered special tents to be erected for them adjacent to **Masjid al-Nabawi**, demonstrating his profound regard for their social standing, despite their paganism. This action exemplified a crit-

ical Islamic principle: the concept of *adab* or justice, which differs from mere *musawaat* (absolute equality). While Islam affirms the fundamental equality of all humanity before Allah, it also recognizes and respects natural distinctions such as lineage, knowledge, or the dignity of a person. Acknowledging a person's honorable status, even if they are non-Muslim, is an act of justice and wisdom, particularly if it serves the greater good of *Da'wah*. The Prophet (s) understood that showing such respect could open hearts that pride might otherwise keep closed. The members of the delegation were also permitted to enter the mosque and observe the Muslims' prayers, a privilege not extended to common non-Muslims.

The negotiations commenced. Driven by their pre-Islamic habits and their desire to retain aspects of their former lifestyle, the Banu Thaqif presented several audacious demands. They sought permission to continue committing *zina* (fornication), consume and trade alcohol (given Ta'if's vineyards), and engage in *riba* (usury). The Prophet (s) listened patiently but responded with absolute firmness: these practices were *haram* (forbidden) and could not be permitted under any circumstances. There was no room for compromise on matters explicitly forbidden by Allah.

Undaunted, the delegation then shifted their demands. Their most cherished idol was "Lat," a massive stone deity unique to their tribe. They requested a reprieve, first for three years, then one year, then one month, before it would be destroyed. They argued that their women and children were deeply attached to it and needed time to psychologically adjust. The Prophet (s) again refused any delay. The essence of Islam is **Tawhid** (Oneness of God) and the absolute rejection of idolatry. However, demonstrating his strategic wisdom, he made a crucial concession: *they* would not have to break the idol themselves. Others would be sent to demolish it, sparing them the direct act of destroying their beloved deity. This was a brilliant move, upholding the principle while accommodating their emotional difficulty.

Their final demands were even more audacious: exemption from the core pillars of Islam—*Salat* (prayer), *Zakat* (charity), *Hajj* (pilgrimage), and *Jihad* (struggle). To this, the Prophet (s) responded with unwavering clarity regarding *Salat*: "There is no good in a religion without *Salat*." Prayer is the direct connection with Allah; a faith without it is incomplete. However, regarding *Zakat*, *Hajj*, and *Jihad*, the Prophet (s) granted a *temporary* concession for one year. This was not a compromise on their eventual obligation, but a strategic allowance. These duties were not immediately *wajib* (obligatory) upon them, and the Prophet (s) knew that once they formally embraced Islam, the community would gently educate and prepare them, and these obligations would naturally become binding in due course. This strategic leniency allowed the tribe to enter the fold of Islam without feeling overwhelmed, trusting that their full adherence would follow as their faith matured.

With these terms, the Banu Thaqif delegation returned to Ta'if. Initially, their women resisted the idea of idol-breaking, but over the course of the year, under the guidance of the Muslim emissaries (including Mughirah ibn Shu'bah and Abu Sufyan) sent by the Prophet (s), the tribe gradually underwent a profound transformation. By the next year, when the Prophet (s) himself performed *Hajj*, the entire tribe arrived, not only as pilgrims but also having paid their *Zakat* and embraced *Salat* and *Jihad*. This outcome validated the Prophet's (s) wisdom: by distinguishing between uncompromisable *haram* and flexible application of *wajib* obligations, he secured the conversion of a powerful tribe that would otherwise have remained hostile.

The narrative of the Ta'if delegation also brought forth crucial lessons about *debt* and its profound spiritual implications. The Prophet (s) had sent Mughirah and Abu Sufyan to demolish the idol Lat, from which a large treasure was discovered. This treasure, not being spoils of war, was considered *Anfal* (property belonging to the Prophet as per divine de-

cree). Urwah ibn Mas'ud's son, Abu Mulayh, approached the Prophet (s), requesting that his martyred father's significant debt be paid from this treasure. The Prophet (s) readily agreed, acknowledging Urwah's immense service to Islam. Another companion, Harith, also requested his *kafir* father's debt be paid from the *Anfal*. The Prophet (s) granted this as well, recognizing Harith's sincerity and steadfastness. These instances highlight the gravity of debt in Islam. The Prophet (s) once halted the funeral prayer of a martyr until his debt was settled, stating that debt could prevent a martyr from entering Paradise, even for those who sacrifice their lives for Allah. This underscores that personal financial obligations are a heavy burden that even the most pious must address.

This principle extends to the suffering of the *Ahlul Bayt*. Even in the most dire circumstances, the sanctity of their principles and their concern for the *Ummah* remained paramount. Consider the profound example of Muslim ibn Aqil, the Prophet's (s) cousin and Imam Husayn's (a.s.) envoy, who, even as a captive in the court of Ibn Ziyad, expressed profound concern about his outstanding debt. This moment in Islamic history, often overshadowed by the larger tragedy of Karbala, illustrates the meticulous concern for personal obligations even in the face of death.

Furthermore, a profound distinction is drawn between the outwardly defiant stance of Muslim ibn Aqil in Ibn Ziyad's court and the apparent humility of Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn, Imam Sajjad (a.s.), who was also brought before the tyrant. A companion once questioned Imam Sajjad (a.s.), noting Muslim's bold, upright posture and direct gaze, contrasted with the Imam's (a.s.) downcast eyes and sorrowful demeanor. Imam Sajjad (a.s.), tears in his eyes, explained that Muslim ibn Aqil was brought alone, his concern solely for himself and his debt. But Imam Sajjad (a.s.) was brought not alone, but surrounded by the unveiled women of the *Ahlul Bayt*—his aunts and sisters—who had never been seen by strangers. In such a moment, how could a son of Fatima (a.s.) raise his head or show

defiance, when his primary concern was the sanctity and protection of the women of the Prophet's (s) household? This heartbreaking revelation showcases the unparalleled *masaa'ib* faced by the *Ahlul Bayt* and illuminates how their every action, even their posture, was a profound act of self-sacrifice and dedication to divine dignity.

The story of the Ta'if delegation, therefore, stands as a testament to the Prophet's (s) sagacious leadership, his unwavering commitment to core Islamic principles, his strategic flexibility where permissible, and the profound importance of rectifying personal obligations. It also offers a glimpse into the immense sacrifices and struggles endured by the *Ahlul Bayt* in preserving the integrity of Islam.

Chapter 167

The Tide Turns: Wisdom, Faith, and the Influx of Nations

The Prophet Muhammad's (s) mission was fundamentally one of *hidayat* (guidance) and *tabligh* (preaching), a profound concern for humanity's salvation articulated in **Surah At-Tawbah**: **"Certainly, a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your suffering; he is ardently anxious over you; and to the believers he is most kind and merciful."** (**9:128**). The Qur'an further revealed that the Prophet's (s) desire for the *Ummah*'s guidance was so intense, it was as if he would "burn himself out" if they did not believe (**Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 26:3**). While *jihad* in defense of faith remained a crucial pillar, as Imam Ali (a.s.) taught in *Nahj al-Balaghah* regarding the dignity of Islam maintained through the sword, the post-Conquest era brought a new phase of the Prophet's (s) mission. With the primary external threats neutralized and the major centers of *kufr* subdued, the true work of peaceful *da'wah* could flourish, allowing the Prophet (s) to dedicate himself fully to teaching and guiding the burgeoning Muslim community.

This period, marked by the 9th and 10th years of *Hijrah*, became known as

the **"Year of Delegations"** (*Am al-Wufood* or *Sanat al-Wufood*). No longer under constant siege or immediate military threat, the Prophet (s) was now able to receive countless delegations in *Masjid al-Nabawi*. These groups, drawn by the truth of Islam and the Prophet's (s) unparalleled character, traveled from across the Arabian Peninsula to inquire about the faith and accept its tenets.

The narrative of the Banu Thaqif delegation continued to illustrate this shift. Their initial arrogance and defiant refusal to embrace Islam during the siege of Ta'if had been met not with continued force, but with the Prophet's (s) strategic withdrawal and a fervent prayer: "O Allah, guide Thaqif and bring them to me." What appeared to some *munafiqin* as a retreat—and was indeed mocked by the Thaqif—was, in fact, a divinely guided pause. The subsequent humiliation and internal strife within Thaqif, culminating in the martyrdom of their leader Urwah ibn Mas'ud, compelled them to journey to Medina and submit to the Prophet (s). Their eventual, complete acceptance of Islam, albeit after attempts to negotiate exemptions from core Islamic practices, was a testament to the Prophet's (s) far-sighted wisdom and the power of his prayers.

A striking aspect of the Thaqif delegation's return was the Prophet's (s) appointment of a remarkably young man, Uthman ibn Abi al-'As, as their new leader. Despite being only 16 or 17 years old, Uthman was chosen due to his pure heart and rapid absorption of Islamic knowledge during his time in Medina. This decision served as a direct challenge to the entrenched arrogance of the Thaqif, accustomed to valuing age and social status above all else. It conveyed a powerful message: in Islam, leadership is determined by *ilm* (knowledge) and proximity to the divine truth, not by worldly conventions. This was also a subtle foreshadowing of principles of Imamah, where divine appointment and knowledge supersede age.

Before their departure, the Prophet (s) imparted crucial guidance to Uthman, particularly concerning the leadership of *Salat*. He famously instructed him: "Do not kill the people with your prayers." This meant that an Imam should always consider the physical and temporal conditions of the congregation, ensuring that prayers are not overly long or burdensome, but are accessible to the old, the sick, and those with obligations. Uthman also sought guidance from the Prophet (s) regarding distracting thoughts (*waswasah*) during *Salat*. The Prophet (s) attributed such distractions to a specific devil and advised beginning prayers with sincere *isti'adha* (seeking refuge in Allah from Satan).

The submission of the Banu Thaqif, following that of the Quraysh, effectively removed the two major obstacles to Islam's spread in Arabia. This opened the floodgates for an unprecedented influx of delegations. Over 250 named delegations, and possibly many more, poured into Medina. The Prophet (s) simultaneously dispatched his companions as missionaries to various tribes, knowing that the fear of reprisal had vanished.

Among the notable delegations was that of the Banu Tamim, a proud tribe with a history of raiding Medina. They arrived not with weapons or theological arguments, but with a unique challenge: a competition of eloquence and poetry. Their delegation included Khattab ibn Hajib, a celebrated orator renowned even in the court of Nushirwan, and Zabraqan, a famous poet. They also brought Aqra' ibn Habis, a wise man known for his astute judgment, who famously claimed that his praise could elevate anyone to the sky and his criticism could debase anyone to the ground. The Banu Tamim initially approached the Prophet's (s) chamber disrespectfully, demanding his presence. The Prophet (s), however, graciously met their challenge. He called upon Thabit ibn Qays to respond to Khattab's oration, and Hassan ibn Thabit, the Prophet's (s) poet, to answer Zabraqan's poetry. After the exchanges, Aqra' ibn Habis, the judge, declared the Muslim orator and poet superior, leading to the entire tribe's

acceptance of Islam. This event underscored Islam's triumph through the sheer power of its truth and eloquence, a testament to the Prophet's (s) profound words: "**Indeed, some eloquence is like magic**" (**inna minal bayani lasihra**).

Another significant delegation was that of the Banu Asad from Yemen. In stark contrast to the pride of other tribes, these Yemenis arrived with deep humility, wearing worn clothes and demonstrating profound respect. They immediately declared their *Iman*, prompting the Prophet (s) to ask them for proof of their sincerity—a sign of the higher expectations placed upon those who claimed to be believers. The Banu Asad then articulated their faith, listing five core beliefs (God, angels, books, messengers, resurrection), five fundamental practices (*Kalima*, *Salat*, *Sawm*, *Zakat*, *Hajj*), and five profound principles inherited from their elders: patience in hardship, gratitude in prosperity, steadfastness in war, contentment with divine decree, and **never gloating over an enemy's misfortune**. The Prophet (s), moved by their sincere adherence, added five more principles for their worldly and spiritual well-being: never accumulate what you do not intend to consume, never build what you do not intend to inhabit, never worry about what is perishable, always strive for what is everlasting, and remain mindful of Allah in all circumstances. The Prophet (s) then bid them farewell with heartfelt prayers, demonstrating the immense respect and honor bestowed upon those who approached Islam with sincere humility.

This period of consolidation also brought forth intricate legal and social guidance. One such instance led to the revelation of **Surah Al-Ma'idah, Ayah 105 and 106**. The narrative recounts a Muslim merchant traveling with two Christian companions. Nearing Medina, the Muslim suddenly fell ill and died, entrusting his valuables to the Christians to deliver to his heirs. When the Christians presented the belongings, the heirs noticed valuable gold items missing. The Prophet (s) was approached, and

initially, **Ayah 105** was revealed, a unique concession allowing the testimony of *non-Muslims* in inheritance cases when no Muslim witnesses were available, especially in situations of sudden death during travel. The Christians swore they had delivered everything. However, soon after, the heirs discovered the missing gold items for sale in the market, sold by one of the Christian companions. Returning to the Prophet (s) with this new evidence, **Ayah 106** was revealed, stipulating that if suspicion arose regarding the initial witnesses, the heirs could then take an oath, and their sworn testimony would prevail. The heirs took the oath, and the items were recovered.

This incident profoundly underscored the paramount importance of safeguarding *wasiyyah* (will or testament) in Islam. The divine intervention through these *Ayat* highlighted that the protection of a deceased person's last wishes and their heirs' rights is so critical that Islamic law, under specific circumstances, would make an exception regarding the testimony of non-Muslims. Sadly, in later times, the sanctity of *wasiyyah* has often been neglected, both in making one and in upholding it. The significance of *wasiyyah* resonates through the lives of the **Ahlul Bayt**. Moments before his martyrdom in Karbala, Imam Hussain (a.s.) fulfilled his father Imam Ali's (a.s.) *wasiyyah* by embracing Sayyidah Zaynab's (a.s.) arms, which would later be bound by ropes. In turn, Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.) fulfilled her mother Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) *wasiyyah* by kissing Imam Hussain's (a.s.) throat, which would soon be cut by the killer's dagger. This enduring example of the Prophet's (s) family illustrates the profound, sacred nature of *wasiyyah* and its protective spiritual power, even in the direst of circumstances.

Chapter 168

The Prophet's Boundless Compassion and the Threefold Path of *Da'wah*

As the 9th and 10th years of *Hijrah* unfolded, the Prophet Mohammad's (s) mission entered a pivotal phase, marked by an intensified focus on *da'wah*—the propagation of Islam through persuasion, wisdom, and invitation, rather than military engagement. This era vividly showcased the unparalleled compassion and profound zeal for humanity's guidance that defined the Messenger of Allah (s). The Holy Qur'an beautifully encapsulates this intrinsic aspect of his character in **Surah At-Tawbah, Ayah 128**: **"Indeed, there has come to you a Messenger from yourselves. It grieves him that you should suffer; he is anxious over you; and to the believers he is most kind and merciful."** This divine description, particularly the phrase "**Hareesun Alaykum**," reveals the Prophet's (s) profound desire for the welfare and salvation of all people.

The term "**Hareesun Alaykum**" (keenly anxious over you, zealous for your welfare) in its Arabic context is a testament to the Prophet's (s) pure and benevolent concern. Unlike its common Urdu connotation of greed or avarice, in the Qur'anic context, it signifies a burning desire for

human beings to embrace faith and attain salvation. This profound spiritual yearning meant that the Prophet (s) would never invoke curses or pray for the destruction of his community, a stark contrast to some earlier prophets who, at certain junctures, were compelled to pray for the eradication of those who vehemently rejected divine guidance. The Prophet's (s) ultimate aim was always to increase the number of believers, not to diminish humanity. His *Sirah* stands as an enduring testament to this philosophy: even in the fiercest battles, his primary objective remained the conversion of hearts, as exemplified by his instruction to Imam Ali (a.s.) during battles not to strike until the opponent had been invited to Islam. This unwavering zeal for guidance shaped his strategic approach to the entire Arabian Peninsula.

During this period, the Prophet (s) employed a comprehensive and multifaceted strategy for *da'wah*, which can be broadly categorized into three principal methods:

1. **Dispatching *Muballighin* (Preachers and Missionaries):** The Prophet (s) sent knowledgeable and eloquent companions to various tribes and regions to teach Islam directly. These *muballighin* would immerse themselves in the local communities, engaging in person-to-person discussions, clarifying Islamic principles, and answering questions. This direct engagement was highly effective in conveying the nuanced teachings of Islam and addressing local customs and concerns. The recent example of the Banu Asad delegation, mentioned in the previous chapter, illustrates the success of this method, where the tribe acknowledged learning fundamental Islamic tenets from the Prophet's (s) passing *muballighin*.

2. **Extensive Correspondence (*Khat-o-Kitabat*):** The Prophet (s) sent formal letters to various tribal chiefs, regional rulers, and even powerful emperors beyond Arabia, inviting them to Islam. These letters

were meticulously crafted, conveying the core message of Islam with clarity and wisdom. A prime example is the letter he dispatched to the Christians of Najran, which began with the profound invitation found in **Surah Aal-Imran, Ayah 64**: **"Say,"O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you — that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah."** This verse, chosen by the Prophet (s) as the opening of his missives, underscored his universal call to pure monotheism (*Tawhid*) and unity, a shared foundation that transcended existing religious differences. These letters, coming from the now-formidable city of Medina, commanded respect and forced recipients to consider their content seriously, leading to meetings and discussions within their communities.

3. **Receiving Delegations (*Wufud*) in Medina:** As Islam gained strength and Medina's reputation grew, tribes from across the Arabian Peninsula began sending delegations to the Prophet (s). These groups, often numbering in the hundreds, came out of curiosity, a desire for peace, or to formally embrace Islam. The Prophet (s) would personally receive them, address their concerns, and explain the principles of Islam, demonstrating his *akhlaq* (morals) and profound wisdom. The transformation of entire tribes, such as the Banu Thaqif of Ta'if, served as a powerful testimony to Islam's truth, inspiring neighboring tribes to send their own delegations. This era, thus aptly termed the "Year of Delegations," reflected the widespread acceptance of Islam through non-military means.

It was crucial for the Prophet (s) that conversions were not merely superficial changes of *kalimah* (declaration of faith), but profound transformations of individuals and societies. His emphasis was on a complete change in lifestyle, values, and governance. This was evident in his appointments of *muballighin* not just to teach the *kalimah*, but to oversee the

collection of *zakat* and other financial obligations, ensuring the establishment of an Islamic socio-economic system. He always sought proof of sincere faith, sometimes even testing those who came to Medina proclaiming Islam, making it clear that *Iman* demanded a fundamental shift in behavior, not just verbal assent.

During this period, the Prophet's (s) treatment of non-Muslims was guided by divine principles. He distinguished between various categories of non-believers, particularly the *Ahl al-Kitab* (People of the Book – Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians). Unlike other *kuffar* (disbelievers) with whom war could be waged if they actively opposed Islam, *Ahl al-Kitab* were offered a choice: accept Islam, or live under Islamic rule as *Kafir Dhimmi*, paying a *jizya* (tax) in exchange for protection and the freedom to practice their own religion. This demonstrated Islam's inherent respect for religious freedom and its emphasis on peaceful coexistence, unless provoked by aggression or treachery. The Prophet (s) and even the awaited Imam Mahdi (a.s.) are divinely restricted from initiating hostilities against *Kafir Dhimmi* unless they commit acts of aggression or conspiracy.

The zenith of this *da'wah* phase, and an event of immense theological significance, was the impending **Mubahala** with the Christians of Najran. The Prophet's (s) letter containing the invitation from **Surah Aal-Imran, Ayah 64** reached them. When the Najran Christians, led by their bishops and scholars, remained resistant to accepting Islam despite clear signs, the Prophet (s) proposed *Mubahala* – a solemn invocation of divine curse upon the lying party. This event, narrated in **Surah Aal-Imran, Ayah 61**, would become a defining moment in Islamic history, showcasing the truth of the Prophet's (s) mission and the exalted status of those he brought with him: Imam Ali (a.s.), Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), Imam Hasan (a.s.), and Imam Hussain (a.s.).

The *Mubahala* event, universally attested in Islamic tradition, serves as

a powerful testament to the unique virtues of Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.). While her life was one of profound *hijab* (veiling) and spiritual seclusion, her presence at *Mubahala* was a divine command, demonstrating that when the truth of Islam and the Messenger (s) were on the line, even the most revered daughter would step forward. Her inherent equality with Imam Ali (a.s.) – often expressed as "if Ali had no equal, Fatima would have no match" – underscored her unparalleled spiritual station. Her *hijab*, while paramount, did not prevent her from making profound sacrifices for the sake of divine truth, whether it was her presence at Mubahala to support her father or, later, her presence in the court for the sake of Imamate and her rightful claim to Fadak.

The *Masa'ib* (sufferings) of Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) and Imam Ali (a.s.) represent the pinnacle of divine testing and *sabr* (patience). Imam Ali's (a.s.) legendary courage and knowledge were complemented by his boundless patience in the face of immense adversity: witnessing the suffering of his beloved wife, the desecration of her sanctity, and later, the tragedies that befell his children. The profound *sabr* of Imam Ali (a.s.), and subsequently the Imams from his lineage, in enduring such trials, reflects a divine wisdom that transcends human comprehension. This continuity of sacrifice and *sabr* within the *Ahlul Bayt* is a timeless lesson for the *Ummah*, demonstrating that true faith often demands the ultimate submission to Allah's decree, even amidst the most heart-wrenching trials. The *Mubahala* is thus not merely a historical incident, but a profound theological lesson, paving the way for understanding the unique station of the *Ahlul Bayt* and the profound sacrifices they endured for the sake of Islam's preservation.

Chapter 169

The Ultimate Proof: Mubahala with Najran

The Prophet Muhammad's (s) approach to different communities varied, a testament to the consistent divine method of the Infallibles: responding to people according to their actions. While the Jewish tribes, persistently engaged in mischief and conspiracies against Islam, often necessitated military action—as seen in the *Ghazwah Khaybar*—the Christians of that era, generally less hostile in their nature, were met with a different form of engagement. This led to the pivotal event of *Mubahala*, a profound confrontation of truth that concluded not with the sword, but with a unique spiritual challenge.

It is regrettable that despite its immense significance, the *Mubahala* event is often recounted with remarkable brevity in historical and biographical works. Prominent historians, such as Shibli Nomani in his renowned *Seeratun Nabi*, dedicate only a page or two to this momentous occasion, sometimes even omitting the crucial role of Imam Ali (a.s.) from the main text, relegating his presence to a mere footnote. This downplays an event unanimously acknowledged by all Islamic scholars, unlike the event of *Ghadir Khumm*, which some later generations have attempted to deny or reinterpret. The *Mubahala* remains an undeniable fact of Islamic history, affirmed across various periods and schools of thought.

Numerous *Tafasir* (Qur'anic exegeses) by both Sunni and Shia scholars—including *Tafsir al-Tabari*, *Tafsir al-Kabir* by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, *Tafsir al-Baydawi*, *Tafsir al-Kashshaf* by Zamakhshari, *Tafsir al-Jawahir* by Tantawi, and *Ruh al-Ma'ani* by Alusi—are compelled to mention this event in their commentaries on **Surah Aal-Imran, Ayah 61-62**. Similarly, major *Hadith* collections, such as *Sahih Muslim*, *Mustadrak al-Hakim*, *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, *al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-Sahabah* by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah* by Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahani, and *Asbab al-Nuzul* by al-Wahidi al-Naysaburi, all contain narrations concerning *Mubahala*. In the Indian subcontinent, Shah Abd al-Haq Muhaddith Dehlawi detailed the event extensively in his *Madarij al-Nubuwwah*.

The term *Mubahala* itself holds a specific, profound meaning within Islamic context, similar to how *Salat* (prayer) or *Sawm* (fasting) have technical religious definitions beyond their literal Arabic translations. In Arabic, *Mubahala* is derived from *Bahl*, meaning to release or abandon. For instance, a mother animal whose milk is freely available to its offspring is called *Baahl*. In *dua*, *Ibtihal* means to surrender oneself completely to Allah, freeing oneself from all worldly fears and attachments. Conversely, if Allah "abandons" an individual, allowing them to face their fate without divine attention, it signifies the utmost misfortune.

In Islamic terminology, *Mubahala* signifies a solemn invocation between two parties in a dispute over truth and falsehood, where they collectively pray to Allah to inflict His curse and punishment upon the liar. It is a final resort when all other means of establishing truth—such as intellectual debate, rational argument, or scriptural evidence—have failed. **Surah Aal-Imran, Ayah 61** states: **"And whoever argues with you concerning him after what has come to you of knowledge – say, 'Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, then supplicate [to Allah] and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars.'"** This verse underscores *Mubahala* as a profound form

of *dua*, the ultimate weapon of the believer, particularly when faced with obstinate denial despite clear evidence.

A critical question arises whether *Mubahala* was exclusive to the Prophet (s) or if it applies to the entire *Ummah*. While the Qur'anic verse specifically addresses the Prophet (s), Islamic traditions, particularly from the *Ahlul Bayt*, confirm that *Mubahala* is a general injunction available to believers in matters of truth and falsehood, not for mundane disputes over wealth or property. *Usul al-Kafi*, the earliest collection of *Hadith* from the *Ahlul Bayt*, contains a dedicated chapter on *Mubahala* in its section on *Dua*. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) taught his companion Abu Masrooq the specific invocation for *Mubahala*. When Abu Masrooq described encountering opponents who rejected every logical argument and Qur'anic verse with flimsy excuses, the Imam instructed him: "If you encounter such a person, then invite him to *Mubahala*." The Imam outlined the procedure: prepare for three days, then go to an open place with your opponent, interlock fingers, and supplicate to Allah to curse the liar. This signifies that *Mubahala* is fundamentally an intensified form of *dua*, a last resort when intellectual reasoning fails. Had Islam been spread by force, such an emphasis on *Mubahala* would have been unnecessary, as it relies on spiritual confrontation rather than physical might.

The historical context of the *Mubahala* event began with the Prophet's (s) widespread invitations to Islam. In the 7th and 9th years of *Hijrah*, he dispatched letters to various rulers and tribes, including Christian communities. News of this new religion reached Najran, a prominent Christian settlement located on the border between the Hijaz and Yemen. Najran boasted a magnificent church, so grand that Arabs referred to it as "Ka'bat Najran," akin to the Ka'bah in Mecca. This church received substantial financial support from the Roman Emperor, *Qaysar*, who sought to expand Christian influence in the region.

In 9 AH, after the *Ghazwah Tabuk* and the Prophet's (s) assumption of control over the *Hajj*, formal invitations to Islam were sent to all Arab tribes. Eventually, the Prophet's (s) messenger arrived in Najran. Initially, when the Najran delegation, adorned in gold and silk, arrived in Medina, the Prophet (s) refused to acknowledge their greetings, signaling his displeasure with their display of worldly grandeur over spiritual humility. Their leaders were Sayyid (also called Ayham), *Aqib* (also known as Abd al-Masih, who managed administrative and political affairs), and Abu Haritha (responsible for religious matters, highly revered even by *Qaysar*).

The Prophet's (s) letter to Najran began with the profound invitation of **Surah Aal-Imran, Ayah 64**: **"Say, 'O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you – that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah.' But if they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].'"** The letter then directly invited them to accept Islam, pay *jizya* (tribute), or prepare for *Mubahala*.

Upon receiving the letter, Sayyid/Ayham, the chief of Najran, was deeply troubled. He consulted with the surrounding pagan tribes, who had themselves received similar invitations. Recognizing the Prophet's (s) power, they sought advice from the Najran Christians. In a significant meeting held within their grand church, the Christians of Najran debated their response. During this meeting, remarkably, discussions even touched upon the future Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and the blessings of his just government—a testament to the breadth of knowledge and prophetic foresight recorded in detailed historical accounts.

The Christians of Najran, after much deliberation, decided to accept the challenge of *Mubahala*. This confrontation would serve as the ultimate,

spiritual proof of truth.

The *Mubahala* event, like the life of the Prophet (s) and his *Ahlul Bayt*, serves as a profound testament to truth and unwavering faith. The challenges faced by the Prophet (s) and his family did not cease with his earthly departure. Just as the *Mubahala* showcased the Prophet's (s) profound conviction, the subsequent suffering of his *Ahlul Bayt* exemplified their steadfastness and sacrifice.

Consider the heart-wrenching scene following the Prophet's (s) passing. Bilal (r.a.), the beloved *mu'adhdhin* (caller to prayer), pledged never to give the *adhan* again in Medina after the Prophet's (s) demise, unable to bear the reminder of his absence. He migrated to Syria. Yet, in a dream, the Prophet (s) appeared, asking if Bilal had forgotten him and his *Ahlul Bayt*. Bilal, recognizing his oversight, immediately returned to Medina. His unexpected return caused a stir, and the people of Medina, yearning to hear his voice, pleaded for him to give the *adhan*. Bilal initially refused, bound by his oath.

However, from the Prophet's (s) house emerged Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.), the Prophet's (s) grandsons, pleading with Bilal to give the *adhan*. Bilal, overwhelmed with emotion, placed them on his shoulders, reminding the startled crowd that these were the very children he had seen sitting on the Prophet's (s) shoulders. Then, Sayyidah Fizza, the loyal maidservant, came out from Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) chamber, conveying a message from Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) herself: she wished to hear the *adhan* in her father's name once more. Bound by Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) plea, Bilal ascended the minbar. As he uttered the first phrase, **"Allahu Akbar,"** a wave of anticipation and grief swept through Medina. When he reached **"Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasul Allah,"** the sound resonated through Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) chamber. Unable to bear the profound pain of hearing her father's name, Sayyidah Fatima

(a.s.) collapsed in a faint. Bilal was immediately silenced.

This poignant moment underscores the immense grief and suffering endured by Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), who became an orphan in Medina, unable to even hear her beloved father's name without being overcome by sorrow. This stands in stark contrast to the reverence shown by Christians in Yazid's court, where a Roman ambassador bravely defended the sanctity of prophets and their families, criticizing Yazid's treatment of Imam Husayn (a.s.). While the Christians of Najran debated the truth with the Prophet (s) and ultimately acknowledged Islam, the *Ahlul Bayt* endured unspeakable hardships, their right to even mourn their beloved Prophet (s) denied.

Chapter 170

The Divine Foretelling and Najran's Deception

The profound event of *Mubahala* stands as a pivotal moment in the Prophet Mohammad's (s) *Sirah*, a testament to divine truth and unwavering faith. As the Christians of Najran deliberated in Medina, the Prophet (s) extended an invitation rooted in ancient prophecies and clear divine injunctions. While the general contours of the *Mubahala* event, from the Christians' arrival to its climax, are familiar from common narrations, deeper historical insights emerge from the internal discussions that preceded their departure from Najran, revealing the intricate interplay of faith, politics, and human nature. The very essence of *Mubahala* itself, while commanded to the Prophet (s) in **Surah Aal-Imran, Ayah 61**, is, as clarified by the *Ahlul Bayt*, a universal right for believers engaged in disputes between truth and falsehood, extending to the Day of Judgment.

Central to understanding the events unfolding in Najran is the Qur'anic emphasis on the universality of Prophet Mohammad's (s) message and his recognition in earlier scriptures. Allah (SWT) declared in **Surah Aal-Imran, Ayah 81**: "**And [recall, O People of the Scripture], when Allah**

took the covenant of the prophets, [saying], 'Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom and then there comes to you a messenger confirming what is with you, you must believe in him and support him.'" This profound verse indicates that every prophet was bound by a divine covenant to believe in and support the final Messenger, and by extension, to instruct their communities to do the same.

Further, the Holy Qur'an highlights the prayers of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) and Isma'il (a.s.) as they raised the foundations of the Ka'bah. In **Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayahs 127-129**, they supplicated: "**Our Lord, accept from us; indeed You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.**" They prayed for themselves to be Muslims (submitters to Allah) and for a Muslim progeny, specifically asking: "**Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Almighty, the All-Wise.**" The subtle yet significant reordering by Allah of the Prophet's (s) tasks—placing purification (*tazkiyah*) before the teaching of the Book and wisdom—underscores the paramount importance of spiritual upbringing (*tarbiyah*) and character refinement in Islam.

The prophecies continued through later prophets. Prophet Isa (a.s.) himself, as stated in **Surah As-Saff, Ayah 6**, announced to the Children of Israel: "**O Children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name will be Ahmad.**" This clear declaration by Isa (a.s.) was a crucial point in the subsequent debate with the Najran Christians. The Qur'an further asserts in **Surah Al-A'raf, Ayah 157**, that the People of the Book would find the description of the *Nabi al-Ummi* (unlettered Prophet) written in their own Torah and Injil. Indeed, multiple verses like **Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayah 146** and **Ayah 89** (and a partial repetition in **Surah Al-An'am, Ayah 21**) explicitly state: "**Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him as they know**

their [own] sons. But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know." This unequivocally declared that the People of the Book possessed prior knowledge of Prophet Mohammad (s) and his advent.

Within Najran, a significant Christian settlement located strategically between Hijaz (Mecca) and Yemen, intense deliberations unfolded following the Prophet's (s) letter. The letter presented three choices: embrace Islam, pay the *Jizyah* (a protective tax for non-Muslims under Islamic rule), or face war. This offer was uniquely extended to the People of the Book, distinguishing them from polytheists who would only be offered Islam or war.

The internal meeting was attended not only by Christian leaders but also by allied pagan tribes, such as the Banu Harith ibn Ka'b. Among the prominent figures were Al-Aqib (Abd al-Masih), a political advisor of advanced age, Al-Sayyid, the chief leader, and Abu Harithah, the esteemed 120-year-old religious head. Abu Harithah, despite his outwardly Christian position, had secretly embraced Islam due to his profound understanding of the truth. His wisdom and piety commanded immense respect among his people.

The debate began with Abu Harithah, who, sensing the looming threat of conflict, passionately urged caution. "Do not be like blind sheep following one another," he implored, "but deliberate with understanding. Allah has bestowed upon you great blessings: peace, security, and the safety of your lives, wealth, and honor. Do not squander these divine favors through foolishness." He conceded that war might resolve disputes in some cases but emphasized that "often, silence is better than war, and most blessings are preserved through reconciliation, not conflict." His words, though wise, were perceived by some, especially the hot-blooded warriors, as a sign of weakness.

Immediately, Qurs ibn Harith, a pagan chief and a fierce warrior known

as the "Lion of Arabia," stood up in fiery opposition. Shaking with emotion, he retorted that he could not believe a revered elder would advocate for cowardice. "We prefer to give our lives rather than surrender our weapons to anyone," he declared, "and there is no greater virtue than *jihad* in the way of God!" As he spoke, his fervor led him to grip his spear so tightly that blood flowed from his hand, an intense physical manifestation of his passionate resolve for war. He vehemently rejected the idea of *Jizyah* or abandoning their long-held religion and social standing, vowing to fight until many women were widowed and children orphaned, or until he himself perished.

Al-Aqib, the political advisor, attempted to restore order and reason. He echoed Abu Harithah's wisdom, reminding them that the counsel of elders is always farsighted and that not all problems are solved through warfare. Al-Sayyid, the chief, then supported Al-Aqib, highlighting the formidable power of the Muslims, who had humbled the Quraysh of Mecca, instilled fear in the empires of Persia and Rome, and now enjoyed the allegiance of numerous Arab tribes. "If they draw their swords today," Al-Sayyid warned, "hundreds of Arab tribes will rally to their support. War will bring us nothing but loss."

Despite the logical appeals, Qurs remained unyielding. He reiterated his refusal to accept Islam or *Jizyah*, demanding a fight to the end.

At this stalemate, a cunning proposal emerged from Jubair, a highly respected Christian from Syria, known for his wisdom and experience in the constant conflicts of that region. Jubair, observing the Muslims' growing strength and the Prophet's (s) focus on *Da'wah*, presented a treacherous plan. "My counsel," he began, "differs from both war and surrender. Let us accept their letter, announce our conversion to Islam, and go to meet them. This will lull them into a false sense of security, diverting their attention to other tribes and areas for *Da'wah*." His insidious plot con-

tinued: "Once their vigilance is lowered, we will then secretly coordinate with our allies: the Roman Empire, Egypt, Nubia (Sudan), and Abyssinia (Ethiopia), and even gather an elephant army from Yemen, akin to the Companions of the Elephant. We will then launch a multi-front, overwhelming surprise attack on Medina, swiftly capturing it while they are off guard." This deceptive, hypocritical strategy resonated deeply with the assembled chiefs, even winning over the fiery Qurs. The entire assembly resounded with cries of approval, convinced that this was the most pragmatic and advantageous path. Consequently, they resolved to summon the Prophet's (s) representatives to convey their feigned acceptance.

However, a young man named Harith, hailing from the Yemeni tribe of Rabia, stood up. Though a stranger in Najran and a *ghareeb al-watan*, his profound wisdom and debating prowess earned him universal respect. He had listened intently to Jubair's deceitful scheme and could no longer remain silent. With a powerful voice, Harith recited two lines of Arabic poetry, imploring: "How long will you turn people away from the truth? How long will you present falsehood? Only those who enter through the right door will find the destination; those who crash against the wall will only injure themselves and never reach their goal."

Then, directly addressing Al-Sayyid and Al-Aqib, Harith exclaimed, "I am astonished by you! You are the leaders and spiritual guides of this nation, yet you endorse such a deceptive plan! Do you not recall the last will of Prophet Isa (a.s.) to his successor, Shim'un ibn Yuhannas (Simon Peter/John)? Do you not remember his sacred words?" Harith proceeded to recite passages from Isa's (a.s.) will, revealing the divine revelation to Isa (a.s.) in which Allah (SWT) declared: "**O Isa, son of Maryam, seize the Book with strength.**" The will continued to describe Allah as the Creator of the heavens and earth without pre-existing matter (*Badi' al-Samawati wal-Ard*), One who does not perish or change, and who sent forth His messengers and books. It prophesied a time when Allah would

send His most virtuous Messenger to the world, bearing the most excellent Book, who would "make the blind see, the deaf hear, and open the sealed hearts." The will then joyfully declared: "**So blessed is he who witnesses his days and hears his words, and follows the light that descended with him. O Isa, send blessings upon him, for indeed I and My angels send blessings upon this last Messenger.**"

The recitation of this profound will by Harith, who was not privy to their secret knowledge, stunned Al-Sayyid and Al-Aqib. Every phrase of Isa's (a.s.) testament was etched in their memory, passed down through generations. Their astonishment at how this young man knew of their hidden scripture was quickly overshadowed by their distress at its public revelation. They attempted to deflect the impact, twisting the prophecy by claiming that Isa (a.s.) foretold a *different* Muhammad, and that the Prophet (s) standing in Medina was not the one their prophet spoke of. They claimed they would believe in "their" Muhammad, but not *this* Muhammad. This audacious assertion set the stage for further heated debate, attempting to sow confusion and delay the inevitable confrontation with truth.

Chapter 171

The Najran Deliberations: A Challenge to Prophethood and the Unveiling of Deception

The profound success of Islam in the ninth and tenth years of *Hijrah* — marked by the merciful **Conquest of Mecca**, the divine test of **Ghazwah Tabuk**, the expulsion of polytheists from the Ka'bah, and the submission of even the most rebellious tribes like Banu Thaqif of Ta'if — led to an unprecedented surge in conversions across the Arabian Peninsula. People were now arriving in Medina in droves, eager to understand Islam and embrace its truth. This period of widespread acceptance, however, also brought forth new challenges, a recurring phenomenon in the wake of significant success. A society witnessing the triumph of a single individual or ideology often gives rise to two distinct reactions.

First, there are those consumed by envy and malice, unable to tolerate another's prosperity. This group, often comprising the *munafiqin* (hypocrites), dedicates itself to undermining and destroying the successful, driven by sheer resentment rather than any specific grievance. Their mis-

sion is solely to sabotage the perceived triumph.

Second, a group of imitators emerges, seeking to replicate the success by adopting its outward forms. In the context of the Prophet Mohammad's (s) burgeoning spiritual and temporal authority, this meant the emergence of false claimants to prophethood. It is crucial to note that these false prophets did not merely appear after the Prophet's (s) demise, as is commonly believed, but began to assert their claims during his blessed lifetime, particularly in the later years of the ninth and tenth *Hijrah*. Individuals like Musaylima in Yamama (Yemen), a renowned liar, along with several others, including even a woman, Sajjah, declared themselves prophets, mimicking the Prophet's (s) claim in pursuit of similar worldly power and influence. They observed his visible success—the surrender of Mecca, the retreat of the mighty Roman Empire at Tabuk, the Muslim control of the Ka'bah, and the submission of Ta'if—and concluded that claiming prophethood was the path to dominion.

It was against this backdrop of surging conversions and emergent deceptions that the crucial deliberations with the Christians of Najran continued. Having received the Prophet's (s) invitation to Islam, or to accept a pact of protection (*Jizyah*), or face war, the Najran delegation found themselves in a precarious position. They were unwilling to embrace Islam but lacked the military strength to confront Medina directly. Their internal discussions had been fraught, with some like Qurs ibn Harith advocating for war, while the cunning Syrian Christian, Jubair, proposed a deceptive strategy: feign conversion to buy time, then conspire with allied empires to launch a surprise attack on Medina.

Just as this deceitful plan seemed to gain consensus, Harith ibn Aththal, a learned Yemeni Christian who had long resided in Najran, rose to challenge their folly. He reminded them of the profound prophecy of Prophet Isa (a.s.) to his disciple Shamoun ibn Safa, which unequivocally fore-

told the advent of the final Messenger. Harith's eloquent intervention had initially shamed the common folk among the Najranis, but their cunning leaders, Al-Sayyid (the chief) and Al-Aqib (the political advisor), remained unyielding. Their worldly interests—the valuable gifts and prestige they enjoyed as Christian leaders—were at stake, a status they knew would vanish under the egalitarian and just system of Islam.

Al-Aqib was the first to counter Harith, standing up to assert control over the faltering meeting. He began with a seemingly wise, yet ultimately deceptive, principle: "Not every truth is to be spoken at all times and in all places, for sometimes speaking the truth can sow seeds of hatred in hearts." He admonished Harith, accusing him of causing *fitnah* (disunity) within their community and urging him to restrain his knowledge. This was a subtle attempt to suppress the prophetic truth that threatened their vested interests, cloaking their worldly concerns under the guise of maintaining harmony.

Following Aqib, Al-Sayyid, the chief, spoke. While outwardly appearing to temper Aqib's harshness, he echoed the same underlying agenda. He agreed that Harith's intentions might be good but deemed his topic "dubious" and unproven. Al-Sayyid conceded that Prophet Isa (a.s.) had indeed prophesied the coming of a final Prophet. However, he cunningly twisted the narrative, suggesting, "How can we be certain that *this* Muhammad (s) is *that* final Prophet? Perhaps another, more permanent Prophet will come after him, after this era of *ummah* passes, for this Prophet (s) in Hijaz seems merely a temporary ruler." He implied that there were two prophets to come: one whose rule was transient, and another, truly enduring one. This was a direct distortion of the sacred prophecies, designed to cast doubt on the authenticity of Prophet Muhammad's (s) mission.

Harith, recognizing their deliberate obfuscation, responded with righ-

teous indignation. He declared that if anyone else had uttered such a blatant fabrication, he would have dismissed them as liars. He reiterated the *true* prophecy of Prophet Isa (a.s.), which foretold the coming of **two** individuals after him: one, a true Prophet from the lineage of **Banu Isma'il** (the Prophet Muhammad (s)), and the other, a false claimant, **Dajjal**, from **Banu Isra'il**. Prophet Isa (a.s.) had explicitly stated that he himself would return to slay Dajjal with his sword. Harith powerfully drew a parallel to the historical error of the Jews, who had rejected Prophet Isa (a.s.) by falsely claiming that Prophet Musa (a.s.) had prophesied the coming of Dajjal, whom they awaited as their true Messiah. Harith underscored that the Najran Christians were now repeating the same grave mistake of the Jews by misinterpreting prophecies and rejecting the true Messenger.

Silenced by Harith's irrefutable arguments and profound knowledge of their own scriptures, Sayyid took his seat. It was then that Aqib, ever persistent, made his second attempt to sow confusion. He conceded that Prophet Isa (a.s.) had indeed prophesied a *single* Prophet. However, he argued, "At this very moment, in the ninth year of *Hijrah*, there are *two* men claiming prophethood: the Prophet Muhammad (s) in Hijaz, and Musaylima in Yamama. Both are from the lineage of Banu Isma'il, and both have followers. Why should we, the people of Najran, who are geographically situated between Hijaz and Yemen, choose the 'foreign' Prophet from Hijaz over our 'local' prophet, Musaylima?" He further suggested that Prophet Isa (a.s.) had foretold a prophet named "Ahmad," and since neither Muhammad (s) nor Musaylima bore that exact name, they were, in his twisted logic, equally valid or invalid claimants. This argument, playing on regional bias and superficial similarities, aimed to undermine the Prophet's (s) unique status.

Harith, despite his growing frustration, maintained his composure. He retorted that while they had indeed heard about both claimants, they had failed to investigate the crucial differences between them. He revealed

that Najran's own envoys and passing caravans had witnessed the profound disparity in their abilities. In Medina, the Prophet Muhammad (s) had performed undeniable miracles: when the city faced water scarcity, he placed his blessed saliva in wells, causing dry wells to gush, increasing water flow, and transforming salty water into sweet, refreshing springs. He had cured the blind and healed the wounded simply by touching them with his blessed hands.

In stark contrast, Musaylima in Yamama, when pressured by his followers to perform miracles, produced "anti-miracles." When he placed his saliva in wells, the water either became excessively salty or vanished entirely. When he attempted to cure the blind, their sight worsened, or even those with vision became blind. When he tried to heal the sick, healthy individuals contracted debilitating diseases like leprosy or vitiligo. His own followers, terrified by these reverse manifestations, had to *beg* him not to perform any more miracles. Musaylima, in his deceit, attributed his failures to the impure intentions of his audience or claimed he awaited further divine revelation. Harith's account of these stark differences, based on undeniable eyewitness reports, left Sayyid and Aqib momentarily stunned, forcing them to acknowledge the profound distinction between the true Prophet and the false claimant.

Yet, Aqib, ever the opportunist, made one final, dangerous attempt to justify his stance. He conceded that Musaylima was indeed a false prophet. However, he argued, "Even if Musaylima is a false prophet, he is still performing a good deed by eradicating idolatry (*shirk*) in his region. Is it not a benefit that, despite his false claim, he is leading people away from idol-worship and demolishing temples?" This argument sought to justify a false path on the basis of a perceived positive outcome, ignoring the fundamental importance of true faith and divine authority.

Harith, aghast at Aqib's audacious sophistry, countered with the pro-

found truth that Allah (SWT) has declared that anyone who denies Him, associates partners with Him (*shirk*), or falsely claims prophethood, their worship, no matter how fervent, only distances them further from the Divine. He reminded them of Iblis (Satan), who was a devout worshipper but was eternally cursed for his single act of disobedience and arrogance in denying the Prophet Adam (a.s.). He then drew a chilling parallel to the *Khawarij* in Islamic history – a sect renowned for their extreme piety, constant prayer, and diligent recitation of the Qur'an, yet whose distorted *aqeedah* (creed) led them to commit horrific atrocities, including the brutal murder of a companion of Imam Ali (a.s.), his wife, and their infant child. Harith emphasized that ritualistic worship, no matter how outwardly impressive, is utterly meaningless if the core belief (*aqeedah*) is corrupt and leads to the denial of Allah's true Messengers or His chosen representatives.

The debate, poised on the precipice of a definitive theological revelation, continued to unfold, as the leaders of Najran struggled to evade the irrefutable truth brought forth by Harith's wisdom and unwavering commitment to the authentic prophetic legacy.

Chapter 172

The Prophecy of the Last Successor and the Demand for the Sacred Scrolls

The profound spiritual encounter with the Christians of Najran continued to unfold, a testament to the divine methodology of *da'wah*—to invite people to the path of Allah "with wisdom and good counsel, and argue with them in the best manner" (**Surah An-Nahl, Ayah 125**). This principle was vividly embodied in the steadfast and logical arguments put forth by Harith ibn Aththal against the cunning and worldly calculations of the Najran leadership, Sayyid and Aqib.

As the discussions progressed, Harith had successfully cornered Sayyid, the chieftain of Najran. While initially denying the prophethood of Mohammad (s), Sayyid was compelled to acknowledge the truth of his mission, albeit with a restrictive caveat. He conceded, "Yes, we accept that this Messenger is indeed a true prophet sent by Allah. However, he has been sent for his own people—the *Banu Isma'il*, the Arabs, the people of Mecca and Medina. He is not a prophet for us, the Christians of Najran; perhaps another prophet will come for us later."

Harith, with unwavering resolve, immediately challenged this limiting

assertion. "How can you accept him as a true Messenger of Allah and simultaneously deny his universal message? He himself proclaims that he is a Messenger to all of humanity, and his representatives have come to you, calling you to accept his faith. If he were merely a prophet for his own people, why would he send letters to nations like Egypt, Abyssinia, and even to Najran? If you truly believe him to be a Messenger of Allah, then you must accept his every word as truth, including his claim of universal prophethood. You cannot simultaneously affirm his truthfulness and reject a core tenet of his message, just as a *kaahin* (soothsayer) mixes truth with falsehood." Sayyid, recognizing the irrefutable logic and his own glaring contradiction, fell silent, his face pale with shame and perspiration.

At this critical juncture, Aqib, Sayyid's political advisor, rose to intervene. After chiding Harith for his perceived disrespect towards the elders of Najran, Aqib presented a new argument, attempting to shift the ground of the debate. "You have presented many signs that point to this Messenger's truthfulness," Aqib conceded, "and we acknowledge some of them. However, our scriptures contain one ultimate sign, a foundational prophecy that, if not fulfilled, renders all other signs null and void. This sign is akin to the head of a body; without it, the body is useless. And until this ultimate sign appears, we cannot truly believe that the Messenger you present is the one foretold to be a prophet for all humanity."

Aqib then proceeded to elaborate on this profound prophecy, attributing it to Prophet Isa (a.s.): "Our scriptures, and the words of Isa, state that the final Messenger will come, and his dominion will spread over all of Arabia. However, after a long period, his *Ummah* will become extremely weak and oppressed. Disbelievers will gain ascendancy, and Islam will be reduced to a mere name; the *Qur'an* will only exist in written form, devoid of practical application in people's lives. A small, disheartened group of believers will remain, losing all hope in divine assistance, convinced that

this state of subjugation will persist until the Day of Judgment."

"But then," Aqib continued, "at this moment of utmost despair, Allah will send a **son** of this final Prophet. Through him, Islam will once again spread from east to west, dominating the entire world. The Earth will reveal all its treasures and bounties, returning to its pristine state, as it was in the time of Prophet Adam (a.s.). All physical defects and illnesses will be removed, and even the most venomous animals will lose their toxicity, living in harmony with others. Lions will tend to cattle, wolves will guard sheep, and children will play fearlessly with snakes. Happiness and joy will be visible on every face, and the religion of this Prophet will encompass the entire globe, fulfilling Allah's promise."

Having recounted this lengthy prophecy, Aqib concluded, "Now, Harith, tell us: does this description match the Messenger from Medina? For we know that he had two sons, one from his Meccan wife (Sayyidah Khadijah) and one from his Medinan wife (Sayyidah Mariya Qibtiyya), but both passed away. This Messenger has no surviving male offspring. Therefore, based on our Prophet Isa's prophecy, how can he be the universal prophet whose **son** will spread Islam across the world? This crucial sign is missing; hence, he cannot be the universal prophet foretold in our scriptures."

Harith listened intently to Aqib's elaborate argument. When Aqib paused, expecting a concession, Harith calmly responded, "Aqib, your entire discourse, though lengthy, hinges on a single word: **'son'**. You claim that the ultimate sign is the coming of a 'son' of the final Prophet. If this is indeed your most important argument, then let us clarify this very point. Since you are the most knowledgeable religious scholar of Najran, and you possess the sacred ***Kitab Jami'a***—a compilation of the scriptures of Prophet Adam (a.s.), Prophet Seth (a.s.), Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), Prophet Musa (a.s.), and Prophet Isa (a.s.)—let us bring forth this book. Let us

open it and see what the earlier prophets truly said about the progeny of the last Messenger. Did they specify a **'son'** (*ibn*) or simply **'offspring'** (*awlad*), which would include a daughter? Your objection is based on the idea that this Prophet's lineage has been cut off because he has no male heir. Let the ***Kitab Jami'a*** reveal the truth about the continuation of the final Prophet's lineage."

The demand for the ***Kitab Jami'a*** sent a wave of unease through Sayyid and Aqib. This sacred text, kept secret and guarded by Abu Harithah, contained prophecies they knew would expose their deceit. They understood that if the book were opened in the presence of Harith and the Prophet's (s) representatives, their manipulative arguments would crumble. Panicked, Sayyid hastily interjected, "Harith, we have been debating for three long days, and now it is the fourth day, nearing the time of *Zuhr*. Our throats are parched, and our people are exhausted from the heat and continuous discussion. Let us postpone this matter until tomorrow. Tomorrow, the ***Kitab Jami'a*** will be brought, and we shall examine your claim."

Harith, understanding their ploy, agreed to the postponement, sensing that the truth would ultimately prevail with the revelation of the sacred scrolls. The meeting was adjourned, setting the stage for a decisive confrontation on the following day.

Chapter 173

The Unveiling of Ancient Prophecies: Lineage, Pride, and the Path to True Faith

The pivotal discussion concerning the **Mubahala** with the Christians of Najran resumed for its fifth decisive day, building upon the intricate exchanges of the preceding four. The central point of contention remained the universal prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (s) and, crucially, the continuity of his blessed lineage, which the Najranite leaders, Sayyid and Aqib, had claimed was severed by the passing of his sons. The proceedings of this day were underpinned by divine pronouncements from the Holy Qur'an, as the Prophet (s) had earlier cited, including **Surah Al-A'la, Ayah 18-19**: "**Inna Hadha La Fis-Suhufil-Ula, Suhufi Ibrahima Wa Musa**" (Indeed, this is in the former scriptures, the scriptures of Abraham and Moses), and **Surah Al-Kawthar**: "**Inna Shan'iaka Huwal-Abtar**" (Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off [without offspring]). These verses foreshadowed the deep truths about to be unveiled.

As the morning broke on the fifth day, Sayyid and Aqib, having privately plotted their strategy, aimed to either avoid the highly anticipated unveiling of the *Kitab Jami'a* (the Comprehensive Book of ancient scriptures)

or, if forced to open it, to misinterpret its contents. Their ultimate fallback plan was to verbally concede the Prophet's (s) truth in front of the assembled crowd, then later renege on their admission once public attention waned. Meanwhile, Harith ibn Aththal, steadfast in his pursuit of truth, ensured that the full delegation from Medina, and indeed the broader public, were present to witness the forthcoming revelations.

When Sayyid attempted to deflect Harith's insistence on opening the *Kitab Jami'a*, dismissing it as mere oratorical skill, Harith stood firm, demanding the truth. Aqib intervened, suggesting a private resolution, but the gathered multitude, eager for clarity, loudly insisted on witnessing the contents of the ancient book. Harith then concisely re-established the core of the debate: the Najranites had already acknowledged the Prophet's (s) truthfulness based on prophecies in their own scriptures; the sole remaining point of contention was his lineage.

With the crowd's unequivocal demand, the *Kitab Jami'a* was brought forth by Abu Harithah, the esteemed chief scholar and custodian of these sacred texts. The book was colossal, not composed of paper but of aged leaves or animal skins, inscribed in ancient languages, including Syriac. As it was opened, a profound journey through the annals of divine prophecy began.

First, the **Scripture of Adam (a.s.)** was presented. It narrated Adam's (a.s.) own creation, his awakening, and his perception of various luminous forms. Allah, in His infinite wisdom, explained these lights: the most brilliant being the light of Prophet Muhammad (s), the **Khātam al-Nabiyyīn** (Seal of the Prophets), destined to be the last and greatest of all Messengers. Around him were four other radiant lights: his divinely appointed successor, Imam Ali (a.s.); his blessed daughter, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.); and her two sons, Imam Hassan (a.s.) and Imam Hussain (a.s.). Allah revealed that through these two grandsons, the pure and

blessed lineage of the Prophet (s) would continue, ensuring the preservation of his message and the succession of divine proofs (Imams) on Earth, culminating in the Last Imam (Imam Mahdi (a.s.)), who would fill the world with justice after it had been steeped in darkness. Adam's (a.s.) query regarding the selection of these chosen souls was met with Allah's reply that He chose those who held the deepest conviction and love for Him.

Next, the **Scripture of Seth (Sheeth) (a.s.)**, Adam's (a.s.) son and successor, was unveiled. This scripture recounted a debate among Adam's (a.s.) descendants regarding who held the highest status before Allah—was it Adam, the angels, or specific archangels? Adam (a.s.) resolved the dispute by revealing that the most exalted were those not yet seen by them. He then described how, upon creation, he had seen names inscribed upon the Divine Throne (*Arsh*): "There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah," alongside the names of his blessed offspring and the **Awliya Allah**. Adam (a.s.) sought clarification on these names, and Allah revealed each one: the Prophet (s), his Wasi (Imam Ali (a.s.)), his daughter (Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.)), and her two sons, through whom the Prophet's (s) lineage would perpetuate. At this point, Sayyid and Aqib attempted to halt the reading, claiming the matter of lineage continuity was proven. However, Harith, recognizing the significance of these revelations for the entire community, insisted that the readings continue.

The **Scripture of Abraham (a.s.)** was then read. It detailed how Abraham (a.s.), upon attaining the station of **Khalilullah** (Friend of Allah), received a sacred chest (*Taboot-e-Adam*) containing a book. This book contained sections dedicated to various prophets, concluding with a large section for Prophet Muhammad (s), surrounded by thirteen other sections, alluding to the fourteen infallibles. The narrative reiterated that the Prophet's (s) lineage would continue through his daughter and her

two sons.

Following this, the **Scripture of Moses (a.s.)** was opened. This ancient text, known as "Sifr-e-Doo" (Book of Chapters), prophesied that Allah would send His final *Hujjah* (Proof) from the "summit of Faran" (Mecca). This ultimate Messenger would have a daughter who would bear two sons, like Abraham's (a.s.) sons (Ismail and Ishaq), who would preserve their grandfather's divine law (*sharia*) and pave the way for the awaited *Hujjah* who would illuminate the entire world.

Finally, the **Scripture of Jesus (a.s.)** was presented. This was not the *Injil* (Gospel) but rather Jesus's (a.s.) own personal writings, akin to a compilation of his teachings and prophecies. While the initial part of this scripture, predicting Prophet Muhammad's (s) arrival and his miracles, had been verbally recounted earlier, the written text now confirmed it. The second part, profoundly significant to the Mubahala, declared that Allah would grant this final Messenger a daughter, **Fatima**, who would be superior to Jesus's (a.s.) own mother, Maryam. Through this daughter, Allah would safeguard the Prophet's (s) name, message, and lineage. The scripture further contained a solemn oath from Allah: anyone who affirms His Oneness and harbors love for His final Prophet and his **Ahlul Bayt** shall be protected from all torment. Jesus (a.s.) also recorded Allah's promise that this Prophet, his descendants, and their **Shi'a** (followers) would ultimately reside in *Tuba* in Paradise. When Jesus (a.s.) inquired about *Tuba*, he was told it is a magnificent tree in Paradise with a golden trunk, silver branches, fruits sweeter than honey and musk-like in fragrance, whose essence flows as the water of **Tasneem** and **Kawthar**. This vast tree overshadows all of Paradise, with a branch extending into the home of every **Shi'a**.

Upon the completion of these profound revelations from the scriptures of Adam, Seth, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, the Najranite leaders, Sayyid

and Aqib, found themselves with no further arguments. They conceded, stating, "This Prophet is truly a messenger," and called for the meeting to conclude so they could prepare a written response to the Prophet's (s) letter. However, their internal intent remained deceptive; they planned to return to Najran, allow time to pass for public memory to fade, and then deny their verbal concession. Yet, fate intervened: fourteen prominent Najranite figures insisted on accompanying Sayyid, Aqib, and Abu Harithah to Medina, determined to verify these truths for themselves.

During this period, the Prophet (s), noticing the unusual delay of the Najranite delegation, had dispatched a contingent of Muslim soldiers to ascertain their safety and status, demonstrating his keen leadership and concern for affairs of state. This Muslim contingent met the Najranite delegation en route. The Najranites, witnessing the Muslim soldiers, quickly declared their peaceful intentions, stating they sought only discourse, not conflict. Their subsequent entry into Medina was grand, as they were accompanied by the Islamic contingent. Wanting to project an image of power and piety, the Najranites prepared meticulously before entering the city, donning luxurious silk garments and gold jewelry, which, by Islamic law, were forbidden for men.

When the Najranite delegation approached the Prophet (s) and offered salutations, the Prophet (s) notably did not return their greeting, or in some accounts, turned away. This unexpected reaction from the Prophet (s), whose **Akhlaq al-Azim** (sublime character) was legendary and had endeared countless individuals to Islam, raised questions. Why would he respond so differently to these Christians, whom the Qur'an (in **Surah Al-Ma'idah**) describes as closest to Muslims, compared to idolaters?

The wisdom behind the Prophet's (s) action was profound. The Najranites, despite their claims of piety and spiritual status (represented by their priestly attire and adherence to Jesus's asceticism), arrived in a display

of ostentatious pride and arrogance, wearing silk and gold, which contradicted the spirit of humility expected of spiritual leaders, and which was also forbidden for men in Islam. The Prophet's (s) sternness was a crucial lesson against *takabbur* (arrogance) and *ghuroor* (pride). True faith and spiritual proximity to Allah demand humility and conduct that aligns with one's proclaimed beliefs.

This principle is powerfully echoed in the teachings of the **Ahlul Bayt**. Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (a.s.), for instance, conveyed a profound message in his final moments. When he was martyred by poison, his ultimate **wasiyyah** (will) was not about the Oneness of God or the intricacies of *Imamate*, as he was secure in those truths. Instead, his dying words, conveyed through his wife Umm Hamidah to his **Shi'a**, were a solemn warning: "Our **shafa'at** (intercession) will not reach those who consider *salat* (prayer) insignificant or are negligent about it." This highlighted the paramount importance of prayer and sincere devotion. Furthermore, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) consistently admonished his followers, "**Kunu Lana Zaynan wa la takunu 'alayna Shaynan**" (Be a source of adornment for us and not a source of shame or disgrace). This meant that the actions and character of the **Shi'a** reflect upon the Imams themselves. If their conduct is exemplary, it brings honor to the **Ahlul Bayt**; if it is corrupt, it brings disrepute. The Prophet's (s) sternness with the Najranites served as a living embodiment of this principle, emphasizing that grand claims of faith and virtue must be matched by profound humility and upright conduct.

Chapter 174

Confrontation and Conviction: Setting the Stage for *Mubahala*

The profound confrontation with the Christians of Najran was now reaching its climactic stage, as the Prophet Mohammad (s) had already established the intellectual and spiritual foundations of his universal message. The concept of *mubahala*, as articulated in the **Holy Qur'an**, was not a preliminary step but a final recourse, to be invoked only after all avenues of logical discourse, evidence, and divine proofs had been exhausted. As **Surah Ali 'Imran, Ayah 61** states, it is for those who "dispute with you concerning him after [all] the knowledge that has come to you." This established *mubahala* as the ultimate challenge, reserved for situations where truth was clearly presented, yet deliberately rejected. Furthermore, while the *Mubahala* event itself involved the Prophet (s) and his **Ahlul Bayt**, the essence of this divine challenge extends to the *Ummah* until the Day of Judgment, permitting believers to engage in *mubahala* in matters of fundamental faith, but never in trivial personal disputes or worldly disagreements.

The Najran delegation, comprising their chief leaders Sayyid, Aqib, and

their paramount religious scholar Abu Harithah, along with approximately seventy other individuals, embarked on their journey to Medina. This large retinue, though outwardly committed to a religious inquiry, secretly harbored political and material motivations. As they journeyed through the desert, a significant incident occurred that underscored the spiritual reality at play. The mule carrying their crucial provisions—food and water, invaluable necessities in that era—suddenly became unruly. In a fit of frustration, Abu Harithah's younger brother cursed the Prophet Mohammad (s), attributing their travel woes to the Prophet's (s) alleged false claims.

Abu Harithah, despite his inner reservations and hidden agenda, was visibly distressed by his brother's outburst. Calling him aside, he admonished him severely, reminding him of the Prophet's (s) true status and divine mission. He revealed a secret, ancient scripture of Prophet Isa (a.s.), a volume known as the ***Kitab Jami'a***, which was passed down through their lineage and guarded closely from the common people. Abu Harithah recited from this scripture, detailing unequivocal prophecies about the final Messenger. This sacred text affirmed Prophet Muhammad (s) as the "leader of all prophets," destined to appear in the land of Faran (Mecca), where his ancestor Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) had built the Ka'bah. The scripture also foretold that the Prophet's (s) esteemed wife, Sayyidah Khadijah (a.s.), would be among the four most virtuous women of Paradise, alongside Sayyidah Maryam (a.s.) and Sayyidah Asiyah (a.s.). Most profoundly, it described the **Hawdh al-Kawthar** (Pond of Abundance) that would be granted to Prophet Muhammad (s), from which anyone who believed in the Prophet (s) and loved his **Ahlul Bayt** would drink, never to thirst again. Abu Harithah confessed that these prophecies were undeniably true and applied to Prophet Muhammad (s).

His brother, dumbfounded by these revelations, questioned why they were still traveling to Medina if the truth was so evident. Abu Harithah,

exposing the true, cynical motivation of the Najranite leaders, admitted that their primary concern was not religious truth but the preservation of their worldly status, wealth, and influence among their people. Accepting Islam would mean relinquishing the grandeur of their large churches, the vast treasures accumulated through their people's labor, and the high esteem in which they were held, even by the Roman Emperor. Their journey to Medina was not for genuine inquiry but a political maneuver to save face while rejecting the truth they already knew.

Upon their eventual arrival at the outskirts of Medina, the Najran delegation made a grand entrance, adorned in splendid silk garments, gold jewelry, and elaborately styled hair, hoping to project an image of power and authority. However, as they presented themselves before the Prophet (s) in **Masjid al-Nabawi**, the Prophet (s) pointedly turned his face away, refusing to acknowledge their greetings. This deliberate act of rejection was a clear message from the Prophet (s), signaling his disapproval of their arrogance and pretense. He who had always received the humble and the sincere with warmth and respect, now demonstrated that spiritual eminence was attained through humility, not ostentation. The Najranites, accustomed to deference, were utterly perplexed and humiliated.

Confused and desperate, they sought counsel from Meccan traders like Uthman and Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, who had long-standing commercial ties with Najran. These companions, equally astonished by the Prophet's (s) unprecedented coldness towards such prominent visitors, admitted their inability to comprehend the Prophet's (s) behavior. They recalled only one other instance of such a reaction—towards the arrogant envoys of the Persian Emperor, who had torn the Prophet's (s) letter. However, they directed the Najranites to Imam Ali (a.s.), asserting that only he truly understood the Prophet's (s) disposition and could provide guidance.

Approaching Imam Ali (a.s.), the Najranite leaders presented their predica-

ment. Imam Ali (a.s.) looked at them, discerning their inner state, and immediately understood the Prophet's (s) message. He advised them that if they wished to meet the Prophet (s), they must first shed their lavish silk robes and gold ornaments, which were forbidden for men in Islam. He also instructed them to simplify their elaborate hairstyles. "The Messenger of Allah will not meet you in this state," Imam Ali (a.s.) firmly declared, emphasizing that those who approached the Prophet (s) in the name of religion must do so with humility, unlike those who came for worldly gain.

The Najranites, with no other recourse, complied. They cast off their rich attire, donned simpler clothing, removed their gold, and humbly rearranged their hair. When they returned to the Prophet (s) in this altered state, he received them warmly, rising to greet them and welcoming them as the followers of his brother, Prophet Isa (a.s.). Demonstrating profound religious tolerance, the Prophet (s) even allowed them to perform their Christian prayers within **Masjid al-Nabawi**, facing their own *qiblah* towards Najran, a testament to Islam's respect for diverse forms of worship as long as they are rooted in the belief in one God.

With the atmosphere now transformed, the formal discussion commenced. The Prophet (s) invited them to embrace Islam, to worship the One God, and to obey His commands. The Najranites, however, confidently responded that they were already "Muslims," believing in God and abiding by His commands. The Prophet (s) countered their claim, stating that true Islam possessed distinct signs that were absent in their practices. He pointed out their worship of the cross, their consumption of pork, and their claim that Prophet Isa (a.s.) was the son of God. He clarified that mere verbal affirmation was insufficient; true Islam required adherence to its principles and rejection of polytheism and unlawful practices.

The Najranites acknowledged the Prophet's (s) argument but clung to

one fundamental point of contention: the miraculous birth of Prophet Isa (a.s.) without a father. They argued that such an extraordinary event could only signify divine parentage, making Isa (a.s.) more than just a prophet. At this precise moment, **Ayah 59 of Surah Ali 'Imran** was revealed, providing a definitive answer to their stubborn query: **"Indeed, the example of Jesus in the sight of Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust, then said to him, 'Be,' and he was."** The Prophet (s) presented this divine proof, asking them: if Isa (a.s.) was divine because he had no father, what then of Adam (a.s.), who was created without both a father and a mother? This powerful argument utterly dumbfounded the Najranites; they had no logical response.

Despite being intellectually defeated, their hearts remained resistant. They confessed that their intellect simply could not accept Prophet Isa (a.s.) as merely a servant of God. It was at this juncture, with all rational arguments exhausted and their obstinacy fully exposed, that **Ayah 61 of Surah Ali 'Imran**, the **Ayah al-Mubahala**, was revealed: **"And whoever disputes with you concerning him after [all] the knowledge that has come to you – say, 'Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, then supplicate, and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars.'"** This was the ultimate challenge, issued directly by Allah, setting the stage for the formal *mubahala* to take place on the following day.

Chapter 175

The Divine Summons and the Sacred Procession of Mubahala

The path to conveying the truth of Islam was always rooted in principles of profound wisdom and mercy, as enshrined in the divine command to **"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel, and debate with them in the best manner."** (***Ud'u ila sabili rabbika bil-hikmah wal-maw'izat al-hasanah wajadilhum billati hiya ahsan***). However, when reasoning and eloquent discourse failed to penetrate hardened hearts, when knowledge had been presented and yet rejection persisted, a final, solemn recourse remained: the ***Mubahala***. This unique and weighty challenge, a direct invocation of divine judgment, occurred only once in the history of Islam, during the blessed life of the Prophet Mohammad (s). Notably, unlike previous instances in the history of prophets where such challenges culminated in a divine curse, the Prophet's (s) ***Mubahala*** with the Christians of Najran was averted by their immediate retreat, a testament to the undeniable truth and formidable spiritual presence of the Prophet (s) and his family. This monumental event unfolded on the 24th of Dhul Hijjah in the 9th year of *Hijrah*, a date that would mark the Prophet's (s) final Dhul Hijjah spent in Medina, as

his eventual departure from this world would precede the same month in the following year.

The Najran delegation, after their initial internal discussions and the unveiling of their sacred scriptures, finally arrived in Medina. They presented themselves before the Prophet (s) arrayed in opulent garments, adorned with gold and silken attire, seeking perhaps to impress or assert their worldly status. The Prophet (s), perceiving their underlying pride and hypocrisy, deliberately turned away from them, withholding his usual warm greeting. Confused by this unexpected coldness, they sought counsel from certain prominent companions, including Uthman and Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, who wisely directed them to Imam Ali (a.s.). Upon hearing their predicament, Imam Ali (a.s.) immediately understood the core issue and instructed them to shed their extravagant clothes and gold, emphasizing that humility was the prerequisite for engaging with the Messenger of Allah. As soon as they complied, stripping away their worldly adornments, the Prophet (s) received them with his characteristic warmth, even permitting them to offer their prayers within ***Masjid al-Nabawi***, facing their own *qiblah*.

The debate resumed with the Prophet Mohammad (s) inviting them to embrace the true essence of Islam. The Najranites, however, claimed to be already Muslim, prompting the Prophet (s) to expose the contradictions in their beliefs, pointing to their practice of cross-worship and their assertion of Prophet Isa (a.s.) as the son of God. Their primary argument rested on the miraculous, fatherless birth of Prophet Isa (a.s.), which they presented as undeniable proof of his divine nature. In response, a profoundly significant verse, ***Ayah 59 of Surah Ali 'Imran***, was revealed: **"Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, 'Be,' and he was."** (***Inna masal 'Isa inda Allah kama masal Adam khalaqahu min turab thumma qala lahu kun fayakun***). This divine revelation decisively silenced their argu-

ment, equating Isa's (a.s.) miraculous creation by divine command (***Kun Fayakun***) to that of Adam's (a.s.), who was created without either a father or a mother, demonstrating Allah's absolute power.

Despite this clear and irrefutable proof, the hearts of the Najranite leaders, Sayyid and Aqib, remained resistant. They had no logical counter-argument but retreated to an illogical position: "Our heart does not accept." This stubborn refusal, prioritizing personal inclination over manifest truth, mirrored similar incidents in the history of other prophets and Imams, where opponents, cornered by irrefutable logic, resorted to denying what their intellect knew to be true. It was at this juncture, when all forms of reasoned discourse had been exhausted, that ***Ayah 61 of Surah Ali 'Imran***, known as the ***Ayah al-Mubahala***, was revealed, setting the stage for the ultimate spiritual challenge: **"Then whoever argues with you concerning him after what has come to you of knowledge, say, 'Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, then let us invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars.'"** (***Faman hajja-ka fihi min ba'di ma ja'aka min al-'ilm fa-qul ta'alaw nad'u abna'ana wa abna'akum wa nisa'ana wa nisa'akum wa anfusana wa anfusakum thumma nabtahil fa-naj'al la'nat Allahi 'ala al-kadhibin***).

To the surprise of many, the Najranites accepted the challenge of ***Mubahala***. Their surprising readiness, even bringing their women (Maryam and Sarah) and children (Sibghat al-Muhsan and Abtal al-Man'im), hinted at a prior understanding or a strategic move. Perhaps they anticipated this ultimate challenge and believed the Prophet (s) lacked surviving male offspring, thus hoping to discredit him. This was rooted in their scriptures, which foretold the final prophet having an enduring lineage through his progeny, and they wanted to test if the Prophet's (s) lineage through his daughter, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), would fulfill this prophecy.

On the night preceding the formal ***Mubahala***, the 23rd of Dhul Hijjah, the Prophet Mohammad (s) returned to the house of his beloved daughter, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.). There, he gathered Imam Ali (a.s.), Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), Imam Hasan (a.s.), and Imam Hussain (a.s.) under a Yemeni cloak, known as the ***Kisa*** (mantle). It was during this sacred assembly that the divine ***Ayah al-Tathir*** (***Innama yuridu Allahu li-yudhhiba 'ankum al-rijs ahl al-bayt wa yutahhirakum tat-hira***) was revealed, proclaiming their complete purification from all impurities. This event, forever remembered as the ***Hadith al-Kisa***, solidified the unique spiritual eminence and ***Wilayah*** of the ***Ahlul Bayt***. Meanwhile, the Najranite leaders, Abu Harithah, Sayyid, and Aqib, held their own meeting, preparing their contingent for the next day. Abu Harithah, their chief scholar, warned them, emphasizing that a true prophet would not endanger his closest kin in such a challenge unless he was absolutely certain of his truth. He urged them to observe the Prophet's (s) demeanor at the ***Mubahala*** site: if he came with a large army and pomp, he was a pretender; but if he came with only his closest family, humble and spiritually focused, then he was indeed a true Messenger of God.

The morning of the 24th of Dhul Hijjah dawned. After performing his Fajr prayers in ***Masjid al-Nabawi***, the Prophet Mohammad (s) emerged, not from his private *hujra*, but from the dwelling of Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.). The air was still dark, the sun not yet risen. In a procession of unparalleled spiritual majesty, the Prophet (s) walked forward, with Imam Hasan (a.s.) by his right side and Imam Hussain (a.s.) by his left. Behind him walked his revered daughter, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), and at the very rear, Imam Ali (a.s.). They proceeded to a designated spot outside Medina, near a mosque and distant mountains, where the Prophet (s) cleared a space between two date palms and spread his ***'aba*** (cloak) as a canopy. He then sat down in the posture of *tashahhud*, as in prayer, with Imam Hasan and Imam Hussain on either side, Sayyidah Fatima behind him,

and Imam Ali behind her.

A moment later, the Prophet (s) stood up, leaning on a bow, his left shoulder still covered by the ***'aba***, and raised his hands in fervent supplication. Witnessing this awe-inspiring sight, the Najranites, especially Qard ibn Alqamah (Abu Harithah's younger brother, who had insulted the Prophet on the journey but was later chastised by his brother and recognized the Prophet's truth), were struck by terror. Abu Harithah, their chief scholar, immediately cried out, warning his people not to advance even a single step. He recognized the Prophet's (s) solemn posture and imminent prayer as a sign of absolute certainty, knowing that if the Prophet (s) invoked the curse, divine retribution would undoubtedly befall them. The atmosphere was thick with dread; the Najranites observed the signs in the sky, and their hearts were filled with overwhelming fear.

This sacred event of ***Mubahala*** finds a poignant parallel in the journey of Imam Hussain (a.s.) from Medina on the 28th of Rajab, 60 AH, a journey that also involved the "sons," "women," and "selves" of the Prophet's (s) lineage for the sake of truth. Just as the Prophet (s) took his ***Ahlul Bayt*** to the field of ***Mubahala*** to establish the truth of Islam, Imam Hussain (a.s.) took his family—Sayyidah Zainab (a.s.), Umm Kulthum (a.s.), Sayyidah Rabab (a.s.), Sayyidah Layla (a.s.), and his sons, Imam Ali Akbar (a.s.), Qasim (a.s.), and the infant Ali Asghar (a.s.), along with Imam Sajjad (a.s.)—on a path of immense sacrifice. The departure from Medina was marked by solemn preparations, with security around the quarter of Banu Hashim.

A particularly heart-wrenching scene unfolded within the household: the exclusion of Sayyidah Sughra (a.s.) from the journey. Despite Sayyidah Zainab's (a.s.) heartfelt plea on her behalf, Imam Hussain (a.s.) firmly stated that Sughra could not accompany them. His profound reason, later understood, was that Sayyidah Sughra bore a striking resemblance

to his blessed mother, Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.). Imam Hussain (a.s.) could endure any hardship for his family, but he could not bear the thought of Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) image, embodied in Sughra, being exposed to indignity in the markets and courts of Kufa and Sham, veiled and protected. Thus, Sughra remained behind as a symbol of the *Ahlul Bayt's* immense sacrifice and the sanctity of Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) veil. As the caravan prepared to depart, Sayyidah Zainab (a.s.) observed her beloved brother, Imam Hussain (a.s.), personally assisting her onto her mount, a gesture that would find its painful inversion in Karbala, where Imam Sajjad (a.s.), despite his illness and chains, would have to help her onto her mount in the absence of Imam Hussain (a.s.) and Abbas (a.s.). The stage was now set for the decisive moment of ***Mubahala***.

Chapter 176

The Mubahala's Conclusion: Prophetic Victory and Testament of Succession

As the 9th year of *Hijrah* drew to a close, a period marked by profound spiritual and legislative developments, the culmination of the **Mubahala** with the Christians of Najran stood as its crowning event. This was the eighth and final discourse dedicated to this momentous encounter, bringing to a close the detailed account of the Prophet Mohammad's (s) sixty-first year of life, which, according to historical reckoning, corresponded to the 9th year of *Hijrah*. This era was pivotal, not only for the consolidation of Islamic law but, more significantly, for the repeated and explicit establishment of the Prophet's (s) succession—a matter that would continue to unfold with even greater clarity in the subsequent 10th year of *Hijrah*.

The 9th *Hijri* year had witnessed three monumental events: the **Ghazwah Tabuk**, which served to expose the *munafiqin* and highlight Imam Ali's (a.s.) unique status; the purification of the Ka'bah and the divine injunctions of **Surah At-Tawbah**, delivered by Imam Ali (a.s.); and finally, the **Mubahala**, which further affirmed the sanctity and spiritual author-

ity of the **Ahlul Bayt**. Each of these events, while encompassing various divine directives, collectively revolved around a central theme: the continuous and prominent introduction of Imam Ali (a.s.) as the Prophet's (s) vicegerent and successor to the Muslim *Ummah*, and the simultaneous unveiling of the *munafiqin*'s hypocrisy. The Prophet's (s) life, particularly in these final years, was a meticulous preparation for the *Ummah* to navigate future challenges, and the issue of succession was paramount in this divine design.

The engagement with the Najran delegation was a protracted intellectual and spiritual battle. The revelation of an astonishing **eighty *Ayat* of Surah Ali 'Imran** in response to their arguments underscored the depth and significance of this divine discourse. While often summarized, the sheer volume of revealed verses indicates a lengthy and complex debate that warrants careful study.

During their initial encounters in Medina, the Najran Christians, aided by some Jews, attempted to undermine the Prophet's (s) mission. One such attempt involved questioning his motives, suggesting that he, like Prophet Isa (a.s.) (as the Jews alleged), sought to be worshipped. In response, **Ayah 79 of Surah Ali 'Imran** was revealed: **"It is not for any human being that Allah should give him the Book and authority and prophethood and then he would say to the people, 'Be worshippers of me instead of Allah'; but [rather, he would say], 'Be devoted to the Lord because of what you have taught of the Scripture and because of what you have studied.'"** This *Ayah* unequivocally clarified that no prophet, including Prophet Muhammad (s), would ever invite people to worship them, affirming the purity of his message and the absolute oneness of Allah.

A second significant debate arose concerning Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.). The Najran Christians, joined by a Jew named Abu Rafi, claimed Ibrahim (a.s.)

belonged to their respective faiths, with Abu Rafi asserting Ibrahim (a.s.) was Jewish, and the Christians claiming he was Christian. This argument sought to draw Prophet Muhammad (s) into a sectarian dispute. However, Allah's definitive response came in **Ayah 65 of Surah Ali 'Imran**: **"O People of the Scripture, why do you argue about Abraham while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after him? Then will you not reason?"** This *Ayah* logically debunked their claims: since the Torah and Gospel were revealed *after* Ibrahim (a.s.), he could not have been Jewish or Christian. The Qur'an then chastised them in **Ayah 66**: **"Here you are, arguing about that which you have [some] knowledge, but why do you argue about that which you have no knowledge? And Allah knows, while you know not."** This served as a potent reminder to focus on the core issue of Prophet Muhammad's (s) prophethood rather than engaging in irrelevant and baseless arguments.

The ultimate clarification came with **Ayah 67**: **"Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim [submitting to Allah]. And he was not of the polytheists."** This *Ayah* profoundly redefined Prophet Ibrahim's (a.s.) identity, emphasizing his pure submission to Allah (*Hanif*) and confirming that the essence of "Muslim" (one who submits) predated specific *Sharias* and was the original faith. This firmly distinguished Ibrahim (a.s.) from both Jewish and Christian claims, and explicitly from polytheism, correcting any misconception that *mushrikeen* (polytheists) could claim adherence to Ibrahim's (a.s.) faith by virtue of calling themselves *Hunafa*.

Following this, **Ayah 68 of Surah Ali 'Imran** was revealed: **"Indeed, the nearest of people to Abraham are those who followed him, and this Prophet and those who believe. And Allah is the Protector of the believers."** This *Ayah* directly linked true followership to those who adhere to the path of Ibrahim (a.s.), and, most importantly, affirmed the Prophet Muhammad (s) and his true believers as the rightful inheritors

of Ibrahim's (a.s.) legacy.

The profound interpretation of this *Ayah* by Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) further illuminated its significance. In a narration found in *Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan* and *Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn*, Imam Ali (a.s.) declared: "Know that the closest of people to the Prophets are those who follow their commands and abide by what they have brought." He then recited **Ayah 68** of Surah Ali 'Imran, followed by the Prophet Muhammad's (s) powerful statement: **"Indeed, the closest to Muhammad (s) is he who obeys Allah, even if his lineage is distant; and indeed, the enemy of Muhammad (s) is he who disobeys Allah, even if his lineage is close."** This declaration emphasized that true proximity to the Prophet (s) is not based on blood relations alone, but on obedience to Allah and adherence to His commandments. This principle resonated deeply with the emphasis on the *Ahlul Bayt*, whose proximity was intertwined with their unparalleled obedience and purity.

The Mubahala itself, as the ultimate challenge, proceeded with the Prophet (s) leading his chosen family: Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Hussain (a.s.) as his "sons," Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) as his "women," and Imam Ali (a.s.) as his "self." The strategic arrangement of their procession, with Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Hussain (a.s.) at the front, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) in the middle, and Imam Ali (a.s.) at the rear, was laden with symbolism. It highlighted the sacred protection afforded to Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) by the Prophethood and Imamate, ensuring her *chastity* and *purity* were shielded from all gazes. Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) in this procession represented all fundamental female roles: the purest daughter, the exemplary wife, and the blessed mother, embodying the perfection of womanhood in Islam.

The linguistic arguments surrounding the terms **"Abna'ana," "Nisa'ana," and "Anfusana"** (our sons, our women, ourselves) were a testament to

the Qur'anic precision. These terms, in Arabic grammar, when used in the plural with possessive suffixes, denote inclusivity – "all our sons," "all our women," "all our selves." This affirmed that no one else was worthy of joining the Prophet (s) in this ultimate challenge, establishing the unique stature of the *Ahlul Bayt*. During the *Imamah* of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.), Harun al-Rashid questioned the Imam's claim to be the Prophet's (s) descendant through Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) since the Prophet (s) had no surviving sons. Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) eloquently cited **Ayah 84 of Surah Al-An'am**, where the lineage of prophets like Isa (a.s.) is traced through their mothers, affirming that progeny can indeed be through the female line. He further used the Mubahala *Ayah* to prove his lineage, stating that "Abna'ana" included Hasan and Hussain (a.s.), who were the Prophet's (s) grandsons through Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.). He then countered the *Ma'mun's* linguistic argument that *Anfusana* (our selves) would refer to males due to the presence of *Nisa'ana* (our women), by explaining that the prior inclusion of *Abna'ana* (our sons) freed the term *Anfusana* to signify Imam Ali (a.s.) as the spiritual equivalent of the Prophet (s). This subtle yet profound linguistic analysis solidified the *Ahlul Bayt*'s unparalleled position and confirmed Imam Ali (a.s.) as the Prophet's (s) "self."

As the Prophet (s) emerged with his sacred household, their solemn and humble demeanor struck terror into the hearts of the Najranite leaders. Qurz ibn Aththal, the younger brother of Abu Harithah (the chief bishop), who had not been present for the earlier debates, arrived on the day of Mubahala. Having heard of the Prophet's (s) truthfulness, he observed the scene with growing trepidation. Their wisest scholars, including Abu Harithah himself, recognized the signs of impending divine wrath: the sun changing color, trees shriveling, birds descending and prostrating on the ground, smoke rising from mountains, and ominous dark clouds gathering in the sky—all traditional signs of divine punishment known

to the People of the Book. Abu Harithah vehemently warned his people against proceeding, declaring that if the Prophet (s) were to invoke the curse, not a single Christian in Najran would survive.

Faced with this terrifying prospect, Sayyid and Aqib, the chief Najran leaders, consulted with Qurz. He advised them to avoid the Mubahala at all costs, emphasizing that the Prophet's (s) truth was undeniable through various divine proofs and their own scriptures. He even suggested they embrace Islam for their own sake in this world and the hereafter. However, their pride and concern for their worldly status prevented an immediate conversion. Instead, they dispatched a representative to negotiate a peaceful resolution.

The Prophet (s) responded to their plea for avoidance by offering them a choice: embrace Islam, prepare for *jihad*, or pay the *Jizyah* (tribute). The Najranites chose the third option. The Prophet (s) appointed Imam Ali (a.s.) to negotiate the terms of the *Jizyah*. The agreement stipulated that the Najranites would pay 2,000 sets of clothes annually (1,000 in Safar and 1,000 in Rajab), each not exceeding 40 dirhams in value. Furthermore, in the event of an attack on Yemen, they would provide 30 horses, 30 camels, 30 shields, 30 spears, and 30 swords, all as *Ariyah Mazmoonah* (guaranteed loans), meaning they would be responsible for any loss or damage. This equitable agreement, written by Imam Ali (a.s.) and signed by the Prophet (s) and two witnesses, ensured their protection and rights within the Islamic state.

Upon returning to *Masjid al-Nabawi* after the Mubahala had been averted, the Prophet (s) raised his hands to the heavens, with his armpits clearly visible, and declared: **"O people of my household, if anyone among you fails to fulfill the duty of aiding my Prophethood, then Allah, all angels, and all prophets will curse them eternally."** He then prostrated himself in gratitude to Allah, repeating three times, **"Shukran lil Mun'im"**

(**Thank You, O Bestower of Bounties**). At that moment, Jibreel (a.s.) appeared, informing the Prophet (s) that had the Mubahala proceeded, Najran would have been utterly annihilated, just as Korah (misidentified as Harun in the transcript, but contextually referring to Korah) and his wealth were swallowed by the earth during Prophet Musa's (a.s.) time. Jibreel (a.s.) stressed that Najran was fortunate to have averted such a catastrophic divine punishment. The Prophet (s) then turned to his *Ahlul Bayt* and said, "O *Ahlul Bayt* of Prophethood! Today, Allah is boasting about you to the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth."

The events that followed further solidified the victory. Abu al-Qamah, the learned cousin of Abu Harithah, who had been an initial negotiator, was so moved by the signs and the Prophet's (s) demeanor that he immediately embraced Islam and pledged his allegiance. Another influential figure was a reclusive Najran monk who lived in a tower. Upon hearing of the Mubahala and the undeniable truth of the Prophet (s), he descended from his hermitage, declared his faith, and traveled to Medina to pledge allegiance to the Prophet (s). Though the transcript mentions that *Allamah Majlisi* stated that Aqib and Sayyid later embraced Islam and remained in Medina until their deaths, marking a complete triumph.

The Mubahala was not merely a theological debate but a profound demonstration of divine truth and the unmatched purity and spiritual authority of the *Ahlul Bayt*. This momentous event, culminating in the peaceful acceptance of *Jizyah* by the Najranites, marked a decisive victory for Islam, establishing its dominance not through force but through undeniable spiritual proof. It left an enduring legacy, reaffirming the unique status of the *Ahlul Bayt* as the torchbearers of Islamic knowledge and the embodiment of its highest spiritual principles.

Miscellaneous Inquiries from the Assembly:

Towards the end of the session, a few questions from the audience were addressed:

1. **Prayer on decorated prayer mats or carpets:** If the forehead can firmly touch the ground (on the material beneath the decorations), prayer is permissible, regardless of patterns or images on the mat or carpet. This includes traditional prayer mats or carpets from Mecca and Medina with designs.
2. **Consumption of *Nazar* (votive offerings) by men:** *Nazar* consecrated in the name of Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) or any other holy personality can be consumed by men. The permissibility depends on the owner's consent and whether the offering was prepared from *halal* earnings. There is no religious prohibition based on gender for consuming such offerings.
3. **Purity of urine and feces of a milk-fed baby:** The feces of a baby are considered impure, similar to an adult's. The urine of a baby who is only breastfed or bottle-fed (not yet eating solid food) can be purified by simply pouring water over the affected area once, without the need for squeezing or extensive washing. However, if the baby consumes solid food, their urine is treated like an adult's, requiring two rinses for purification.
4. **Fasting in a state of major impurity (*Janabah*) without *Ghusl* (ritual bath):** If a person performs their necessary *Ghusl* for major impurity or *Ghusl Jumu'ah* (Friday bath) before Fajr, their fasting is valid. However, regarding the necessity of *Wudhu* after *Ghusl* for prayer, there are differing views among prominent *Mujtahids*. Some scholars, like the late Ayatollah Khoei, Ayatollah Ruhani, and Ayatollah Sistani, permit prayer without *Wudhu* after a valid *Ghusl*. Others, like Ayatollah Golpaygani, Ayatollah Araki, and Ayatollah Khamenei, consider *Wudhu* necessary after any *Ghusl* other than *Ghusl Janabah*. These diverse opinions highlight the need for individuals to follow their

chosen *Marja' al-Taqlid*.

Chapter 177

The Prophet's Final Years of *Da'wah*: Opening the Gates to Yemen and Beyond

The unfolding of the Prophet Mohammad's (s) blessed life now entered its thirteenth year since the commencement of his mission, marked by the 180th discourse in this series. This period, the tenth year of *Hijrah*, signifies the final full year of his public life, a time dedicated to an intensified *da'wah* effort. While some events from the preceding ninth year and the beginning of the eleventh year (his illness) will also be touched upon, the tenth year of *Hijrah* is distinguished as **Aam al-Wida'**, the Year of the Farewell Pilgrimage, a pivotal period in the establishment and spread of Islam.

It is crucial to understand that the *Sirah* of the Prophet (s) is not merely a historical account of a bygone era. It is a living, breathing guide, eternally relevant for believers until the Day of Judgment. The Prophet's (s) life offers a continuous source of guidance, lessons, and messages for every moment and every individual. Unlike mere historical figures whose impact might be confined to their time, the Prophet (s) remains indispensable for humanity's salvation, especially as highlighted by the significance of

his intercession on the Day of Judgment.

Indeed, even unbiased observers from outside the Muslim faith have acknowledged the Prophet's (s) unparalleled impact. Consider the choice of Quaid-e-Azam for Lincoln's Inn for his legal studies, drawn by a list at its gate that recognized Prophet Mohammad (s) as the greatest lawgiver in human history. More significantly, Michael H. Hart, in his seminal work "The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History," placed Prophet Mohammad (s) at the very top. This was not based on religious belief, but purely on an academic assessment of his profound, lasting influence on humanity—an influence that transcended the contributions of scientists, philosophers, and rulers, who despite their brilliance, could not offer the same universal benefit to mankind that the Prophet (s) did.

This profound recognition of the Prophet's (s) enduring legacy stands in stark contrast to certain modern intellectual currents that attempt to marginalize his role or even question the authenticity of Qur'anic verses related to him. For instance, some individuals, influenced by numerical theories of the Qur'an (such as Dr. Rashad Khalifa's *'Quran-19'* theory), have gone so far as to reject portions of the Holy Qur'an, specifically **Ayah 128 of Surah At-Tawbah**, which states, "**Laqad ja'akum rasoolun min anfusikum 'azeezun 'alayhi ma 'anittum hareesun 'alaykum bil-mu'mineena ra'oofun raheem**" (Indeed, there has come to you a Messenger from yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; he is concerned over you, with the believers he is most kind and merciful). Their argument was that these verses did not fit their pre-determined numerical patterns, thus concluding they were not part of the divine text. This intellectual arrogance extends even to denying the *shahada* "Muhammadur Rasoolullah" (Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah) from the *adhan*, claiming it doesn't align with their numerical schema. Such approaches dangerously elevate computational analysis over divine revelation and

the explicit promises of Allah to elevate His Messenger's *dhikr* (remembrance), as affirmed in **Surah Ash-Sharh**: "**Alam nashrah laka sadrak? Wa wada'na 'anka wizrak? Allathee anqada zahrak? Wa rafa'na laka dhikrak?**" (Did We not expand for you, your breast? And relieve you of your burden? Which had weighed upon your back? And raised high for you your remembrance?). The very omnipresence of the *adhan* across the globe, twenty-four hours a day, reiterates the fulfillment of this divine promise, ensuring that the Prophet's (s) name is continuously proclaimed and elevated.

The final years of the Prophet's (s) life witnessed the full manifestation of his inherent eagerness and intense desire (*hareesun alaykum*) to guide all humanity to Islam. For the initial two decades of his mission, constant obstacles, persecutions from the polytheists of Makkah, relentless wars, and attacks on Medina had curtailed the full scope of his *da'wah*. However, after the pivotal victories at Khaybar, the *Fath Makkah* (Conquest of Makkah), and the breaking of the backbone of Arab paganism, the Prophet (s) finally had the opportunity to unleash the full force of his compassionate mission. The ninth and tenth years of *Hijrah* became a period of strategic, organized *da'wah* expansion across the Arabian Peninsula and beyond.

This expansion targeted various regions: * **The North (Shaam/Syria):** While the Prophet (s) himself did not enter these Christian-dominated lands, *muballighin* (preachers) were dispatched to spread Islam to its borders. * **The East (Bahrain):** Such was the success of *da'wah* in Bahrain that the first *Jumu'ah* prayer outside Medina was established there. * **The South (Oman and Yemen):** Oman readily accepted Islam. Yemen, however, held profound strategic significance. It was historically a powerful region, once ruled by Queen Bilqis, and at that time, was under the control of the Persian (Parsee) Empire. The spread of Islam into Yemen would serve as a crucial warning to the powerful Persian monarchy, signaling

that the seemingly "ordinary" Prophet (s) they had once dismissed now commanded authority over their territories.

Crucially, the path to Yemen was significantly obstructed by Najran, a prominent Christian settlement. The recent **Mubahala** event, as detailed in the previous chapters, now revealed its far-reaching, multi-dimensional impact. It was not merely a theological debate but a strategic maneuver with profound political and economic implications. The Najran Christians, by agreeing to pay *Jizyah* instead of engaging in the Mubahala, effectively opened the main trade routes to Yemen.

This opening of Yemen was monumental. From Yemen's bustling ports, Muslim traders, imbued with the spirit of Islam, ventured across the seas. This facilitated the spread of Islam to distant lands like Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Maldives, Mauritania, and Sri Lanka. These regions became Muslim not through conquest but through the sincere *da'wah* of merchants sailing from Yemeni ports. This global propagation of Islam, extending across the Indian Ocean and into Southeast Asia, owes a significant debt to the strategic opening of the Yemeni routes, which in turn was a direct consequence of the **Mubahala** and the profound spiritual authority of the ***Ahlul Bayt*** (Imam Ali (a.s.), Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), Imam Hasan (a.s.), and Imam Hussain (a.s.)) who accompanied the Prophet (s) on that momentous day. Just as the wealth of Sayyidah Khadijah (a.s.) initially sustained Islam in its early, difficult years, the **Mubahala** event, through the *Panjatan Paak*, served as the catalyst for Islam's global expansion in its later stages.

It was during this period of extensive *da'wah* and political consolidation that a significant challenge emerged: the rise of false prophets. In Yemen, during the tenth year of *Hijrah*, Musaylama, known as Musaylama the Liar, declared himself a prophet. His motivation was purely worldly. Unlike the early Muslims who endured immense hardship and sacrifice,

Musaylama observed the Prophet's (s) final years—a period of triumph, widespread respect, and immense power. He erroneously concluded that prophethood was merely a means to attain wealth, authority, and public veneration, which he believed could not be achieved through mere riches or military strength. Musaylama, being from the Banu Qahtan tribe (a rival to the Prophet's Banu Isma'il), exploited tribalistic sentiments, proclaiming, "To Banu Isma'il belongs their prophet, and to Banu Qahtan must belong their own prophet." This deceptive claim stemmed from a narrow, materialistic view of prophethood, a stark contrast to the Prophet's (s) enduring sacrifices and ultimate goal of spiritual purification and divine truth. Such was his misperception that he mirrored the later rhetoric of individuals like Yazid, who would similarly dismiss the Prophet's (s) mission as a mere quest for worldly dominion, saying, "Banu Hashim played a game for rulership; neither revelation came, nor angel descended." This insidious mindset, which dismisses the true spiritual essence of prophethood, continues to be a profound threat to the integrity of Islam, and its origins can be traced to such figures as Musaylama, who rose in the wake of Islam's worldly success, misinterpreting divine blessings for mere earthly ambition.

Chapter 178

The Tenth Year: Foundations of Succession and Confronting Hypocrisy

The tenth year of *Hijrah*, universally known as *Aam al-Wida'* (The Year of the Farewell Pilgrimage), marked a pivotal and profound phase in the life of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s). This was the year of his final Hajj, an event that would become a cornerstone of Islamic practice and a powerful stage for critical declarations. While the latter part of this year was dominated by the Farewell Pilgrimage and the momentous event of **Ghadir Khumm**, the preceding months, though devoid of major military engagements, bore witness to an intensification of the Prophet's (s) prophetic mission and a clear unfolding of his future plans.

As the Prophet's (s) blessed life neared its earthly conclusion, his focus increasingly sharpened on securing the future of Islam. This period saw simultaneous efforts on two crucial fronts: first, the Prophet (s) was meticulously preparing the ground for the designation of his protector and successor, the one who would safeguard Islam after his departure, a role destined for Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.). From the early days of *Da'wat Dhul Ashira* to the various declarations of Imam Ali's (a.s.) virtues

and excellence throughout his *Sirah*, the Prophet (s) had been subtly, and then progressively more explicitly, indicating Ali's (a.s.) unique status. Now, these allusions were transforming into clear, undeniable declarations of Ali's (a.s.) *niyabat* (vicegerency) and *Imamah*.

This clear designation brought to the fore the internal conflict within the nascent Muslim community. A notable historical group, known as the *Tafzeeliyyah*, recognized Imam Ali's (a.s.) unparalleled excellence (*tafzeel*) over all other companions but stopped short of accepting his rightful *Imamah* (divine leadership). They acknowledged the numerous narrations highlighting Ali's (a.s.) unparalleled virtues – his valor in battles like Khandaq and Khaybar, his unique position during *Da'wat Dhul Ashira*, the incident of the ring given in charity, and so on. They conceded that no one was superior to Ali (a.s.) but denied that these facts established his exclusive right to *Imamah*. This stance, regrettably, was sometimes exploited by the enemies of the *Ahlul Bayt* to dilute the significance of the Prophet's (s) explicit declarations, claiming that even those who appeared to accept Ali's (a.s.) virtue did not necessarily accept his *Imamah*. However, as the 10th *Hijri* year progressed, the Prophet's (s) statements became increasingly unambiguous, leaving no room for such interpretations. The mission of Tabuk, the delivery of **Surah At-Tawbah** by Imam Ali (a.s.), and the Mubahala event had already underscored Ali's (a.s.) unique authority; now, this clarity would only intensify.

The second crucial aspect of this year was the rapid expansion of Islam. With the removal of external obstacles—Mecca conquered in 8 AH, and Najran having submitted in 9 AH—the path was now clear for more extensive *da'wah*. The strategic opening of Yemen, a powerful region historically under Persian influence, became a paramount objective. Geographically, Yemen was strategically vital, with its maritime ports facilitating the spread of Islam to Southeast Asia. However, the path to Yemen was previously blocked by Mecca and then by the Christian stronghold of Najran.

With these barriers removed, the focus shifted to this significant territory.

Yemen presented a unique challenge. Its people, being ancient Arabs with a rich culture, advanced trade, and established monarchies (like the Queen of Sheba), held a strong sense of superiority over other Arab tribes. This inherent pride and perceived power made them resistant to accepting a new faith, particularly from a community they considered less sophisticated. Conquering this spiritual pride proved more challenging than overcoming military might or economic resistance. It was precisely because of this unique difficulty that the Prophet (s) made an exceptional decision: for the first and only time in his life, he sent Imam Ali (a.s.) as a *muballigh* (preacher) to a region for an extended period of six months. While other regions like Syria, Egypt, Abyssinia, and Bahrain received envoys from among the Prophet's (s) other companions, Yemen was reserved for Ali (a.s.), underscoring the gravity and significance of the mission. This six-month absence of Imam Ali (a.s.) from Medina also provided a fertile ground for the *munafiqin* to escalate their plots and maneuvers, preparing for the vacuum they hoped to create after the Prophet's (s) passing.

During this period, the Prophet (s) also witnessed the emergence of false claimants to prophethood, such as Musaylama in Yemen, and strategically countered their misguided ambitions. The overall situation in 10 AH thus became a summary of the Prophet's (s) final phase: clear designations of Imam Ali's (a.s.) *wilayah*, intensified propagation of Islam, and the open surfacing of the *munafiqin*'s enmity.

One of the significant events that unfolded during this time, shedding light on these themes, was the incident involving *Madi Karb*, a renowned Yemeni champion. *Madi Karb*, a giant of a man and a celebrated warrior throughout Arabia, possessed a formidable sword named ***Samsam***. Hearing of Islam's rapid spread and the submission of Mecca and Ta'if,

he came to Medina, still before the Mubahala, to assess this new religion. Upon meeting the Prophet (s), *Madi Karb*, displaying his characteristic arrogance, asked, "What benefit will this Islam bring me?"

The Prophet (s) replied, "On the ***Yawm Fath al-Akbar*** (Day of Great Terror), those who have embraced Islam will find comfort, while all others will be in distress." *Madi Karb*, misunderstanding the depth of this terror, swelled with pride. "I am a mighty warrior," he boasted, "no fear can touch me. I am ready to face any army, any number of swords." The Prophet (s) then described the true nature of the Day of Judgment. He spoke of the first trumpet blast, so terrifying that the dead would awaken, and the living would perish, save for those whom Allah willed. Then, a second blast would bring the dead back to life. He described the heavens splitting, the earth being leveled, and mountains crumbling into dust, with the flames of Hell rising as high as mountains. On that day, every soul would be so consumed by the weight of its own sins that it would not concern itself with others. The Prophet (s) explained that people would be submerged in their own sweat up to their ears. Only those upon whom Allah's special mercy descended would be spared.

Hearing this vivid description, *Madi Karb*'s bravado vanished. His chest, which had been puffed with pride, now sank, and sweat poured from his brow. Overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the Day of Judgment, he instantly accepted Islam.

However, *Madi Karb*'s conversion, though sincere in that moment of fear, was not rooted in profound understanding. Soon after leaving Medina, he encountered the man who had killed his father in the pre-Islamic era. Seizing the killer, *Madi Karb* brought him before the Prophet (s), seeking justice. He demanded *qisas* (retribution) for his father's murder, citing Islamic law of "life for life, eye for eye." The Prophet (s), upon hearing this, pronounced a fundamental principle: "***Al-Islam Yajibbu ma Qablahu***"

(Islam obliterates what came before it). He explained that if the killer had committed the act in a state of disbelief (*kufr*) and had since embraced Islam, his past sin was forgiven, and *qisas* could not be applied.

This judgment infuriated *Madi Karb*. He felt his honor was compromised and that Islam was denying him his rightful revenge. He exclaimed, "What kind of Islam is this, that denies me justice for my father?" In a fit of rage, *Madi Karb* apostatized (*murtadd*) and left Medina, rejecting a faith that he perceived as denying his honor.

Recognizing the potential for chaos and the need to uphold justice, the Prophet (s) immediately dispatched two expeditions to apprehend *Madi Karb*. He ordered one force to be led by Imam Ali (a.s.), while another was led by a different companion (whose name is not explicitly mentioned in the *Sirah* accounts, though Abu Musa Ash'ari was his deputy). The Prophet (s) specifically instructed the leader of the second force that if he received a letter from Ali (a.s.), he was to halt his advance. Imam Ali's (a.s.) force was directed towards *Madi Karb*'s main tribe, Banu Zubaid, while the other headed towards the Japi tribe.

Madi Karb, having received intelligence of his pursuit, fled to his main tribe. Imam Ali (a.s.) followed. Upon reaching the vicinity of Banu Zubaid, the tribe taunted Ali (a.s.), proclaiming *Madi Karb* as "***Abul Thawr***" (father of the bull), signifying his immense power. When *Madi Karb* emerged, Ali (a.s.) engaged him. Despite his formidable reputation, *Madi Karb* fled from the battlefield, just as Amr ibn Abd Wudd had fled from Ali (a.s.) in the Battle of Khandaq. Ali (a.s.) defeated and scattered the tribe, capturing *Madi Karb*'s wife, Ruqana, among the captives.

Imam Ali (a.s.) then appointed Khalid ibn Saeed ibn Al-Aas, a distinguished member of Banu Umayyah renowned for his unwavering devotion to Ali (a.s.), as his deputy. Ali (a.s.) instructed Khalid to offer clemency: if any member of *Madi Karb*'s fleeing tribe returned, sought

forgiveness, and embraced Islam, not only were they to be forgiven, but their property and captive women were to be returned. After giving these instructions, Imam Ali (a.s.) began his journey back to Medina.

Soon after Ali's (a.s.) departure, *Madi Karb* returned to Khalid ibn Saeed. He first displayed his strength by expertly slaughtering a camel and wielding his legendary sword ***Samsam***, demonstrating that his prowess remained undiminished. He then sought forgiveness and accepted Islam once more. In accordance with Ali's (a.s.) instructions, Khalid ibn Saeed returned *Madi Karb*'s wife and all his belongings.

However, the second commander, who had disregarded the Prophet's (s) instruction to halt, observed Imam Ali (a.s.) taking a captive woman into his own possession. As was characteristic of the *munafiqin* and those harboring ill-will towards the *Ahlul Bayt*, he immediately saw an opportunity to malign Ali (a.s.). He dispatched a letter to the Prophet (s) via Abu Buraydah al-Aslami, detailing what he considered an impropriety: Ali (a.s.) had, in his view, improperly taken a share of the *ghanimah* (spoils of war) for his personal use.

Abu Buraydah rushed back to Medina. As he approached the Prophet's (s) Mosque, he was met by a prominent *munafiq* who, upon learning of the mission, instructed Abu Buraydah to present the matter to the Prophet (s) in a way that would especially provoke his anger, by suggesting that Ali (a.s.) was disrespecting the Prophet's (s) daughter, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), by taking another woman for himself.

When Abu Buraydah presented the letter to the Prophet (s), detailing the alleged misconduct, the Prophet (s) was filled with immense wrath—not at Ali (a.s.), but at Abu Buraydah himself. The Prophet (s) sternly rebuked him, asking, "Do you not know that what is lawful for me from the spoils of war is also lawful for Ali? And remember, O Abu Buraydah, there is no one on this earth, from Adam until the Day of Judgment,

more excellent than Ali after me! And know, O Abu Buraydah, that by expressing enmity towards Ali, you have expressed enmity towards Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!"

Abu Buraydah was utterly shaken. His body trembled with fear, and he immediately sought forgiveness. The Prophet (s) accepted his repentance, confirming, "Your actions have served as your repentance. But remember, Ali is the Imam of this *Ummah* after me, and whoever raises an objection against Ali is like one who raises an objection against me." Abu Buraydah recounted leaving the Prophet's (s) presence, his face pale with shock, and relaying the Prophet's (s) furious response to the waiting *munafiq*, who then also departed in extreme distress.

This incident profoundly underscored several truths. It exposed the deep-seated hatred and jealousy that festered in the hearts of the *munafiqin* towards Imam Ali (a.s.). More importantly, it provided yet another clear, unequivocal declaration from the Prophet (s) regarding Imam Ali's (a.s.) absolute superiority and his designated *Imamah* after him. The Prophet's (s) pronouncements were no longer subtle hints but direct, undeniable statements about Ali's (a.s.) spiritual authority and his unique station as his successor.

As the Prophet (s) made these definitive pronouncements, the animosity of the *munafiqin* intensified proportionately, setting the stage for future trials. The *Sirah* reveals that many individuals who outwardly accepted Islam during the Prophet's (s) lifetime later apostatized or actively worked against the *Ahlul Bayt* after his demise. This period of intensified *da'wah* and clear declarations also revealed the true nature of faith: for some, it was a means to worldly gain or status, and they rejected it when it demanded sacrifice or went against their self-interest. For others, like *Madi Karb*, fear could induce submission, but without deeper conviction, it was easily abandoned.

The suffering endured by the *Ahlul Bayt* in the aftermath of these events would be immense. As the month of *Jamadi al-Ula* approaches, traditionally associated with the martyrdom of Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.) and the birth of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.), reflections often turn to the profound sorrows that befell the Prophet's (s) pure lineage. Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), the embodiment of purity and the continuation of the Prophet's (s) light, was said to have aged prematurely due to the immense calamities she faced after her father's passing, particularly the burning of her house and the injury to her side. Historians describe her walking with the aid of a stick even at the tender age of eighteen. Similarly, Imam Sajjad (a.s.), the fourth Imam, was marked by such profound grief after the tragedy of Karbala that he, too, appeared aged beyond his years. These sorrows, the fruit of the enmity that began to openly manifest in the Prophet's (s) final years, serve as a stark reminder of the sacrifices endured by the *Ahlul Bayt* for the preservation of Islam, a testament to their unwavering commitment despite the escalating plots of their adversaries.

Chapter 179

The Prophet's Prostration and Sayyidah Fatima's Sacred Intervention

The tenth year of *Hijrah*, revered as *Aam al-Wida'*, marked a profound shift in the Prophet Muhammad's (s) mission. With the Islamic state firmly established across the Arabian Peninsula, his focus intensified on solidifying the spiritual foundations of the *Ummah* and preparing for his inevitable departure. At approximately sixty-two years of age, the Prophet's (s) life entered its final, crucial phase. This period was also characterized by Imam Ali's (a.s.) extended six-month mission to Yemen, a strategic assignment that left Medina without his physical presence for an unprecedented duration. This prolonged absence created a unique context for several significant events, subtly underscoring the indispensable roles of the *Ahlul Bayt* in the Prophet's (s) life and the *Ummah*'s spiritual well-being.

One such poignant incident occurred during Imam Ali's (a.s.) absence. For three days, the Prophet (s) was unaccounted for in Medina. Panic began to spread among the companions as their relentless search yielded no trace. As dusk approached on the third day, a shepherd entered Med-

ina with a remarkable tale. He reported that his flock, typically grazing near Jabal Sala—a small hill close to the city—had been yielding an extraordinary abundance of milk, richer and more nourishing than ever before. The shepherd, sensing something divine, suspected the presence of a blessed soul. Upon hearing this, the companions, their hearts filled with both hope and trepidation, immediately set out towards Jabal Sala.

There, they found the Prophet (s) in a profound state of prostration, his face pressed to the earth, seemingly lost in fervent prayer. Despite their calls and pleas, he remained motionless, absorbed in his communion with Allah. Unable to stir him, and with their beloved Prophet's (s) condition causing immense concern, the companions, recognizing the unique spiritual stature of the *Ahlul Bayt*, concluded that only Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) could intercede. Salman (a.s.) was dispatched to her dwelling. Upon hearing of her father's state, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) emerged from her home—an act of extraordinary significance given her profound adherence to the principles of *hijab*—and made her way to the mountain. As soon as she called out to him, the Prophet (s) raised his head from prostration.

Tears streaming down his blessed face, the Prophet (s) explained his prolonged prostration. He had been earnestly supplicating Allah for the forgiveness and mercy of his *Ummah*. He had resolved not to raise his head until Allah granted him the glad tidings of their absolution. It was at that moment that Jibreel (a.s.) descended, confirming that Allah had accepted the Prophet's (s) prayer, bestowing His mercy upon the *Ummah* and granting the Prophet (s) the sacred ***Haqq al-Shafa'at*** (right of intercession). This moment vividly illustrated the Prophet's (s) boundless compassion for his followers, a reflection of the Qur'anic verse ***Hareesun Alaykum*** (eagerly concerned for you) from **Surah At-Tawbah, Ayah 128**, and underscored the unique privilege of the *Ahlul Bayt* in mediating between the Prophet (s) and the divine.

Soon after this, another profoundly distressing event unfolded, again during Imam Ali's (a.s.) absence. A Qur'anic *Ayah* was revealed, detailing the seven gates of Hell and their specific portions for various transgressors (**"And indeed, Hell is the promised abode for them all. It has seven gates; for every gate is a specific portion [of them]." — Surah al-Hijr, Ayah 44**). Upon this revelation, the Prophet (s) was overwhelmed with grief, his blessed eyes shedding tears for seven days, some narrations mention three days. He spoke to no one, only moving his lips for *salam* or obligatory *salat*. The companions, witnessing his profound sorrow, were again in utter despair. Once more, Salman (a.s.) bravely approached Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), informing her of her father's alarming state.

Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), ever mindful of her *hijab*, was found inside her humble dwelling, grinding flour with a hand mill. Even in that moment, her lips were moving, reciting the profound words: ***Wa ma ind Allahu khayrun wa abqa*** ("And what is with Allah is better and more lasting." — **Surah Al-Qasas, Ayah 60**). This powerful *Ayah* served as a timeless reminder that the blessings of Allah in the Hereafter are infinitely superior and everlasting compared to the transient luxuries of this world. Her simple garment, patched in twelve places with date palm leaves—a stark contrast to the lavish attire of the daughters of kings and emperors—further emphasized her profound humility and detachment from worldly comforts, despite her father being the ruler of Arabia with vast treasures at his disposal.

Upon reaching her father, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) gently inquired about his overwhelming grief. The Prophet (s), his voice heavy with sorrow, explained the revelation of Hell's seven gates. He recounted the names of the gates: Habiyah, Hutamah, Jaheem, Saqar, Lazwa, and Sa'eer. Then, with deep anguish, he revealed the fate of the seventh gate. Jibreel (a.s.) had informed him that this gate was reserved for those from his own *Ummah* who would succumb to their base desires (*shahwat al-nafs*) and

neglect their ***salat***. This was a direct reference to the Qur'anic warning in **Surah Maryam, Ayah 59**: **"But there came after them successors who neglected prayer and followed [their] desires; so they will meet evil."** Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) shrieked in despair, sharing her father's profound sorrow for the *Ummah*'s potential spiritual downfall.

These events, occurring in the 10th year of *Hijrah* during Imam Ali's (a.s.) prolonged absence, consistently highlighted Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) unique purity and her willingness to step into the public sphere only under the most dire and divinely ordained circumstances. Her emergence from the sanctified private sphere of her home was an act of profound spiritual significance, demonstrating the *Ahlul Bayt*'s collective burden and shared anguish for the *Ummah*. The sanctity of her *hijab* was paramount, so much so that even in the darkness of her mother's funeral, Imam Ali (a.s.) had extinguished a lamp to ensure no external gaze could fall upon her blessed form, emphasizing that even in the deepest night, no external light should reveal her silhouette. This unparalleled reverence for Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) veil stands in stark and painful contrast to the events of Karbala, where Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.), the daughter of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), would have her veil forcibly snatched in broad daylight by the enemies of Islam, a tragedy that would cause her a suffering akin to a fish out of water. This profound commitment to the sanctity of *hijab* by the *Ahlul Bayt* was a constant lesson for the *Ummah*, demonstrating that certain circumstances may necessitate deviation from typical norms, but only when divinely mandated or facing extreme duress, as in the case of ***Jihad***, where even the laws of *salat* are altered.

Meanwhile, Imam Ali's (a.s.) mission in Yemen continued to unfold. Months prior, another renowned companion had been sent to Yemen to propagate Islam but had met with consistent failure, unable to convert a single individual. The Prophet (s) then appointed Imam Ali (a.s.), instructing him not to engage in warfare unless absolutely necessary, em-

phasizing that converting one soul through *da'wah* was far superior to any worldly gain. Upon Imam Ali's (a.s.) arrival, on his very first day, the entire powerful Banu Hamdan tribe—a central and influential family in Yemen—accepted Islam. Overjoyed by this unprecedented success, the Prophet (s) performed two *sajdat al-shukr* (prostrations of gratitude), a practice that some scholars trace back to this very moment. The Banu Hamdan tribe became a staunch bastion of *Ahlul Bayt* love, enduring through generations, producing devoted figures like Harith Hamdani, to whom Imam Ali (a.s.) famously declared, "O Harith Hamdani, whoever dies sees me, be he a believer or a disbeliever." This remarkable triumph in Yemen further affirmed Imam Ali's (a.s.) unparalleled spiritual authority, leadership, and efficacy as a *muballigh*, clearly demonstrating his divine suitability to lead the *Ummah* after the Prophet's (s) eventual departure.

Chapter 180

Imam Ali's Mission to Yemen and the Prophet's Final Affirmations

The tenth year of *Hijrah*, *Aam al-Wida'*, continued to unfold with events that further cemented the spiritual and political landscape of the nascent Islamic state. As the Prophet Mohammad (s) continued to prepare his *Ummah* for his approaching departure from this world, he undertook critical measures, one of the most significant being the extended mission of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) to Yemen. This six-month period of Imam Ali's (a.s.) absence from Medina proved profoundly significant, as it was during this time that certain elements within the *Ummah* began to reveal their true inclinations, both in support and opposition to the Prophet's (s) chosen successor.

Yemen, a vital region in the Arabian Peninsula, was known for its cultured and intellectual populace, receptive to logic and reason. While previous attempts at *da'wah* had been made, notably by Khalid ibn Walid for six months with little success, it was Imam Ali (a.s.) who was destined to open this land to the light of Islam. The Prophet (s) orchestrated Imam Ali's (a.s.) departure with a profound solemnity, underscoring the mon-

umental importance of this mission. He did not merely dispatch a letter or an instruction; instead, he accompanied Imam Ali (a.s.) on foot for three miles from Medina to Quba, which served as the gathering point for the three hundred soldiers accompanying Ali (a.s.). This heartfelt farewell was a poignant mirror image of the *Hijrah* itself, where the Prophet (s) had awaited Imam Ali (a.s.) at Quba before entering Medina. At Quba, in a symbolic gesture of profound significance, the Prophet (s) removed his own *Imamah* (turban) and placed it upon Imam Ali's (a.s.) head, including its *tahthul hanaq* (the part that hangs down), establishing a *sunnah* for generations to come.

As Imam Ali (a.s.) prepared for his mission, the Prophet (s) formally appointed him as the *wali* (governor), *qadi* (judge), and *hakim* (ruler) of Yemen. The Prophet (s) imparted crucial guidance, stressing the profound merit of *da'wah*: "O Ali, remember that if a single person is guided through you, it is better than all that the sun rises and sets upon." He instructed Ali (a.s.) to establish *salat* (daily prayers) as obligatory once a person embraced Islam, collect *zakat* from their wealth, and distribute *khums* from war spoils. Crucially, he advised Ali (a.s.) on judicial matters: "**O Ali, when a case comes to you, do not make a decision until you hear from both parties.**" This fundamental principle of justice was emphasized as paramount.

Despite the divine affirmation and profound wisdom, Imam Ali (a.s.), in his characteristic humility, expressed a slight apprehension. He observed that his age was comparatively young, and there were many senior and experienced companions present in Medina, wondering if people in Yemen might question his authority due to his youth. In response, the Prophet (s) placed his blessed hand upon Imam Ali's (a.s.) chest and prayed: "**Allahumma ihdi qalbahu wa saddid lisanahu**" (O Allah, guide his heart and make his tongue firm and correct) and in another narration, "**Allahumma thabbit lisanahu wa ihdi qalbahu**" (O Allah, make

his tongue firm and guide his heart). Imam Ali (a.s.) would later affirm that after this prayer, he never once felt any doubt or confusion in any judgment he made. This moment served as a vital lesson for the *Ummah*: while divine prayer is potent, it must be accompanied by diligent action and adherence to principles. The Prophet (s) subtly affirmed that true leadership and wisdom are not solely bound by age but by divine guidance and inherent competence, a principle that contrasted with the later misinterpretations within the *Ummah* regarding seniority in leadership.

Upon entering Yemen, Imam Ali (a.s.) demonstrated the spiritual authority bestowed upon him. As his army approached, he addressed the very landscape, proclaiming, "**O trees, O sand dunes, O earth, peace be upon you from the Messenger of Allah!**" The aggressive tribal leaders who had initially displayed their weapons, preparing for confrontation, were miraculously overwhelmed. They came forward, fell at Imam Ali's (a.s.) feet, and embraced Islam through his ***da'wah***. This spiritual triumph led to the immediate conversion of the entire Banu Hamdan tribe on his first day, prompting the Prophet (s) in Medina to perform two *sajdat al-shukr* (prostrations of gratitude).

Imam Ali (a.s.) then began his administrative and judicial duties. Soon, a complex case arose. A man's horse had tragically trampled and killed a person from another tribe. The aggrieved party sought *diyat* (blood money). Imam Ali (a.s.), after hearing both sides, ruled that if the horse's owner had not been negligent in securing the animal (meaning he had tied it in the customary manner, and it had unexpectedly broken free), he was not liable for the *diyat*. The deceased was considered to have died in an accident and would receive full reward in the Hereafter. This just ruling, based on the principle of absence of negligence, was accepted by the horse owner's tribe but angered the deceased's tribe, who formed a delegation and traveled to Medina to complain to the Prophet (s), accusing Ali (a.s.) of injustice.

The Prophet (s) received the delegation in Medina and, to their astonishment and to the entire *Ummah*'s clear understanding, publicly declared: "**Inna Aliyyan laysa bizallamin wa ma yakhluqu 'Aliyun bizulmin wal hukmu hukmuhu wal qawlu qawluhu la yuraddu hukmuhu wa la qawluhu wa la qada'uhu illa kaafirun wa la yarzahu bi hukmihi wa qawlihi wa qada'ihi illa mu'minun**" (Indeed, Ali is not a wrongdoer, and Allah has not created Ali for injustice. His judgment is His judgment, and His word is His word. None rejects his judgment, his word, or his decree except a disbeliever. And none is pleased with his judgment, his word, and his decree except a believer.) Overwhelmed by this unequivocal divine affirmation of Imam Ali's (a.s.) flawless justice and *wilayah*, the complainants repented, and the Prophet (s) accepted their repentance, stating that their acknowledgment of Ali's (a.s.) truth was sufficient expiation for their error. This incident, publicized widely in Medina, served to solidify Imam Ali's (a.s.) unique and divinely ordained position.

Another incident during this period involved Omar ibn Sha'f, who had initially served with Khalid ibn Walid in Yemen and later with Imam Ali (a.s.). Displeased with Imam Ali's (a.s.) distribution of wealth from war spoils, *khums*, and *zakat*—as Yemen was a prosperous region yielding significant income—he returned to Medina and began to speak ill of Ali (a.s.). One day, as the Prophet (s) was walking to the *mihrab* for prayer, he paused near Omar ibn Sha'f and publicly declared, "**Ya Umar ibn Sha'f laqad aazaytani**" (O Umar ibn Sha'f, you have hurt me greatly). When Omar expressed dismay, protesting his loyalty, the Prophet (s) clarified, "**Qad aaza Aliyyan wa man aaza Aliyyan faqad aazani**" (You have hurt Ali, and whoever hurts Ali has hurt me). This explicit statement once again underscored the inseparable bond between the Prophet (s) and Imam Ali (a.s.) and warned against any antagonism towards Ali (a.s.).

Later, during the distribution of spoils from a battle in Yemen where twenty enemy combatants were slain by Imam Ali (a.s.) and his forces, a seem-

ingly pious man—gaunt from excessive worship and fasting, with a long beard—stood up and brazenly challenged the Prophet (s), saying, "**Itta qillah ya Rasul Allah!**" (Fear Allah, O Messenger of Allah!), accusing him of injustice in the distribution. Though outwardly appearing to embody peak piety and austerity, this man's underlying malice was revealed. The Prophet (s) did not punish him immediately. Instead, he prophesied about his progeny: "From the progeny of this man will emerge a nation. You will consider your prayers and fasts insignificant compared to theirs. They will recite the Qur'an, but it will not go beyond their throats. They will exit Islam as an arrow leaves the bow, never to return. They will be the greatest enemies of my brother Ali." This chilling prophecy vividly described the future *Khawarij*, who would later emerge as a formidable and outwardly pious but internally misguided force, fiercely opposing Imam Ali (a.s.). The Prophet (s) did not execute the man, partly to avoid the calumny that he killed his own followers, and also out of respect for his apparent devotion in *salat*, though it was a *salat* devoid of true understanding.

The gravity of events further escalated after the Prophet's (s) passing. While many of the *Ummah* remained passive or silent, those who had harbored ill will made their move. Concerned that their conspicuous absence from the Prophet's (s) funeral and burial might draw public scrutiny, some individuals plotted a shocking act: they intended to exhume the blessed body of Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.), claiming it was to perform a public *salat al-janazah* and re-bury her with full public rites, even preparing a canopy over the grave and summoning pious women to perform the exhumation.

When news of this reached Imam Ali (a.s.), he reacted with an unprecedented display of righteous fury, a rage never before seen in him, nor after this event. He emerged from his home in his everyday clothes, his collar open, sleeves rolled up, barefoot, with foam at his mouth, and the

Zulfiqar—his mighty sword—drawn in his hand for the first time since the Prophet's (s) demise. He strode to Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) freshly dug grave and sat beside it, his ***Zulfiqar*** pointed menacingly. With a roar, he declared, "**Beware! Let no one dare touch this grave. If anyone tries to dig this grave, my sword will not stop until I finish the work. The covenant I made with the Messenger of Allah does not include this.**" Witnessing his terrifying wrath, the onlookers recoiled in fear. The attempt to desecrate Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) grave was averted, preserved by the raw, divinely sanctioned power of Imam Ali (a.s.). This event underscores the immense trials faced by the *Ahlul Bayt* and their unwavering commitment to protect the sacred, serving as a poignant reminder of the enduring struggles for truth and justice throughout history.

Chapter 181

The Prophet's Final Directives: Cultivating Love and Shunning Oppression

The tenth year of *Hijrah* dawned, a year destined to be momentous, marking the Prophet Mohammad's (s) sixty-third year of blessed life. This period brought with it the culmination of divine legislation, signaling the nearing completion of the sacred *Sharia* that would reach its zenith with the proclamation of *Ghadir Khumm* later that year. Beyond the formal completion of laws, this era profoundly emphasized the intricate fabric of Islamic society, highlighting the critical importance of interpersonal relations, the cultivation of compassion, and the absolute rejection of oppression in all its forms.

The Prophet (s) continued to impress upon his *Ummah* the sanctity of mutual respect and love among believers. He repeatedly warned against actions that sow discord, such as backbiting (*gheebat*) and slander, which he equated with consuming the flesh of one's deceased brother. Instead, he championed the exchange of gifts (*tohfa*) as a powerful means to nurture affection and strengthen bonds. Yet, he clarified that the most profound gift one could bestow upon another was the gift of guidance (*hidayat*) –

a piece of knowledge that illuminates the path to the Hereafter and facilitates ease in the eternal life.

A poignant illustration of these teachings unfolded during this period through the remarkable story of Bilal al-Habashi. Following a battle where Bilal had captured a woman named Jumana, he developed an affection for her and desired to marry her. However, during the return journey to Medina, Jumana managed to free herself, attacked Bilal with a dagger while he was unprepared, and left him for dead, taking her ornaments and escaping to a tribe led by a man named Shahab, whom she subsequently married.

When Bilal was found, severely wounded and at the brink of death, he was brought before the Prophet (s). Upon seeing Bilal's condition, the Prophet (s) performed two units of *salat* and, with his blessed hands, applied the soil of Medina directly to Bilal's wounds, healing him instantaneously. Bilal rose as if from peaceful slumber, completely healed, with no trace of injury, weakness, or blood loss. This miraculous healing underscored the divine power accompanying the Prophet (s) and the sanctity of the blessed soil, hinting at a profound connection that would later resonate with the sacred earth of Karbala.

Subsequently, Jumana and Shahab were captured. To the astonishment of many, when Bilal was asked about Jumana, he expressed his willingness to forgive her. He stated that since both Jumana and Shahab had accepted Islam, they were now his Muslim brothers and sisters, and he would not pursue his personal right to her, even though she had nearly killed him and stolen his possessions. This extraordinary act of self-sacrifice, prioritizing the unity and honor of the Muslim community over personal injury and proprietary claims, profoundly pleased the Prophet (s). He declared that Bilal's act had earned him such immense pleasure from Allah, perhaps even more than years of worship, because it demonstrated a

supreme commitment to the rights and dignity of a fellow believer. This incident taught the *Ummah* that true piety often lies in transcending personal grievances for the sake of Allah's pleasure and the collective harmony of society, reminding believers that sometimes relinquishing one's rightful claim for the greater good is a superior act of *taqwa*.

This principle extended to the broader societal framework. The Prophet (s) highlighted the importance of *Amr bil Ma'ruf* (enjoining good) and *Nahi anil Munkar* (forbidding evil). While both are crucial, he emphasized that when faced with a choice between performing a *wajib* (obligatory) act and avoiding a *haram* (forbidden) one, avoiding the *haram* often takes precedence, especially when it involves preserving the dignity and rights of others or avoiding discord. This is consistent with the Qur'anic emphasis on avoiding sins being even more prevalent than the mention of rewards for good deeds, stressing the prevention of corruption.

The Prophet (s) further deepened the spiritual understanding of his followers by dedicating specific attention to the sacred month of Sha'ban. He repeatedly referred to Sha'ban as "my month," urging believers to respect it as they would the months of Rajab and Ramadan. He expressed concern that this crucial month might be overlooked between the sanctity of Rajab (associated with Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.)) and Ramadan (the month of the Qur'an). He stressed that Sha'ban is not a month for rest or laxity, but a time of intensified spiritual effort. He particularly emphasized the first day of Sha'ban, stating that any good deed performed on this day, no matter how small or seemingly ordinary—such as respecting parents, paying a debt, expressing love for Imam Ali (a.s.), or enjoining good—could lead to profound blessings and even miracles, as it had for individuals during his own lifetime. He described how branches from Paradise (*thawab*) and Hell (*zukhkhum*) extend to the world in Sha'ban, pulling people towards good or evil based on their actions, urging believers to cling to the branch of good.

The uncompromising stance against oppression was exemplified by the teachings of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.), the sixth Imam, whose directives illuminated the profound meaning of aiding a *zalim* (tyrant or oppressor). Safwan al-Jammal, a prominent camel owner and a companion of the Imam, rented his camels to Caliph Harun al-Rashid for his journey to Mecca. Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) advised Safwan to cease this business, explaining that even the slightest cooperation with a tyrant, such as merely wishing for his safe return so that the rented camels might also return, constituted a form of assistance to his oppression. Safwan, understanding the gravity of the Imam's words, immediately liquidated his highly profitable business, demonstrating the profound spiritual sensitivity required to truly disassociate from oppression.

The concept of a *zalim*, the Imam clarified, extends far beyond tyrannical rulers. A *zalim* is anyone who transgresses Allah's laws, violates the rights of others, or causes injustice. This includes a father who oppresses his children, a husband who degrades his wife, a leader who misuses his authority, or even an individual who allows the *Qur'an* to be disrespected in a *masjid* for a trivial matter. The Imam (a.s.) taught that merely having the thought of a *zalim*'s well-being, even for a personal benefit, can be deeply displeasing to Allah. Therefore, believers are called to not only avoid direct support for oppression but also to foster a purity of intention and action that detaches them from any form of complicity or even silent approval. The ultimate goal is to align one's entire being with Allah's pleasure, even if it means foregoing material gains or personal rights, for the sake of the spiritual integrity of the *Ummah* and the individual.

Chapter 182

The Tenth Year: Imam Ali's Mission to Yemen and the Unveiling of Divine Authority

The tenth year of *Hijrah*, known as *Aam al-Wida'* (the Year of Farewell), commenced with a profound shift in the Prophet's (s) divine mission. This year would culminate in his final Hajj and, critically, the pivotal declaration at Ghadir Khumm. Throughout these twelve months, the Prophet's (s) preparations for his impending departure from this world intensified, focusing on securing the future of Islam through the appointment of a guardian and successor. His earlier, more implicit allusions to Imam Ali's (a.s.) virtues (*fada'il*) now transitioned into increasingly explicit declarations of his *niyabat* (vicegerency) and *Imamah*.

This period also exposed the machinations of the *munafiqin* (hypocrites) with greater clarity. As the Prophet (s) made his intentions regarding succession more transparent, the opposition to Imam Ali's (a.s.) divine authority grew bolder. The emergence of the *Firqa-e-Tafziliyyah* (Sect of Prioritization) exemplified this challenge. This group, while acknowl-

edging Imam Ali's (a.s.) unparalleled excellence and superiority, controversially rejected his right to *Imamah*, thereby providing a convenient justification for those who sought to undermine his legitimate claim. This selective acceptance of virtues while denying inherent authority became a tool for the enemies of the *Ahlul Bayt*. Yet, the Prophet (s) continued to dismantle all obstacles to Islam's complete establishment, strategically focusing his efforts on new territories.

One such critical region was Yemen, which, despite its proximity, had remained largely untouched by direct Islamic *da'wah* due to the preceding dominance of Mecca and Najran. With Mecca's conquest in 8 AH and Najran's submission in 9 AH (following the **Mubahala** event), the path to Yemen was finally clear. The people of Yemen, being original Arabs with an ancient, established culture, trade, and even a monarchy (like the Queen of Sheba), held a sense of superiority over other Arab tribes. This perceived cultural and intellectual preeminence made them particularly resistant to external influence, posing a unique challenge to the spread of Islam.

Recognizing the immense difficulty and significance of this mission, the Prophet (s) chose Imam Ali (a.s.) as the lead *muballigh* (preacher) for Yemen. This decision followed a pattern observed in earlier critical moments, such as the **Da'wat Dhul Ashira** and the **Battle of Khandaq**, where Imam Ali (a.s.) was ultimately chosen after others had been given a chance to prove themselves or had been unable to fulfill the task. This was one of the rare occasions when Imam Ali (a.s.) was absent from Medina for an extended period (six months), leaving the *munafiqin* an opportunity to further their conspiracies.

A significant event during this period was the arrival of *Madi Karb*, a legendary Yemeni warrior renowned for his strength and his unique sword, *Samsam*. Drawn by the rapid spread of Islam and the humbling of Mecca

and Hunayn, *Madi Karb* came to Medina to inquire about the benefits of embracing this new faith. The Prophet (s), in response, did not speak of worldly gains, but instead described the profound terror of ***Yawm al-Fadh al-Akbar*** (the Day of Greatest Calamity) – the Day of Judgment.

The Prophet's (s) description of that day was utterly terrifying: when the first trumpet would be blown, all the dead would be resurrected, while all the living would die; then, upon the second blast, all would be resurrected again. He depicted the heavens tearing apart, the earth splitting open, mountains crumbling to dust, and the towering flames of Hell. On that day, every soul would be so consumed by the dread of its own sins that it would have no thought for another. Sweat would pour from every individual, submerging them to their earlobes. Only those upon whom Allah's special mercy descended would be spared. This vivid and harrowing portrayal of the Day of Judgment profoundly shook *Madi Karb*, who, despite his physical prowess, was overwhelmed by fear and immediately embraced Islam.

However, the trial for *Madi Karb* had only just begun. Soon after his conversion, as he was leaving Medina, he encountered his father's killer. Filled with rage, *Madi Karb* seized the man and brought him before the Prophet (s), demanding *qisas* (retribution) for his father's murder. The Prophet (s) delivered a fundamental principle of Islam: all sins committed in a state of *kufr* (disbelief) are completely forgiven upon sincere conversion to Islam. Therefore, since the killer had now embraced Islam, *Madi Karb* could not seek *qisas* for a past act committed by him in *kufr*. This ruling deeply offended *Madi Karb*'s tribal honor. Believing his dignity diminished, he apostatized and left Medina, vowing to attack the killer's tribe.

Upon hearing of *Madi Karb*'s apostasy and intent to harm, the Prophet (s) swiftly dispatched two contingents. One was placed under the command

of Imam Ali (a.s.), with Khalid ibn Saeed ibn Al-Aas as his deputy, and tasked to pursue *Madi Karb*. The other contingent was sent under a different commander, with Abu Musa al-Ash'ari as deputy, with instructions to halt their advance if they received a letter from Imam Ali (a.s.).

Imam Ali (a.s.) and his contingent tracked *Madi Karb* to his tribe, Banu Zubayd. Before Imam Ali (a.s.) reached them, *Madi Karb*, in an act of defiant strength, demonstrated his prowess by cleaving all four legs of a camel with a single blow of his sword, *Samsam*, intending to convey that his flight was not out of cowardice but due to the unparalleled strength of his opponent, Imam Ali (a.s.). Nevertheless, when Imam Ali (a.s.) confronted him, *Madi Karb* again fled in terror. Imam Ali (a.s.) and his forces prevailed over the tribe. Following the battle, Imam Ali (a.s.) instructed his deputy, Khalid ibn Saeed ibn Al-Aas (a member of the Banu Umayyah who was profoundly devoted to the *Ahlul Bayt*), to show exceptional mercy to any who returned seeking forgiveness and conversion. Khalid (a.s.) generously returned their wealth and freed their captives, including *Madi Karb*'s wife, upon their re-conversion.

As Imam Ali (a.s.) prepared to return to Medina, a major conspiracy unfolded. The commander of the second contingent, who had disregarded the Prophet's (s) instruction to follow Ali's (a.s.) orders, sent a message to the Prophet (s) via Abu Buraydah al-Aslami. This message falsely accused Imam Ali (a.s.) of taking a captive woman from the spoils of war for his personal use. A *munafiq* further instigated Abu Buraydah, urging him to frame the accusation in a way that would provoke the Prophet's (s) anger, implying Ali's (a.s.) action somehow slighted his daughter, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.).

When Abu Buraydah presented this distorted report, the Prophet (s) was filled with intense anger, a rare display of divine wrath. He emphatically declared, "O Abu Buraydah! Do you not know that whatever is lawful

for me in terms of war spoils is also lawful for Ali? And remember, from Adam until the Day of Judgment, there is no one in my *Ummah* more excellent than Ali after me! And remember, O Abu Buraydah, that you have displayed enmity towards Ali, and whoever shows enmity towards Ali, Allah, the Almighty, becomes their enemy!" Abu Buraydah was so struck by the Prophet's (s) words that he instantly regretted his action, seeking forgiveness, which was accepted. The Prophet (s) further emphasized that Ali (a.s.) was the *Imam* of this *Ummah* after him, and to challenge Ali (a.s.) was tantamount to challenging the Prophet (s) himself. This powerful defense unequivocally affirmed Imam Ali's (a.s.) unparalleled status and divine authority, revealing the deep-seated hatred of the *munafiqin*.

Imam Ali (a.s.) was subsequently sent back to Yemen for an extended mission, where he was explicitly designated as the *Imam* and given authority over matters such as inheritance where no rightful heir existed. The Prophet (s) advised him to disregard the criticisms of the people, emphasizing his divine mandate.

The chapter concludes with a profound spiritual reflection on the immense suffering endured by the *Ahlul Bayt*, particularly Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.) and Imam Ali ibn al-Hussain (a.s.), Imam Sajjad. These two noble souls are described as the most sorrowful individuals in all creation, bearing such heavy burdens that they aged prematurely. Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), at the tender age of eighteen, was so broken by grief and hardship that she walked with the aid of a staff. The historians recount her daily ritual of mourning her father at *Bayt al-Ahzan* (House of Sorrows) outside Medina, beneath a palm tree. Even after her place of solace was destroyed, she continued her daily mourning under the scorching sun. The narrative reaches a heartbreaking crescendo with the description of the Prophet (s) weeping profusely as he performed the *ghusl* (ritual bath) for his beloved daughter after her passing, discovering the

deep, unhealed wounds on her side from the lashing she had received. This poignant detail underscores the unparalleled suffering of the *Ahlul Bayt*, linking it directly to the injustices and atrocities they endured for the sake of Islam, a testament to their unwavering sacrifice and love for Allah.

Chapter 183

Triumph, Trials, and the Blessed Birth of Imam Hussain (a.s.)

The tenth year of *Hijrah*, known as *Aam al-Wida'*, marked a profound shift in the unfolding narrative of Islam. As the Prophet Mohammad (s) entered his sixty-third year, the divine promise began to manifest with unprecedented clarity. The revelation of **Surah An-Nasr** (***Iza jaa'a nasrullahi wal fath*** – **"When there comes the help of Allah and the victory"**) heralded an era where people would enter the religion of Allah in droves, not in trickles. This was the culmination of twenty-three years of tireless effort, countless sacrifices, and unwavering perseverance—a stark contrast to the early days when proclaiming "Allah is One" could lead to severe persecution. This period was a testament to the fact that divine success is not an instant button-press but the fruit of patient, relentless struggle, even in the face of despair and overwhelming odds. The message was clear: stay steadfast in your purpose, and Allah's help will surely come, turning the tide of opposition into tides of conversion.

As Islam's triumph became undeniable, a peculiar challenge arose: the emergence of false prophets. Witnessing the Prophet's (s) immense pop-

ularity and the rapid spread of his message, individuals driven by worldly ambition or deep-seated envy began to claim prophethood for themselves, believing they could replicate his success by mere declaration. This period, particularly the 9th and 10th years of *Hijrah*, saw the rise of figures such as Musaylima al-Kadhdhab (the Liar) and Sajah, among others. These imposters, often with seemingly pious pasts, sought to exploit the burgeoning faith for personal gain. Musaylima, a man of considerable age and influence from Yamamah, a region connected to Yemen, was among the most prominent. He arrived in Medina as part of a delegation from Banu Hanifa, and even as his companions entered the Prophet's (s) mosque to declare their faith, Musaylima feigned dedication to their belongings, remaining outside. When the Prophet (s) learned of his supposed diligence, he sent him a gift, acknowledging his service. This act of grace, however, was twisted by Musaylima, who began to claim that the Prophet (s) recognized his prophethood, citing the gift as proof. He even dared to suggest a partnership in prophethood, failing to grasp that divine revelation is not a political negotiation.

The Prophet (s) confronted Musaylima, holding a dry date stalk and declaring that if Musaylima sought a share in his authority based on such a condition, he would not even give him that stalk. Islam, the Prophet (s) affirmed, was to be accepted without conditions or worldly stipulations. Later, a bizarre alliance formed between Musaylima and Sajah, a female claimant to prophethood, culminating in a peculiar marriage. As *mahr* (dowry) for their union, Musaylima, the "prophet," "forgave" two daily prayers—Fajr (dawn) and Maghrib (sunset)—for his followers, reducing the obligatory five to three.

This act highlighted a fundamental distinction between true and false prophethood. A false prophet, seeking ease and worldly popularity, reduces religious obligations and offers deceptive "gifts" of convenience. In stark contrast, the true Prophet of Allah, during his ascension (Mi-

raj), brought the ultimate gift from Allah: the institution of the five daily prayers. Moreover, a profound event on the 3rd of Sha'ban, the birth of Imam Hussain (a.s.), further underscored this divine truth. Upon receiving the joyous news of Imam Hussain's (a.s.) birth, the Prophet (s) performed a prayer of gratitude. It was then that a divine command came to him: in gratitude for the arrival of Hussain, the very preserver of *salat*, the *rak'at* (units) of the daily prayers would be increased—from two to four for Dhuhr, Asr, and Isha, and from two to three for Maghrib. Thus, while a false prophet reduced *salat*, the true Prophet, in celebration of a divine gift, *increased* it, demonstrating that true gratitude and devotion lie in deeper communion with Allah, not in seeking ease. This emphasized Imam Hussain's (a.s.) pivotal role in preserving *salat* and, by extension, the very essence of Islam.

The Prophet (s) continuously taught the *Ummah* that true joy and gratitude for divine blessings must be expressed through increased devotion and submission to Allah, particularly through *salat*. Unlike worldly celebrations that often involve music and frivolity, Islamic tradition emphasizes *salat* as the ultimate expression of thanksgiving. *Salat* is not a burden, but a direct, accessible means of meeting Allah. Just as Imam Hussain (a.s.) would later sacrifice everything to preserve *salat* and guide humanity from *jahiliyyah* (ignorance), his birth itself was linked to its strengthening.

The Prophet's (s) life was a living embodiment of the Qur'an's teachings and *akhlaq*. Even in his final years, his concern for his *Ummah* and his selfless service remained paramount. It was his practice to carry food and provisions on his blessed shoulders in the dark of night, delivering them to the poor and needy without revealing his identity, thus preserving their dignity. One poignant incident further illustrates his profound justice and compassion. A woman, desperate to save her husband from a death sentence due to an unpaid *diyat* (blood money) in a complex case,

approached the Prophet (s). He instructed her to seek help from one of four types of individuals: a noble (in lineage), a just ruler, a handsome person, or a devout worshipper. As the woman pondered, the Prophet (s) revealed that all these qualities resided in himself, and he himself would provide the necessary *diyat*. This act not only saved a life but profoundly demonstrated his ultimate authority, justice, and compassion.

The narrative of Imam Hussain's (a.s.) life is inextricably linked to guiding humanity from *jahiliyyah*. He did not simply impart knowledge but engaged people at their level, drawing them in through questions and dialogue, subtly leading them to the truth. His very existence was meant to awaken souls from ignorance and direct them towards Allah's path.

The birth of Imam Hussain (a.s.) on 3rd Sha'ban was a momentous occasion, yet it also carried a poignant prophecy. While Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) was pregnant with Imam Hussain (a.s.), she noticed that the *nur* (light) emanating from her womb was brighter than that of Imam Hasan (a.s.). When she expressed her concern to her father, the Prophet (s) revealed that this was because Imam Hussain's (a.s.) *nur* was not alone; it was accompanied by the *nur* of the nine Imams who would descend from his lineage. This made his arrival a celebration of the continuation of divine guidance until the Day of Judgment.

The Prophet's (s) joy at Hussain's birth was immense, yet it was tinged with sorrow. As Gabriel (a.s.) descended, conveying Allah's congratulations, he also brought the devastating prophecy of Karbala. The Prophet (s) looked at his newborn grandson, then wept, foretelling that this beloved child would be slaughtered, hungry and thirsty, and would witness the bodies of his own children and companions scattered around him. Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), overwhelmed, asked who would be there to help him. The Prophet (s) revealed that neither he, nor Imam Ali (a.s.), nor Imam Hasan (a.s.), nor she, would be present. It was a heart-wrenching prophecy

of ultimate sacrifice, a testament to the profound suffering that the *Ahlul Bayt* would endure for the preservation of Islam and the guidance of humanity.

Chapter 184

The Great Deceiver: Prophecies of Dajjal and the Island Enigma

The tenth year of *Hijrah*, the final year of the Prophet's (s) blessed life, unfolded with a profound emphasis on the future of his *Ummah*. With Islam's external threats largely subdued, the focus shifted to safeguarding the burgeoning Muslim community from internal perils and the challenges that would arise in the distant future, particularly in the end times. The Prophet (s), whose age had now reached sixty-two years, dedicated much of his attention to preparing his followers for these impending trials.

A significant theme that permeated the Prophet's (s) sermons and teachings during this pivotal year was the pervasive danger of *Dajjal*. The Arabic term *Dajjal* (□□□□□□□) signifies a great deceiver or a supreme fraud. The Prophet (s) spoke at length about *Dajjal*, warning his companions, not because *Dajjal* was an immediate threat to the Muslims of Medina, but because he was destined to appear in the latter days, presenting the ultimate test to human faith. This constant emphasis, however, inadvertently led to some confusion among the contemporary Muslims. The frequent

mention of *Dajjal* made many believe his arrival was imminent, leading to an atmosphere of heightened vigilance and, at times, misidentification. This phenomenon mirrored a deeper spiritual lesson, a warning for those awaiting the *Imam Zaman* in later eras: that excessive anticipation, if misguided, could lead to either blind allegiance to false claimants or an overly cautious skepticism that rejects the true guide.

In this context, the Prophet (s) recited **Ayah 89 of Surah al-Baqarah**: **"And when there came to them a Book from Allah, confirming that which was with them—although before they used to pray for victory over those who disbelieved—but when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it. So the curse of Allah is upon the disbelievers."** This verse, originally revealed concerning the Jews who had awaited the final Prophet yet disbelieved upon his arrival, served as a potent admonition. It highlighted how those who most eagerly await a divine manifestation could become its staunchest enemies if their expectations or intentions were flawed.

To clarify the nature of *Dajjal*, the Prophet (s) provided specific characteristics. He revealed that before the "great *Dajjal*" (al-Dajjal al-Akbar or al-Dajjal al-A'war, meaning the one-eyed *Dajjal*), there would appear around thirty other deceivers, some claiming prophethood, like Musaylama al-Kadhdhab. The true *Dajjal*, he explained, would be recognizable by numerous signs: he would be one-eyed; born with unusually large teeth; originate from a Jewish household, to Jewish parents who had been childless for thirty years prior to his birth. His mother would be notably plump. He would be an only child. His face would be repulsive and a cause of revulsion, yet he would use alluring women and captivating music to ensnare people, a timeless strategy of deception where superficial allure cloaks profound falsehood. The Prophet (s) also stated that *Dajjal*'s eyes might appear to sleep, but his heart would remain awake, granting him a deceptive form of awareness. He would travel the entire

world with supernatural speed, his destructive influence reaching every city except the sacred confines of Mecca and Medina.

A notable incident unfolded when reports reached Medina of a peculiar Jewish boy residing outside the city, who seemed to embody many of *Dajjal*'s described characteristics. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, a devoted companion, along with others, went to investigate. They found the boy's mother, whose physical appearance matched the Prophet's (s) description. She confirmed he was her only son, born after thirty barren years. Upon seeing the child, named Ibn Sayyad, they observed his prominent teeth and a general appearance that was far from appealing.

The Prophet (s) himself, accompanied by some companions including Umar, decided to test Ibn Sayyad. The Prophet (s) concealed a specific verse in his heart, **"Yawma ta'tees-sama'u bi Dukhanim Mubeen"** (**"The Day the sky will produce a visible smoke" – Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayah 10**). When asked to reveal what the Prophet (s) had conceived, Ibn Sayyad only uttered the word "Dukhan" (smoke). The Prophet (s) immediately recognized this as a form of *kahana* (soothsaying), wherein *shayateen* (devils) relay partial truths overheard from the heavens to certain individuals, mixing them with falsehoods. Such partial knowledge, the Prophet (s) clarified, was a means of deception and not true divine revelation.

Umar, overcome with emotion, sought permission to kill Ibn Sayyad. However, the Prophet (s) forbade it, explaining that if the boy truly was *Dajjal*, he could not be killed by human hands, as his appearance was ordained for a specific time in the future. And if he was not *Dajjal*, then killing him would be an act of injustice. The Prophet's (s) ambiguous response, coupled with Ibn Sayyad's observable traits, cemented the public perception that he was indeed *Dajjal*. People continued to pursue him, chanting "Dajjal, Dajjal," causing him immense psychological distress, even after

he eventually embraced Islam. He later argued that *Dajjal* would not enter Mecca or Medina, yet he himself lived there, a clear counter-indicator. Ibn Sayyad ultimately perished during Yazid's attack on Medina.

Another profound narrative that illuminated the enigma of *Dajjal* and affirmed the Prophet's (s) foresight was the **Hadith Jassasa** □□□□) ,(□□□□□□□ narrated by the pious female companion Fatima bint Qays. After Fajr prayer one morning, the Prophet (s) announced a special sermon, unusual for that time of day. He introduced Tamim al-Dari, a former Christian who had recently embraced Islam, stating that Tamim carried an extraordinary piece of news.

Tamim al-Dari then recounted his incredible journey. He, along with thirty companions of mixed faiths, had embarked on a sea voyage that was engulfed by a furious storm, leaving their ship wrecked on an unknown island. There, they encountered a creature covered in dense hair, referred to as *Jassasa* (literally, 'the spy' or 'the extensive informant'). This creature directed them to a monastery, where they found a colossal man, bound in heavy chains. His arms were abnormally long, reaching far below his knees, and he was secured in a strange, contorted position. This formidable figure introduced himself as *Dajjal*.

Dajjal interrogated Tamim and his companions about three specific indicators that would signal his impending release: 1. He asked about the date palms of Baysan: "Are they still bearing fruit?" (His release would be marked by their drying up). 2. He inquired about Lake Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee): "Does it still contain water?" (Its drying up would precede his emergence). 3. He questioned the spring of Zughar: "Is it still flowing and irrigating farms?" (Its cessation would be a sign). *Dajjal* then asked if the Arabian Prophet had appeared and if the Arabs had accepted his prophethood. Upon learning that the Prophet (s) had indeed come and been accepted, *Dajjal* expressed a mix of grim satisfaction

and delayed expectation, acknowledging that this meant his own release would be postponed. He then declared that when he was finally freed, he would traverse the entire world, entering every city except Mecca and Tayba (Medina).

Tamim al-Dari, deeply affected by this encounter, journeyed to Medina and embraced Islam, narrating his experience to the Prophet (s), who confirmed the authenticity of the account. The **Hadith Jassasa**, found in esteemed compilations such as *Sahih Muslim*, cemented the belief that *Dajjal* was a real entity, confined to an island since the Prophet's (s) era, awaiting his prophesied release.

This revelation gave rise to a powerful question, one that the speaker passionately underscored: If *Dajjal*, a representative of Shaytan, could be granted such a remarkably prolonged lifespan – having been imprisoned for over 1400 years and possibly much longer – why is the extended lifespan of *Imam al-Mahdi* (a.s.), the divinely appointed representative of Allah, so often met with skepticism and objection? The very acceptance of *Dajjal*'s extraordinary longevity by many, without question, serves as a poignant counterpoint to the resistance faced when affirming the *ghaybah* (occultation) and enduring life of *Imam al-Mahdi* (a.s.).

The Prophet's (s) fervent warnings about *Dajjal* were, above all, a testament to his boundless compassion (*Hareesun Alaykum*) for his *Ummah* across all generations. He foresaw the trials of the end times, particularly for those who would live to confront *Dajjal*. His teachings were not merely for the contemporary Muslims but for the very people of the end times, including those who would witness the advent of *Imam al-Mahdi* (a.s.). He cautioned against two perilous extremes: the hasty ones (*mustajiloon*) who might rush to follow false claimants or abandon the true path in desperation, and the delaying ones (*muta'akhiroon*) who might become so cautious that they fail to recognize and answer the call of the

true Imam. The Prophet (s) emphasized that the true *mu'min* is one who neither rushes nor delays but acts precisely in accordance with Allah's will.

The culmination of these prophecies and warnings points to the ultimate confrontation at the end of time. When *Imam al-Mahdi* (a.s.) finally emerges, his first act will be to declare **"Hal min nasirin yansuruna?"** (**"Is there any helper to help us?"**), a call that will echo across the world. At this sacred moment, the Prophet Muhammad (s) himself, along with the other Imams, will descend from the heavens. The Prophet (s) will carry a sword of pure *nur* (divine light). Shaytan, who had been granted respite until a "known time," will attempt a final, desperate stand, leading his forces against the Imam's army. But upon seeing the Prophet (s) descending with the sword of light, Shaytan will flee in terror, knowing his ultimate demise has come. The Prophet (s) will pursue him, and with that sword of *nur*, he will forever sever Shaytan's existence, casting him into eternal damnation.

In the aftermath, on the plains of Karbala, the Prophet (s) will be reunited with his *Ahlul Bayt*. *Imam al-Mahdi* (a.s.) will declare that he has nothing to say, for his ancestors have long held the burden of their complaints. Then, one by one, the pure Imams will step forth, recounting the injustices and oppressions they endured, not at the hands of disbelievers, but at the hands of those who claimed to be part of the Prophet's (s) own *Ummah*. This procession of grievances will culminate with Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.) herself. She will step forward, not merely with words, but with tangible proofs of her suffering and the sacrifices of her progeny. With aching heart, she will present the severed arms of her son, Abbas, and the tiny, pierced body of Ali al-Asghar. And in her radiant *chador*, she will conceal the small, sacred body of Muhsin, a silent testament to the unparalleled injustices inflicted upon the purest of creation. These profound moments underscore the eternal bond between the Prophet (s)

and his *Ahlul Bayt*, and their shared burden in safeguarding the truth of Islam against all forms of deception and oppression until the final victory.

Chapter 185

The Enduring Message of Prophetic Mercy and Unwavering Adherence

As the journey through the blessed life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his pure family) continued into its crucial final years, a renewed emphasis was placed on understanding the profound and indispensable role of the Prophet (s) himself within Islam. It was a time to firmly counter the insidious notion that the Messenger was merely a deliverer of a message, akin to a "postman" who completes his task and then fades into irrelevance, leaving believers with only the divine word. Such a perspective, regrettably, had begun to permeate even some who outwardly claimed love for the *Ahlul Bayt* (a.s.).

The Holy Qur'an itself, particularly **Surah An-Nisa, Ayah 64**, unequivocally clarifies this matter: **"And if, when they had wronged themselves, they had come to you, [O Muhammad], and asked forgiveness of Allah and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Accepting of repentance and Merciful."** This profound verse declares that Allah's boundless mercy, His attribute of *Rahim*, is often channeled through the Prophet's (s) intercession (*shafa'at*) and sup-

plication. The notion that Allah is *Rahim* unconditionally, without any connection to the Prophet's (s) mediating role, is a misreading of this and similar Qur'anic truths. The path to fully realizing divine mercy often necessitates seeking forgiveness through the Prophet (s), demonstrating his continuous and vital presence, even after his earthly departure.

Unfortunately, this era also saw the alarming trend of misinterpreting the Prophet's (s) life (*Seerat al-Rasool*) to justify personal desires or to undermine the very pillars of *Sharia*. One common misapplication involved incidents taken out of context. For instance, some cited the occasion of the Prophet's (s) arrival in Medina, where young girls were heard singing, to argue for the general lawfulness of all forms of music and singing. While it is true that the Prophet's (s) silence on an action can indicate its permissibility, the intricacies of *Sharia* demand a comprehensive understanding, not merely an isolated incident. The ruling on *ghina* (singing) and music is nuanced, involving specific conditions and definitions (**lahvi** vs. **ghair-lahvi**), which cannot be derived from a single event without considering the broader context of Islamic jurisprudence.

Another prevalent misinterpretation arose from the Prophet's (s) magnanimous forgiveness during the Conquest of Mecca. This act of unparalleled mercy, where he pardoned his most bitter enemies, was twisted to suggest that adherence to *halal* (lawful) and *haram* (forbidden) was no longer strictly necessary, as Allah and the Prophet (s) would always forgive. This utterly contradicted the very purpose of his twenty-three years of arduous struggle. The Prophet (s) did not come to abolish the *Sharia* but to establish it firmly, requiring adherence to obligations (*wajibats*) and abstinence from forbidden acts (*haramats*).

The true message of *Seerat al-Rasool* was one of unwavering commitment and sacrifice. This was vividly illustrated by the severe persecutions endured by early Muslims in Mecca. The Prophet (s) himself, witnessing

the suffering of companions like Khabbab ibn Aratt, who bore the permanent scars of torture, admonished them for seeking immediate relief. He reminded them of the even greater trials faced by believers before them, as described in **Surah Al-Ankabut**, which states: **"Do people think that they will be left to say, 'We believe' and they will not be tested?"** This verse, revealed after the Prophet's (s) rebuke to Khabbab, underscored that genuine faith demands steadfastness through tribulation. The Prophet (s) taught that Islam is not a path of ease in worldly terms but one of continuous effort and patience, even when faced with immense hardship from society.

This truth was further emphasized in a profound *hadith* narrated through Ayatollah Baqir al-Sadr (r.a.). A man approached the Prophet (s) declaring his love for him. The Prophet (s) congratulated him but warned: "Then prepare for continuous misfortunes." The man then professed love for Imam Ali (a.s.), to which the Prophet (s) said: "Then prepare for an abundance of enemies." Finally, when the man expressed love for Imams Hasan (a.s.) and Hussain (a.s.), the Prophet (s) stated: "Then prepare for poverty and hardship." This *hadith* powerfully conveyed that love for the *Ahlul Bayt* (a.s.) is not a path to worldly comfort but a spiritual journey marked by trials, enemies, and privation, embodying the very essence of their own suffering and sacrifice for the sake of Islam.

As the Prophet (s) neared the end of his blessed life, his *Ummah* also faced growing internal challenges. The completion of *Sharia* brought stricter rulings on *halal* and *haram*, which proved difficult for those who had envisioned Islam as merely a means to worldly gains. Simultaneously, the success of Islam, symbolized by victories like Khaybar and the Conquest of Mecca, sparked a new kind of threat: false prophets. Figures like Musaylama al-Kadhdhab emerged during the Prophet's (s) lifetime, claiming prophethood not out of divine inspiration, but out of a desire for worldly power and prestige, having observed the Prophet's (s) rise to authority.

The Prophet (s) vehemently rejected such claims, emphasizing that true prophethood is a divine trust, not a worldly aspiration. He also prophesied the appearance of *Dajjal* (the Great Deceiver) and numerous lesser deceivers who would emerge throughout history, posing an enduring threat to believers. This underscores that the trials of faith would continue even after his passing and the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.).

The role of the *Maraji' Taqleed* (religious authorities) in this context became crucial. When asked why *maraji'* did not simply declare *all* music *haram* to remove ambiguity, Ayatollah Khoi (r.a.) famously explained that *maraji'* do not *create* religious laws. Their duty is to *explain* what they deduce from the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. They cannot make *haram* what Allah has made *halal*, nor *halal* what Allah has made *haram*, based on their own opinions or public pressure. This affirms the immutable nature of Islamic law, established by the Prophet (s) through his sixty-three years of arduous struggle, and preserved by the *Ahlul Bayt* and their legitimate inheritors.

The chapter concluded with a poignant scene from the court of Yazid, highlighting the unwavering adherence to *Sharia* by the *Ahlul Bayt* even in the most dire circumstances. Sayyidah Fatima al-Sughra (Sakina) (a.s.), captured and brought before Yazid, demonstrated the *Ahlul Bayt's* steadfastness. Despite being unveiled before strangers, she used one tiny hand to cover her face, showing her commitment to *hijab*, and the other to cover her bruised neck, marked by the rope used by Yazid's army. When questioned by Yazid, she explained her hand movements and her alternating posture (standing and sitting) were due to the shared pain of the rope with her ailing brother, Imam Sajjad (a.s.). This powerful image served as a stark contrast to Yazid's mockery of Islam and illustrated that true devotion to the Prophet (s) and his family means upholding *Sharia* at all costs, even in the face of unimaginable oppression, poverty, and isolation. It was a profound reminder that the struggles for Islam and its principles

would continue beyond the Prophet's (s) physical presence, demanding immense sacrifices from those who truly loved him and his pure progeny.

Chapter 186

The Unveiling of Falsehood: Exposing Musaylima's Deception

The tenth year of *Hijrah*, *Aam al-Wida'*, continued to unfold with profound spiritual insights and the persistent challenge of false claimants to prophethood. Before delving further into these critical events, it is imperative to address a nuanced point regarding previous discussions, particularly concerning the figure of *Dajjal*. As has been previously mentioned, two distinct narratives regarding *Dajjal* exist within Islamic scholarship: one describing a young man born in Medina, and another recounted by Tamim al-Dari, who encountered a chained figure on an island. While some scholars hold that these two figures are one and the same—the Madinan youth having been miraculously transported to the island by Jibreel (a.s.)—others maintain they are separate entities. It is crucial to understand that such historical ambiguities, while subjects of academic inquiry, do not constitute matters of *aqeedah* or *fiqh*. Esteemed *Maraji' Taqleed* and scholars typically prioritize resolving issues directly pertaining to core beliefs, practical injunctions (*ahkam*), or matters of the afterlife, recognizing that such historical discrepancies do not undermine the fundamentals of faith. This approach underscores the practical wisdom within Islamic

jurisprudence, focusing scholarly efforts on what directly impacts the believer's spiritual and worldly conduct.

With external threats largely subdued, the Prophet (s), now in the final years of his blessed life, intensified his warnings against internal perils and those awaiting in the distant future. This period, marked by a surge in conversions to Islam, also witnessed the emergence of audacious false prophets who sought worldly power and influence by mimicking the prophetic call. Foremost among them were Musaylima al-Kadhdhab (the Liar) in Yamama and Aswad al-Ansi in Yemen.

One morning, the Prophet (s) entered the *Masjid* and recounted a significant dream: "Last night, I saw two golden bangles being placed on my hands, but I threw them away." A Prophet's dream is not mere fantasy; it is a profound form of ***wahy*** (divine revelation), carrying immense significance. Just as Prophet Ibrahim's (a.s.) dream of sacrificing his son was a divine command, so too was this dream of the Prophet (s). While the *Ummah* might not immediately grasp the full meaning of such a dream, its public recitation signaled a crucial message.

Within a short span, the interpretation became chillingly clear. At that time, two major threats loomed over the nascent Islamic state, one originating from Yamama and the other from Yemen. The people immediately understood that the dream's 'golden bangles' symbolized Musaylima and Aswad, and the act of throwing them away signified their inevitable downfall. The Prophet's (s) declaration that he had "thrown them away" was a direct prophecy that both false claimants would be vanquished. Musaylima, who had proclaimed himself a prophet in Yamama (a region bordering Yemen but distinct from it, forming roughly a third of what is now Saudi Arabia), and Aswad al-Ansi in Yemen, had managed to garner a significant following. Their claims were so serious that large numbers of people had left Islam to join them.

Musaylima, in particular, displayed unparalleled audacity. Not content with merely claiming prophethood, he attempted to create his own "Qur'an," twisting verses and fabricating his own. Although his verses were clearly discernable from the Divine Word, even by a child familiar with Arabic, they were initially accepted by his followers. Furthermore, he dared to imitate the Prophet's (s) ***mu'jizat*** (miracles), attempting to replicate the Prophet's (s) blessed acts. However, his attempts consistently backfired, leading to his humiliation and the eventual disillusionment of many of his followers.

Consider these damning examples of Musaylima's failed "miracles":

- **The Spring of Water:** Women from a Medinan tribe once approached the Prophet (s), lamenting that their spring's water had diminished. The Prophet (s) had merely placed his blessed saliva into a bucket from the spring, instructing them to pour it back into the source. The water then gushed forth in such abundance that it threatened to flood their village. When these women, having traveled far, recounted this to Musaylima and asked for a similar blessing, he spat into a vessel and instructed them to add it to their spring. Instead of flowing, the remaining water in their spring completely dried up.
- **The Goats' Udders:** Hearing that the Prophet (s) had once blessed a goat, causing its udders to produce milk in unprecedented abundance simply by touching them, Musaylima attempted the same. He found a goat, and upon touching its udders, not only did they fail to produce more milk, but any existing milk dried up completely.
- **The Bitter Well:** A well in Medina, known for its bitter water, was once transformed into a source of sweet, pleasant water when the Prophet (s) put his saliva into it. When Musaylima, attempting to impress his followers, spat into a well, its water became so bitter and acrid that it was undrinkable, akin to poison.
- **The Children's Hair:** It was a beautiful characteristic of the Prophet

(s) that when children were brought to him, he would lovingly place his hand on their heads, and their hair would grow long and abundantly, even if they were previously bald due to illness. When Musaylima tried this, the children he touched instantly became bald.

- **The Children's Speech:** The Prophet (s) would also place his blessed hand on the lips of young children, bestowing upon them remarkable eloquence and clear speech, often destined to become renowned orators. When Musaylima attempted this, the children he touched began to stammer and stutter.
- **The Blind Man:** A blind person would regain their sight, or their vision would be enhanced, when the Prophet (s) would apply his blessed saliva to their eyes. When a blind person was brought to Musaylima, his touch not only failed to restore sight but caused what little vision they might have had to vanish entirely.
- **The Widow's Sons:** The most poignant account involves a woman who was widowed at a young age, with 12 sons providing her solace and support in a tribal society where male offspring were vital. Tragically, one by one, 10 of her sons died, leaving her with only two. Distraught, she approached Musaylima, recounting her grief and pleading for his prayer to protect her last two children. Musaylima confidently raised his hands in supplication, then assured her that his prayer had been accepted and her sons were now safe. Reaching her home, however, she found calamity: one son had been carried off by a wolf, and the other had fallen into a well and drowned. This devastating outcome ignited widespread anger and doubt among Musaylima's followers.

Faced with mounting failures and the rage of his disillusioned followers, Musaylima, with cunning deception, attempted to justify his backfiring "miracles." He claimed that his miracles were only effective for those who truly believed in him and would reverse for those who doubted his

prophethood. This illogical explanation, however, could not long sustain his dwindling credibility.

The concept of a ***mu'jiza*** in Islam is precise: it is a supernatural act performed by a Prophet or Imam to prove their divine authority and truthfulness upon making a claim of prophethood or *Imamah*. It is a challenge to disbelievers. In contrast, a ***karamah*** is a divinely granted blessing or extraordinary act performed by a righteous individual, *not* as proof of a claim, but as a favor from Allah. The Prophet (s) and the Imams (a.s.) performed countless *karamat* (e.g., healing the sick, raising the dead) in their daily lives, often without a specific claim of prophethood at that moment. Musaylima's attempts, by their very nature, were meant to be ***mu'jizat***, but they became a testament to his falsehood.

Musaylima managed to sustain his charade until the Prophet's (s) passing. Immediately after the Prophet's (s) demise, a military campaign was launched against him. He was ultimately killed in the Battle of Yamama by Wahshi, the very man who had martyred **Sayyid al-Shuhada'**, Hamza (a.s.), in the Battle of Uhud. Wahshi himself would later say, "I killed the best of men when I was a disbeliever, and I killed the worst of men when I was a Muslim." This marked the end of Musaylima's dangerous deception.

The life of Prophet Muhammad (s) is a continuous lesson in faith, sacrifice, and the profound trials that accompany divine connection. The *Ahlul Bayt* (a.s.) faced trials of unimaginable magnitude, often surpassing those of ordinary believers, precisely because of their unparalleled proximity to Allah and their role as the inheritors of divine guidance. Their suffering is not mere misfortune; it is a testament to their supreme spiritual station and their ultimate sacrifice for the preservation of Islam. Just as we are asked to endure the small tribulations of life, we are reminded of the *Ahlul Bayt's* immense *musibat* (calamity). The tears shed

by Imam Ali (a.s.) during Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) *ghusl*, when he discovered the indelible whip marks on her bruised side, serve as an eternal reminder of the unparalleled suffering she endured for the sake of truth and justice, a suffering so profound that it caused even the ***Mushkil Kusha*** (Remover of Difficulties) to cry out in anguish. Such sacrifices underscore the true essence of devotion and the unwavering commitment required to uphold Allah's sacred law.

Chapter 187

The Prophet's Final Trials: The Fall of Aswad al-Ansi and the Principles of Divine Justice

As the tenth year of *Hijrah*, *Aam al-Wida'*, drew to a close, the era of widespread acceptance of Islam was firmly established. Yet, this period of outward triumph also marked a subtle, profound testing of the Muslim *Ummah*. While external threats diminished, the true battles shifted inward, manifesting in the rise of false prophets. It was during these final, sacred months of the Prophet's (s) blessed life that four audacious individuals dared to claim prophethood, distinguishing themselves from countless later claimants by their immediate, confrontational challenge to the living Messenger of Allah.

The sudden emergence of these false prophets, particularly after the decisive victories of the Conquest of Mecca (8 AH) and the Battle of Khaybar (7 AH), presented a curious paradox. While worldly ambition might seem a logical motivator for mimicking a successful leader, it was unusual for such claimants to appear years *after* the Prophet's (s) temporal power

had consolidated. This late surge of deception, especially in the last six to eight months of his life, hinted at a deeper, more insidious current at play. It suggested that a certain environment, perhaps one of internal weakening or subtle isolation of the Prophet (s) from some quarters, was being cultivated by the *munafiqin* (hypocrites) – an environment where genuine believers were kept distant, and crucial figures like Imam Ali (a.s.) were sent on extended missions far from Medina. These subtle shifts, though not immediately apparent, laid the groundwork for future challenges to the Prophet's (s) legacy.

Among these false claimants, Musaylima al-Kadhdhab, whose deceptions have been detailed in previous chapters, continued to exploit the weaknesses of human nature. He promised worldly ease and spiritual reward without sacrifice, even attempting to "forgive" certain religious obligations. This approach stood in stark contrast to the Prophet's (s) divine wisdom. For instance, when the tribe of Thaqif initially sought exemption from *salat*, fasting, and Hajj as a condition for accepting Islam, the Prophet (s), in his boundless compassion and profound strategic insight, allowed them to embrace the faith without immediate enforcement of *future* obligations like Hajj and Ramadhan fasting. This was not a compromise of *Sharia*, but rather a tactical display of patience, recognizing that once the light of Islam entered their hearts, the believers themselves would yearn for complete submission. Musaylima, however, outright negated *Sharia*, twisting it to suit his followers' desires.

Musaylima's attempts to replicate true ***mu'jizat*** (miracles) also laid bare his deception. Faced with repeated failures in genuine divine signs, he resorted to *shobada* (tricks or illusions). A notorious example involved him presenting an egg in a bottle, claiming it as a miracle. In reality, he would soften the egg by soaking it in vinegar, allowing it to be squeezed through the bottle's narrow neck, and then letting it re-harden inside. This elaborate deception underscored a crucial Islamic principle: ***aqeeda*** (belief)

must be founded upon ***daleel*** (solid reason and evidence), not mere spectacle or hearsay. Imam Ali (a.s.) famously advised Imam Hasan (a.s.), "My son, make your children convinced of God's existence through evidence, for then mountains may move from their place, but their belief will not waver." A faith built on tradition or fleeting impressions, like those swayed by Musaylima's tricks, is vulnerable to collapse when confronted with new deceptions.

While Musaylima remained a significant threat, the second prominent false prophet who emerged during the Prophet's (s) lifetime was Aswad al-Ansi. His rise was swift and alarming, causing widespread turmoil in Yemen. Historians record that he began with only seven companions, yet within four months, he had amassed an army of thousands, besieging and controlling territories from Yemen to Hadramawt. His rapid ascent was facilitated by a critical power vacuum following the death of Bazan, the Persian governor of Yemen.

Bazan's story epitomizes the Prophet's (s) universal appeal and the triumph of truth. When the Prophet (s) sent letters to the world's rulers inviting them to Islam, Khosrow Parviz, the Persian Emperor, arrogantly tore up the Prophet's (s) letter and ordered his governor in Yemen, Bazan, to seize the Prophet (s). However, the Prophet (s) miraculously revealed to Bazan's envoys that Khosrow Parviz had been killed by his own son the previous night, precisely at the time of their departure from Persia. Astounded by this divine foresight, Bazan, a prince from the Persian royal family, embraced Islam wholeheartedly. He declared Yemen part of the Islamic state and remained its governor, earning the Prophet's (s) trust.

However, after Bazan's demise in 10 AH, his son inherited the governorship. While the Prophet (s) honored Bazan's legacy by allowing his son to continue as governor of a portion of Yemen, the Prophet (s), recognizing the son's lack of leadership capabilities, subtly decentralized the vast

and prosperous region, appointing other capable individuals to govern different sectors. This divinely guided decision implicitly highlighted a fundamental principle of Islamic governance: while lineage may be honored, true leadership, particularly in critical administrative roles, must be based on merit and competence. The *Ummah* and its interests supersede hereditary claims when capacity is lacking. This principle, subtly demonstrated in the management of Yemen, would later resonate in the ongoing challenges of succession within Islam.

Aswad al-Ansi capitalized on this administrative decentralization and the perceived weakness of Bazan's successor. His audacity knew no bounds: he murdered Bazan's son and then forcibly abducted and married his widow, Bazan's daughter-in-law. His rapid accumulation of power and his brazen contempt for Islamic norms posed a grave threat to the nascent Islamic state. The situation became so critical that the Prophet (s) issued a direct, unequivocal command to the Muslims of Yemen: "It is obligatory upon you to kill Aswad." This was an urgent, direct directive, unlike the earlier, more patient approach with Musaylima, indicating the extreme danger Aswad presented.

And so, on the 27th of Safar in 11 AH—just one day before the Prophet's (s) own passing—Aswad al-Ansi met his end. From Medina, the Prophet (s), still in a state of profound spiritual absorption, broke into a smile and joyously announced: "My Lord has just informed me that Aswad has been killed!" He further revealed that Aswad was slain by "a blessed man from a blessed family." Later, it was confirmed that this blessed individual was Fayruz, the nephew of Najashi, the just King of Abyssinia, who had provided refuge to early Muslim emigrants. The Prophet (s) declared: "***Faza al-Fayruz***" (Fayruz has triumphed/succeeded). This divine foreknowledge and the Prophet's (s) elation at Aswad's demise underscore the immense gravity of the threat he posed. While Musaylima would be dealt with after the Prophet's (s) passing, Aswad's eradication

occurred within the Prophet's (s) lifetime, a testament to the urgency of his removal.

The tales of false prophets like Musaylima and Aswad, and their reliance on deceptions like the "egg in the bottle" or the "donkey" (an upcoming discussion point), serve as a profound reminder of the necessity for a ***aqeeda*** rooted in ***daleel*** (reason). Islam is the religion of intellect and knowledge, not of blind faith or superficial magic. Its greatest miracle, the Holy Qur'an, is a book of wisdom and guidance, appealing to reason, not merely to physical wonders.

Ultimately, the Prophet's (s) final years and the challenges he faced, particularly regarding succession and the rise of false claimants, illuminate deeper principles of divine justice and the preservation of ***Sharia***. The Prophet (s) and his ***Ahlul Bayt*** suffered immeasurable hardships, not for worldly gain, but to uphold the sanctity of Allah's laws. This suffering extended to the gravest neglect of *Sharia* within the *Ummah* itself, particularly regarding *mi'ras* (inheritance laws) and the rights of the orphaned and the needy. The Holy Qur'an, especially **Surah al-Fajr**, vehemently condemns those who devour inheritance, neglect orphans, and fail to feed the poor, linking such actions directly to societal distress and divine displeasure. It warns against blaming Allah for calamities when the root cause lies in human transgression.

The immense suffering of Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.) and Imam Sajjad (a.s.), though young in age, bore the marks of unimaginable oppression—physical injuries, forced displacement, and profound grief—which aged them prematurely. Their trials stand as a poignant testament to the grave consequences of neglecting the divine laws and the rights of those whom Allah has sanctified. Their unwavering adherence to ***Sharia*** amidst such profound adversity stands as a perpetual beacon, reminding the *Ummah* that true devotion demands uncompromising obedience to divine injunc-

tions, particularly those safeguarding justice, the vulnerable, and the sacred lineage of the Prophet (s).

Chapter 188

The Final Triumph and the Deepening Sorrow

As the complete victory of Islam became undeniably apparent, a predictable phenomenon arose: the emergence of false claimants to prophethood. Throughout history, whenever a divine or even a worldly movement achieved widespread success, individuals driven by self-interest or a distorted understanding of power would seek to capitalize on it. The blessed life of the Seal of Prophets, Prophet Muhammad (s), the most successful divine movement in human history, was no exception. While the Prophet (s) had already established the finality of his prophethood, particularly through the momentous declaration of *Wilayah* at Ghadir Khum, certain individuals dared to stake their false claims even during his lifetime.

Among the most prominent and dangerous of these imposters were Musaylima al-Kadhdhab and Aswad al-Ansi. While Musaylima gained notoriety for his absurd attempts to mimic divine miracles, Aswad al-Ansi, with his unique deceptive methods and rapid rise to power, posed a particularly significant challenge. Aswad, whose original name was Ayhala, acquired

the epithet "Dhul-Khimar" (the veiled one) because he constantly wore a veil, and "Dhul-Himar" (the one with the donkey) due to his primary method of deception.

Aswad's false claim to prophethood hinged on a charade involving a trained donkey. This donkey would perform a prostration (*sajdah*) on command, then sit like a human, and stand again as instructed. In the eyes of the Prophet's (s) discerning companions, this was mere *shobada* (trickery), a trained animal's obedience, far removed from the genuine *mu'jizat* (miracles) granted by Allah to His Prophets, which are divinely willed and beyond human capability. However, in regions like Yemen, where direct exposure to the Prophet's (s) true miracles was less pervasive and where a certain susceptibility to superficial displays of power existed, Aswad's trickery was mistaken for a divine sign.

His influence spread with alarming speed. Within a mere four months, Aswad managed to seize control of a vast territory stretching from Aden to Bahrain, encompassing nearly half of Arabia. He achieved this rapid dominance not through divine truth, but by exploiting the prevailing credulity and the vacuum left by the passing of Bazan, the Persian governor of Yemen who had embraced Islam. Aswad's audacity knew no bounds; he attacked Bazan's capital, murdered his son, and forcibly married his widow. The Prophet (s), in Medina, was kept abreast of these developments, and he issued a direct, obligatory command for Aswad's assassination, recognizing the urgent need to quell this *fitna*.

Despite Aswad's growing menace, the Prophet (s) made a strategic decision to prioritize the *Hajjat al-Wida'* (Farewell Pilgrimage) and the subsequent declaration at Ghadir Khum over personally confronting Aswad or sending a large expedition to Yemen. This was a profound lesson in leadership and divine priorities. The *fitna* of Aswad, though potent, was considered local and temporary, destined to be resolved by the local Mus-

lim community. In contrast, the message of *Hajjat al-Wida'* and the designation of Imam Ali (a.s.) at Ghadir Khum were eternal and universal, crucial for the guidance of the entire *Ummah* until the Day of Judgment. The Prophet (s) thus entrusted the Yemeni Muslims with the task of eliminating Aswad, even recalling Imam Ali (a.s.) from Yemen to join him for the Farewell Pilgrimage, demonstrating that the universal, foundational messages outweighed localized, transient threats.

Aswad's downfall came at the hands of Fayruz al-Daylami, a nephew of the Abyssinian King Najashi, who was living in Yemen and had accepted Islam. Driven by the outrage of Aswad's forced marriage to his cousin (Bazan's widow), Fayruz, along with a small group of courageous believers, orchestrated a daring infiltration of Aswad's heavily guarded palace. On the 27th of Safar, just one day before his own passing, the Prophet (s) miraculously received news of Aswad's demise. With immense joy, he announced to the Muslims in Medina, "***Faza al-Fayruz!***" (Fayruz has triumphed!), celebrating the eradication of this dangerous enemy of Islam. This prophetic announcement underscored the divine vigilance over Islam and its nascent state.

The passing of the Prophet (s) marked a monumental turning point, casting a profound shadow of grief over Medina. In the immediate aftermath of his departure, the vibrant spirit of the city, once illuminated by his very presence, seemed to dim. Among the most noticeable changes was the silence of Bilal al-Habashi, the Prophet's (s) beloved *mu'adhdhin* (caller to prayer). Bilal, unable to bear the thought of calling the *adhan* without the Prophet (s) being present to lead the prayer, had vowed never to call it again. His heart, along with those of the *Ahlul Bayt*, was shattered.

Days after the Prophet's (s) passing, as the *Ummah* grappled with the immense loss, Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.), consumed by an unfathomable sorrow, longed to hear the familiar call to prayer that had res-

onated from Bilal's lips during her father's lifetime. She sent her *khadimah*, Fizza, to request Bilal to call the *adhan* just one more time. Despite his vow, Bilal, out of immense respect and love for the Prophet's (s) daughter, agreed.

As Bilal ascended the minbar and began the *adhan*, the familiar words filled the air: "***Allahu Akbar***," "***Ashhadu an La Ilaha Illallah***," "***Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasoolullah***." As the sound of "Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasoolullah" reached Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) ears, her grief overwhelmed her. She envisioned her father preparing for prayer, taking his staff, wearing his turban, and stepping out of his chambers. The profound realization of his absence, triggered by the *adhan* that had once announced his coming, caused her to collapse in a swoon, crying out, "Oh, my father! I am an orphan!" Fizza rushed out, pleading with Bilal to stop, for his call had plunged the Prophet's (s) daughter into unbearable anguish. Bilal, his own eyes filled with tears, ceased the *adhan*.

This scene underscored the profound, unimaginable grief of the *Ahlul Bayt* after the Prophet's (s) departure. Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) sorrow was so immense that it aged her prematurely, a physical manifestation of her broken heart. This early suffering of the *Ahlul Bayt* foreshadowed the relentless trials and injustices they would endure in the years to come for the preservation of Islam. Her agony was but the beginning of a lineage of suffering, extending to her granddaughter, Sayyidah Sakina (a.s.), who, in the court of Yazid, was denied even the solace of uttering her father's name, her tiny body bearing the marks of unimaginable cruelty. These profound sacrifices of the *Ahlul Bayt* stand as an eternal testament to their unwavering commitment to *Sharia* and the divine message of Islam.

Chapter 189

Hajjat al-Wida': A Legacy of Purity and Leadership

The year 10 AH unfolded as a period of profound spiritual climax, culminating in the Prophet Muhammad's (s) final and most significant pilgrimage, known as the ***Hajjat al-Wida'*** (The Farewell Pilgrimage). This journey, often referred to as *Hajj al-Tamam* (The Complete Pilgrimage), *Hajj al-Islam* (The Pilgrimage of Islam), and *Hajj al-Balagh* (The Pilgrimage of Proclamation), marked the penultimate stage of the Prophet's (s) earthly mission. It occurred in Dhul-Hijjah, a mere two and a half months before his blessed passing on the 28th of Safar in 11 AH.

As the Prophet's (s) life neared its earthly conclusion, divine revelations indicated that two momentous tasks remained before his return to the Divine Presence. These two intertwined responsibilities were the fulfillment of the sacred *Hajj* and the explicit establishment of the *niyabat* (vicegerency) and *Imamah* (spiritual leadership) of his successor. While the importance of *Imamah* had been hinted at from the earliest days of his *da'wah*, such as during the ***Da'wat Dhul 'Ashirah***, and the virtues of *Hajj* had been continuously extolled, the final, unequivocal declarations

were reserved for this pivotal time. This gradual unfolding of divine law reflected Islam's wisdom in preparing the *Ummah* for its responsibilities step by step.

However, the journey of conveying these truths was fraught with challenges due to certain predispositions within the *Ummah* to misinterpret or distort clear messages. The tragic incident of *Ammar ibn Yasir*, martyred during the Battle of Siffin, serves as a poignant example. Despite the Prophet's (s) widely known prophecy that Ammar would be killed by a rebellious group, some individuals later twisted the narrative, astonishingly attributing Ammar's death to Imam Ali (a.s.) for having led him into battle. Such incidents underscored the necessity for explicit and unambiguous declarations regarding both fundamental rituals and leadership succession, lest subtle hints be deliberately misconstrued.

Throughout his Prophethood, even during the eight years when Mecca was inaccessible to Muslims, the Prophet (s) harbored a profound longing for *Hajj*. He consistently spoke of its immense virtues, often requesting those traveling from Mecca to bring him *Zamzam* water, illustrating his deep spiritual connection to the Ka'bah and the sacred pilgrimage. His life was a continuous testament to the importance of rituals and their spiritual rewards. He clarified to his companions the purifying power of *Wudu* and *Salat*, explaining to a man from Thaqif how these acts could cleanse sins from the very limbs used in transgression. Similarly, he elaborated on the extraordinary rewards of *Hajj* to an Ansari companion, stating that a truly accepted *Hajj* would purify a pilgrim of all sins, leaving them as innocent as on the day of their birth. So profound was this cleansing that Allah (SWT) would feel shame to inflict punishment upon such a servant. Conversely, the Prophet (s) issued a severe warning against those who neglected an obligatory *Hajj*, declaring that such a person would die as a Jew or Christian, emphasizing the gravity of this divine command.

In later times, the Prophet (s) prophesied the changing motivations behind *Hajj*. He foretold that the wealthy would perform *Hajj* for leisure and tourism (*nazah*), the middle class for trade and business (*tijarah*), and the poor for show-off and reputation (*riya'* and *sura'*). This foresight, corroborated by scholars like Sheikh Murtada al-Ansari regarding *Ziyarah*, highlighted a potential deviation from the true spiritual essence of the pilgrimage.

The Prophet's (s) decision to perform *Hajj* in 10 AH, despite Mecca being liberated earlier, was deliberate. The *Hajj* of 9 AH had been led by Imam Ali (a.s.), where he recited the verses of **Surah At-Tawbah** prohibiting polytheists from the Ka'bah. The Prophet's (s) own *Hajj* in 10 AH thus became the culminating point where the physical center of Islam, the Ka'bah, and its spiritual center, the ***Imamah*** of Imam Ali (a.s.), were unequivocally united. This was echoed in the Prophet's (s) declaration likening Imam Ali (a.s.) to the Ka'bah, emphasizing that just as all Muslims gather around the Ka'bah, so too must the entire *Ummah* gather around Ali (a.s.) as their spiritual guide.

This ***Hajjat al-Wida'*** was not merely a set of theoretical instructions but a practical demonstration. The Prophet (s) specifically commanded the pilgrims, "Observe me and perform your *Hajj* as I do." Yet, a subtle yet profound distinction arose during this *Hajj*. The Prophet (s) himself performed *Hajj al-Qiran*, maintaining his ***ihram*** from Medina to Mecca continuously. However, he instructed Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) and the majority of pilgrims from outside Mecca to perform *Hajj al-Tamattu'*. This type of *Hajj* involves performing an *Umrah* first, temporarily exiting ***ihram*** for a few days, and then re-entering ***ihram*** for the *Hajj* itself.

This distinction is of immense significance for the *Ummah*. While the Prophet (s) performed a continuous *Hajj* for himself, he divinely ordained Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) *Hajj al-Tamattu'* as the *Sunnah* for the vast major-

ity of Muslims across the globe until the Day of Judgment, particularly for those residing far from Mecca. This act powerfully validates the spiritual station of Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) and the authenticity of her actions as a direct extension of divine will.

A pivotal moment illustrating this occurred upon Imam Ali's (a.s.) arrival from Yemen, where he had been on a six-month mission. Imam Ali (a.s.) entered Mecca in ***ihram*** with the intention of performing *Hajj* in the manner of the Prophet (s). Upon reaching the Prophet's (s) camp, he visited Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) and found her out of ***ihram***, wearing regular clothes, with oil in her hair and perfume. Imam Ali (a.s.), surprised, inquired about this, given the prevailing understanding of continuous ***ihram***. Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), with a gentle smile, responded that she was merely following the direct command of her father, the Prophet (s). This incident underscored the Prophet's (s) explicit teaching of *Hajj al-Tamattu'* through his beloved daughter, making it a living demonstration for the *Ummah*.

This period also brought to light misguided interpretations and excuses within the *Ummah* for neglecting religious obligations. It became necessary to correct the misconception, particularly popular in some circles, that Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) never performed *Hajj*. This erroneous claim was sometimes used to justify women not performing *Hajj*. However, the truth is that Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) performed a *Hajj* so profound and influential that it established the standard practice for the majority of Muslims worldwide, a *Sunnah* upheld by all subsequent Imams (a.s.). Her actions, and indeed the entire ***Ahlul Bayt's*** adherence to *Sharia* even amidst immense suffering, served as irrefutable proof against such misinterpretations. For instance, the *Sharia* clearly states that if *Hajj* becomes obligatory upon a woman, she does not require her husband's permission, nor is a *mahram* necessary for the journey, due to other strong proofs supporting a woman's independent journey for *Hajj*.

The profound suffering of the ***Ahlul Bayt***, particularly Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) and Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.), was often met with similar misinterpretations. Some individuals, in a misguided attempt to justify their own negligence, would claim that since the *Ahlul Bayt* endured such hardships (e.g., Sayyidah Zaynab's (a.s.) veil being removed in Karbala), there was no need for others to uphold *hijab*. Such arguments, born of ignorance or malice, dangerously distort the sacrifices of the ***Ahlul Bayt***. Sayyidah Zaynab's (a.s.) veil was forcibly removed by oppressors, not willingly discarded by her. Their suffering was a testament to their steadfast adherence to *Sharia* in the face of insurmountable evil, not an excuse for its abandonment.

The life of the Prophet (s) and the ***Ahlul Bayt*** consistently demonstrated the obligation to uphold *Sharia* at all costs, even if it meant enduring unparalleled hardships. Their unwavering commitment to divine commands and their profound sacrifices serve as an eternal beacon, guiding the *Ummah* towards truth and exposing the hollowness of excuses. The ***Hajjat al-Wida'*** was a culminating lesson, not only in the rituals of *Hajj* but in the paramount importance of ***Imamah*** and the unwavering commitment to ***Sharia*** through the exemplary lives of the Prophet (s) and his pure ***Ahlul Bayt***.

Chapter 190

The Purification of Sacred Rites and the Essence of Disavowal

As the tenth year of *Hijrah*, *Aam al-Wida'*, continued, the profound culmination of the Prophet Muhammad's (s) mission approached, marked by his final, divinely commanded pilgrimage. This monumental journey, known as the ***Hajjat al-Wida'*** (Farewell Pilgrimage), would be the Prophet's (s) singular *Hajj* performed after its obligation was revealed in Islam. It was a journey laden with spiritual significance, a final, comprehensive lesson for his *Ummah*.

The question of how many *Hajj* the Prophet (s) performed in his lifetime often arises. The historical records indicate that before his prophethood and the *Hijrah* to Medina, while still in Mecca and under the old system prevalent before Islam, the Prophet (s) performed twenty *Hajj*. Notably, some of these were conducted in secret. This secrecy was necessitated by the Quraish's manipulative practices concerning the sacred months, which they would arbitrarily alter to suit their temporal needs for warfare or trade, thus distorting the sanctity of the pilgrimage. When the Quraish announced *Hajj* in months other than Dhul-Hijjah, the Prophet (s) would

perform his *Hajj* secretly during the actual, divinely ordained month, thus upholding the true tradition of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.).

Upon the revelation of *Hajj* as an obligatory pillar of Islam, the Prophet (s) performed only one *Hajj*—this Farewell Pilgrimage. The apparent delay in performing *Hajj* after its obligation and the Muslim conquest of Mecca in 8 AH warrants explanation. While Mecca was under Muslim control by 8 AH, and the *Hajj* of 9 AH occurred while Muslims governed the city, the Prophet (s) did not participate in it. Instead, he entrusted Imam Ali (a.s.) to lead the *Hajj* in 9 AH, a pilgrimage famously known as ***Hajj al-Akbar***.

The Prophet's (s) decision not to lead the *Hajj* in 9 AH was rooted in two critical reasons, both pertaining to the purification and restoration of the sacred rites. Firstly, despite the Muslim conquest, many pre-Islamic superstitions, *khurafat*, and unlawful practices (*wahiyat*) still marred the *Hajj* rituals. These included customs like pilgrims performing *Tawaf* naked, which was explicitly forbidden in Islam. Imam Ali (a.s.) was sent as the leader of the *Hajj* in 9 AH with the explicit divine command to purify these rituals, just as he had purified the Ka'bah itself of idols during the Conquest of Mecca in 8 AH. Imam Ali's (a.s.) mission was to cleanse the *Hajj* from all polytheistic and un-Islamic elements, ensuring it aligned with Allah's pure law.

Secondly, the Quraish had a deeply entrenched practice called ***Nasi'***, mentioned in **Surah At-Tawbah, Ayah 37**: ***"Indeed, the postponing [of restriction within sacred months] is an increase in disbelief..."*** *Nasi'* involved arbitrarily changing the sequence of the sacred months to facilitate their wars or economic activities, a practice condemned by Allah as an "increase in disbelief." This act was deemed even worse than mere *kufr* (disbelief) because it tampered with divine ordinances and universal laws. The *Hajj* of 9 AH was still scheduled according to the Quraish's

manipulated calendar, meaning it did not fall in the true Dhul-Hijjah as divinely ordained since the time of Prophet Adam (a.s.) and reaffirmed by Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.). Imam Ali (a.s.) was therefore divinely tasked with publicly announcing the prohibition of *Nasi'* during the 9 AH *Hajj*, declaring that the months would forever follow their divinely established order, and *Hajj* would always occur in Dhul-Hijjah. This monumental declaration ensured that the *Hajj* of 10 AH, the Prophet's (s) *Hajjat al-Wida'*, would be performed at the correct, divinely appointed time.

Beyond the *Hajj*, the Prophet (s) also performed three *Umrah*s after the *Hijrah*: the incomplete *Umrah al-Hudaybiyyah*, the compensatory *Umrat al-Qada*, and the *Umrat al-Hunayn* following the Battle of Hunayn. Each of these journeys held unique historical and spiritual lessons.

The Prophet's (s) life and the rituals of Islam consistently emphasized the dual pillars of ***Tawalla*** (love and allegiance to truth and its proponents) and ***Tabarra*** (disavowal and detachment from falsehood and its adherents). This principle is not merely theoretical but is manifested in concrete Islamic practices. For instance, the stoning of the *Jamarat* during *Hajj* is a symbolic act of *Tabarra* against Shaytan.

A profound manifestation of *Tabarra* and the Prophet's (s) wisdom can be found in two specific acts during his pilgrimage journeys. Firstly, the Prophet (s) always made it a practice to enter the Ka'bah through a specific gate known as ***Bab Bani Shaybah*** (Gate of Banu Shaybah). This seemingly simple act held immense symbolic significance: during the Conquest of Mecca, after Imam Ali (a.s.) had, with the Prophet's (s) assistance, toppled the idol Hubal—the largest and most revered idol of the Quraish—from atop the Ka'bah, the Prophet (s) commanded that its fragments be buried beneath the very ground of *Bab Bani Shaybah*. Thus, by entering through this gate, every pilgrim would symbolically step over the remnants of polytheism, an enduring act of disavowal against idolatry

and *shirk*.

Secondly, a significant tradition regarding the Prophet's (s) practice in the plains of Muzdalifah during *Hajj* highlights this principle further. Muzdalifah is the area where pilgrims gather pebbles to stone the *Jamarat*. It is narrated that the Prophet (s), during his *Hajj*s (including those before Islam), would always make sure to perform *taharat* (ablution, specifically urination) in Muzdalifah before proceeding. This act was not a jurisprudential obligation but a profound symbolic gesture. The earth of Muzdalifah was the very material from which the idols of Mecca, including Hubal, were fashioned. By performing *taharat* upon this ground, the Prophet (s) was cleansing and purifying the very earth that had been used in opposition to Allah, symbolically trampling upon the essence of idolatry. This act, while perhaps unusual in isolation, signifies the deep spiritual cleansing and disavowal of falsehood that is central to Islam. The Prophet's (s) consistent adherence to this practice, as narrated by Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.), elevates the status of Muzdalifah from being a place of idolatry to one where Shaytan is symbolically defeated and disavowed.

This profound emphasis on *Tabarra* underlines that Islam cannot flourish merely by expressing love for truth (*Tawalla*). It requires the simultaneous and active rejection and disavowal of falsehood and oppression. Just as *Amr bil Ma'ruf* (enjoining good) is essential, so is ***Nahy anil Munkar*** (forbidding evil). The Prophet's (s) actions throughout his life, including his strategic *Hajj* and the symbolic acts embedded within its rituals, were all designed to instill this holistic understanding of faith in his *Ummah*—a faith that actively confronts and disavows injustice and polytheism, ensuring the purity of belief and practice for all times.

With these foundational understandings established, the narrative now turns to the actual commencement of Prophet Muhammad's (s) ***Hajjat al-Wida'***, his first and final obligatory *Hajj*, as he sets forth from Medina.

Chapter 191

From Medina to Miqat: The Commencement of *Hajjat al-Wida'*

The year was 10 AH, the final year of the Prophet Muhammad's (s) blessed life, and the month was *Dhul Qa'dah*, the eleventh month of the Islamic calendar, preceding *Dhul Hijjah*, the month of *Hajj*. It was during this sacred time that Prophet Muhammad (s) embarked on his only *Hajj* after the advent of Islam, a journey destined to be known as *Hajjat al-Wida'*, the Farewell Pilgrimage. This momentous event, a culmination of his prophetic mission, would serve not only to purify the sacred rites of Islam but also to establish a timeless paradigm for the *Ummah*.

The choice of this specific year for the *Hajj* was deliberate and divinely guided. The Prophet (s) had deliberately forgone performing *Hajj* in 9 AH, despite Mecca being under Muslim control. This was primarily due to the pre-Islamic practice of *Nasi'*, a manipulation of the calendar by the Quraish that shifted the sacred months, causing the *Hajj* to fall outside its divinely ordained time. The Prophet (s) awaited the moment when the *Hajj* would perfectly align with its true lunar timing, a restoration declared during *Hajjat al-Wida'* itself: "Time has returned to its original

state." Indeed, the *Hajj* of 9 AH, led by Imam Ali (a.s.), served to cleanse the sacred precincts and publicly abolish these polytheistic innovations. Now, in 10 AH, the Prophet (s) would personally demonstrate the purified rites for all posterity, famously instructing the believers, "**Khudhu an-ni manasikakum**" (Take your rituals from me).

As *Dhul Qa'dah* approached its end, a pivotal revelation descended upon the Prophet (s) in Medina. The verses of **Surah Al-Hajj, verse 27**, were revealed: "**And proclaim among the people the Hajj; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass**." While this verse is traditionally associated with Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.)'s original proclamation after constructing the Ka'bah, it was now revealed to Prophet Muhammad (s) in Medina, explicitly commanding him to invite all humanity to *Hajj*.

Upon receiving this divine command, the Prophet (s) immediately dispatched his heralds and messengers throughout Medina and its surrounding regions. With urgency, they announced his intention to perform *Hajj* that year, urging every capable Muslim to join him on this blessed journey. The response was overwhelming. From all corners of Medina and its environs, eager believers gathered, forming an immense caravan. Accounts vary, but the number of pilgrims who departed Medina with the Prophet (s) ranged from a minimum of 70,000 to as many as 130,000, not including those who would join from Mecca, Ta'if, or the contingent led by Imam Ali (a.s.) from Yemen.

On the 25th or 26th of *Dhul Qa'dah*, this colossal caravan set forth from Medina, embarking on an eight-day journey towards Mecca. The Prophet (s) led them directly to *Dhul Hulayfah*, a tranquil, desolate plain approximately six miles from Medina. This location, now widely known as Bi'r Ali or marked by Masjid Shajarah, is one of the designated *miqats* – specific points from which pilgrims must enter the sacred state of *ihram*. It is

a fundamental principle of *Hajj* that one cannot enter Mecca without first donning *ihram* at one of these specified *miqats*.

Upon reaching *Dhul Hulayfah*, the entire caravan paused. The Prophet (s) commanded all pilgrims to prepare for *ihram*. This preparation involved performing *ghusl al-ihram* (a ritual bath), cleansing the body of unwanted hair, and for men, removing all stitched garments and donning two simple, unstitched sheets—one wrapped around the waist as a loincloth, and the other draped over the shoulders. Women were permitted to wear their ordinary clothes, supplementing them with similar *ihram* sheets. After these preparations, the pilgrims performed the *Dhuhr* prayer, shortened as they were now outside the city limits of Medina, signifying the commencement of their journey.

Following the prayer, the Prophet (s) personally donned his *ihram* and made his intention for *Hajj*. The entire multitude, emulating their beloved Prophet (s), followed suit, making their own intentions for the pilgrimage. It was at this profound moment that the air resonated with the sacred chant of **Talbiya**: "**Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk, Labbayk la sharika laka Labbayk, Innal hamda wanni'mata laka wal mulk, La sharika laka Labbayk**" (Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am, You have no partner, here I am. Indeed, all praise and blessings are Yours, and all sovereignty. You have no partner, here I am). While reciting this powerful affirmation once is obligatory, the companions repeated it constantly throughout the journey, filling the desert with its echoes.

Several notable incidents occurred during this initial phase at *Dhul Hulayfah*. Among the pilgrims was Asma bint Umays, the wife of Abu Bakr, who was in the final stages of pregnancy. She gave birth to a son, Muhammad, right there at the *miqat*. Abu Bakr, seeking guidance, approached the Prophet (s) regarding Asma's condition and her ability to perform *Hajj*. The Prophet (s) reassured them, instructing Asma to perform *ghusl*,

don her *ihram*, make her *niyyah*, and recite the **Talbiya** like all other pilgrims, though she was advised not to enter the mosque itself. This demonstrated the comprehensive nature of Islamic law, ensuring that even in such circumstances, the pilgrimage could be performed.

Another important instruction given by the Prophet (s) at *Dhul Hulayfah* pertained to women's conduct during *Hajj*. As men and women alike began to recite the **Talbiya** aloud, the Prophet (s) subtly indicated that women should recite it softly, unlike men who could raise their voices. He also clarified that certain actions, such as performing *istilam* (touching or kissing) of the **Hajar al-Aswad** (Black Stone) and performing *harwala* (a brisk walk during Sa'i), were not prescribed for women in the same manner as for men.

The Prophet (s) had also brought a hundred camels with him from Medina for sacrifice, a sight that inspired some companions to quickly arrange for their own sacrificial animals, while others, awaiting explicit command, did not. This detail, though seemingly minor, would later play a significant role in the events that unfolded during the *Hajj*. With *ihram* donned, intentions made, and the **Talbiya** resounding, the vast caravan prepared to continue its sacred journey toward the Holy City of Mecca.

Chapter 192

The Prophet's Farewell Hajj: Sacred Entry and the Spirit of the Ka'bah

As the tenth year of *Hijrah* unfolded, the air in Medina thrummed with anticipation. The Prophet Muhammad (s), having spent a lifetime yearning for the spiritual fulfillment of *Hajj*, now prepared for his final, divinely ordained pilgrimage, the ***Hajjat al-Wida'***. Word spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula that the Messenger of Allah (s) would lead this sacred journey, drawing an ever-increasing multitude eager to join him.

From *Masjid Dhi Hulayfah*, also known as *Masjid Shajarah*, the Prophet (s) entered the state of *Ihram*. The journey to Mecca was filled with the collective devotion of countless pilgrims, their voices echoing with the *Talbiyah*. Upon reaching Dhi Tuwa, an area just outside Mecca, the Prophet (s) commanded his caravan to pause. He instructed everyone to perform a *ghusl*, a ritual bath, signifying the spiritual purity required for entering the sacred city. This *ghusl* was a specific, prescribed act, simple in its execution but profound in its symbolism.

From Dhi Tuwa, the Prophet (s) chose to enter Mecca from its higher ground, making his way towards *Bab Bani Shaybah*. This gate, deeply

steeped in history, lay in the vicinity of *Shayb Abi Talib* and *Jannat al-Mu'alla*, the sacred burial ground of Sayyidah Khadijah (a.s.) and Abu Talib (a.s.). It was a customary practice, enshrined as a *sunnah* (recommended act), for pilgrims to enter Mecca from this elevated route.

A remarkable aspect of the Prophet's (s) stay in Mecca during this *Hajj* was his profound display of humility. Despite having his own house in Mecca—the very home from which he (s) had been forced to emigrate thirteen years prior—the Prophet (s) chose not to stay there. Instead, he (s) had two tents erected on the outskirts of the city, one for himself (s) and another for Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), with his wives' tents behind theirs. He (s) resided in these humble tents for the entirety of his eight or nine-day stay, neither accepting invitations nor renting lodging. This act, though seemingly minor, carried immense significance. It taught the *Ummah* a vital lesson: that even when one's rights are clear, power should not be used to reclaim properties seized by others, especially if it causes discord or opens avenues for misinterpretation. This was a precedent that would be followed by his true inheritor, Imam Ali (a.s.), who, upon gaining authority, similarly refrained from forcibly reclaiming his rights to prevent giving the enemy an excuse to malign Islam. The Prophet (s) even declared that the people of Mecca should leave their doors open for guests, signifying the spirit of hospitality and non-ownership of the sacred land.

The state of *Ihram*, once donned, held a unique sanctity. Unlike optional (sunnah) prayers or fasts that could be discontinued at will, the *Ihram* for *Hajj* or *Umrah*, even if *sunnah*, could not be voluntarily broken. It bound the pilgrim to a specific set of rules and prohibitions, to be shed only upon the completion of the prescribed rituals. This rigidity underscored the profound commitment demanded by the sacred journey.

Upon entering the ***Masjid al-Haram***, the Prophet (s) proceeded towards

the Ka'bah. Before commencing the *Tawaf*, he (s) paused at the entrance to the Ka'bah's courtyard and uttered a profound salutation: ***Salamun ala Ibrahima Khalilir Rahman*** ("Peace be upon Ibrahim, the Friend of the Most Merciful"). This act established a *sunnah* for all time: to acknowledge the foundational role of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), the builder of the Ka'bah, before engaging in its rituals. It was a testament to the Islamic principle of reciprocating good deeds (***Hal jazaa'ul ihsani illal ihsan***).

The Prophet (s) then clarified a crucial point regarding the salutation of the ***Masjid al-Haram***. While in other mosques, the traditional greeting is two *rak'at* of *Salat al-Tahiyyat al-Masjid* (prayer of greeting the mosque), for the Ka'bah, the salutation is ***Tawaf*** (circumambulation). This unique rule signified the Ka'bah's unparalleled status as Allah's House.

During his *Tawaf*, the Prophet (s) performed it while seated on his camel. This unusual method, especially for a physically capable individual, served a vital purpose. With the massive gathering of pilgrims, performing *Tawaf* on foot would have made it impossible for everyone to see him (s) or to ask him (s) questions. By riding his camel, the Prophet (s) remained visible to all, allowing the *Ummah* to observe his actions and learn the precise rites of *Hajj*. This also prevented congestion and harm caused by people pushing to get close to him (s).

The Prophet (s) commenced his *Tawaf* by kissing the ***Hajar al-Aswad*** (Black Stone). He (s) then circled the Ka'bah, kissing the ***Rukn al-Yamani*** (Yemeni Corner) as he passed it, but not kissing the other two corners. This became a *sunnah* for all pilgrims. The emphasis on *Rukn al-Yamani* carried profound significance, as it was the very corner of the Ka'bah where the wall miraculously split to allow Sayyidah Fatima bint Asad (a.s.), Imam Ali's (a.s.) mother, to enter for his sacred birth.

This pivotal event of Imam Ali's (a.s.) birth inside the Ka'bah is deeply intertwined with the essence of the sacred House. The Qur'an declares:

"Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Bakkah [Mecca] – blessed and a guidance for the worlds." (***Inna awwala baytin wudi'a lil-nasi – lalladhee bi Bakkata mubarakan wa hudan lil-'alameen***) (**Surah Aal-e-Imran, Ayah 96**). This verse highlights three key characteristics of the Ka'bah: it is the first house of worship, it is blessed, and it is a guidance for all worlds.

The extraordinary circumstance of Imam Ali's (a.s.) birth, where the Ka'bah wall miraculously cracked for Sayyidah Fatima bint Asad (a.s.) to enter, and then again to exit, was a divine testament to his unique purity. Scholars explain that this was to ensure that Ali (a.s.), the one destined to eradicate all idols, would never even momentarily be under the shadow of the idols placed inside the Ka'bah or near its door, a purification that no other prophet or saint achieved. Sayyidah Fatima bint Asad's (a.s.) *khutbah* upon her emergence from the Ka'bah, a sermon preserved in history, declared the unique divine favor bestowed upon her and her son, unparalleled even by Sayyidah Asiya (a.s.), who worshipped in the house of a tyrant, or Sayyidah Maryam (a.s.), who gave birth in the wilderness. Ali (a.s.) was born in the purest place, untouched by any impurity or idolatry, a divine sign that he was the pure ***Wali*** (Guardian) and the very "spirit" of the Ka'bah's guidance.

The Prophet (s) had clearly stated in a profound *Hadith* that **"Looking at the Ka'bah is worship, looking at the Qur'an is worship, and looking at the face of Ali is worship."** While the Ka'bah is the *Baytullah* (House of Allah) and the Qur'an is *Kitabullah* (Book of Allah), Ali (a.s.) is ***Wajhullah*** (Face of Allah) or the true manifestation of divine attributes. The Ka'bah, though a physical structure, is described as "guidance for the worlds." Yet, it is an inanimate object; it cannot actively guide. The true guidance emanates from the "spirit" that resides within or manifests through it. Just as Prophet Adam (a.s.) became worthy of prostration only after Allah breathed His spirit into him, the Ka'bah became a true

Qibla for humanity only when its "spirit"—Imam Ali (a.s.)—was born within it. This signifies that Ali (a.s.) is the true ***Hadi*** (Guide) of the universe, and his *wilayah* is the very essence that imbues the Ka'bah with its guiding power.

The very act of the Ka'bah's wall splitting for Ali's (a.s.) birth underscored his inherent superiority. It was not Ali (a.s.) who sought the Ka'bah; rather, the Ka'bah itself, the inanimate structure, yearned for the honor of hosting him. It was a testament to Ali's (a.s.) status as the ultimate ***Hadi*** (Guide) and ***Mushkil Kusha*** (Solver of Difficulties), the one towards whom all paths eventually lead, both in this world and the Hereafter. Just as the world comes to the Ka'bah, so too must it come to Ali (a.s.) for true guidance and salvation.

Chapter 193

The Exemplary Pilgrimage: Sacred Teachings from *Tawaf* and *Sa'i*

The momentous period in the Prophet Mohammad's (s) *sirah* had arrived, marking the culmination of divine legislation and the delivery of the final, critical pronouncements that would safeguard his followers from misguidance until the Day of Judgment. These were embodied in two monumental addresses: the **Hajjat al-Wida'** (Farewell Pilgrimage) and the address at **Ghadir Khumm**. This chapter details the sacred rituals of the Farewell Pilgrimage, a practical demonstration of Allah's commandments and a profound set of teachings for the *Ummah*.

Having completed the seven circuits of **Tawaf** around the Holy Ka'bah, a rite previously described in its miraculous dimensions, the Prophet (s) approached the **Mustajar**. This specific section of the Ka'bah wall, located behind the door, is known as a place of refuge. It is here that the Ka'bah miraculously split twice for Sayyidah Fatima bint Asad (a.s.) — once for her entry to give birth to Imam Ali (a.s.), and again for her departure three days later. As the Prophet (s) completed his final circuit, he paused at the **Mustajar**, turning slightly to press his blessed abdomen

against the wall. He then supplicated with a heartfelt *du'a*, seeking Allah's protection and refuge. This act of pressing the body against the **Mustajar** was a distinct *mustahab* practice, performed specifically in the seventh and final circuit of **Tawaf**, unlike the kissing of the **Hajar al-Aswad** and **Rukn al-Yamani** which is observed in every circuit. It served as a powerful reminder of the sanctity of the Ka'bah and its deep connection to the lineage of pure Imams.

Following the completion of **Tawaf**, the Prophet (s) proceeded towards **Maqam Ibrahim** (Station of Abraham). **Maqam Ibrahim** is a sacred stone bearing the footprints of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), a profound **miracle** and one of the clear signs of Allah. Unlike the **Hajar al-Aswad**, which is not explicitly mentioned in the **Qur'an al-Karim**, **Maqam Ibrahim** is mentioned twice, emphasizing its elevated status. The **Qur'an** declares: "**Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Makkah - blessed and a guidance for the worlds. In it are clear signs [such as] the station of Abraham**" (**Surah Aal-e-Imran, Ayah 96**). Another verse, **Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayah 125**, explicitly commands: "**And take ye the station of Abraham as a place of prayer.**"

Upon reaching **Maqam Ibrahim**, the Prophet (s) recited the latter *Ayah* and then performed two *rak'at* of **Salat al-Tawaf**. This prayer, a *wajib* act following **Tawaf**, was performed precisely like the *Salat al-Fajr*, with the Prophet (s) reciting **Surah al-Kafirun** in the first *rak'ah* after **Surah al-Hamd**, and **Surah al-Ikhlas** in the second. A profound detail noted by scholars is that the Prophet (s) performed this **Salat al-Tawaf** individually (*furada*), despite the immense congregation of over a hundred thousand companions accompanying him. This practice established a *Sunnah* for this specific prayer, as the majority of *maraje'* (scholars) hold the view that **Salat al-Tawaf** cannot be performed in *jama'ah*. This unique instance highlighted that divine commands and the Prophet's (s) *Sunnah* are not always dictated by convenience or the apparent benefit of congregation,

but by sacred principles.

After offering **Salat al-Tawaf**, and before proceeding to the next stage of the pilgrimage, the Prophet (s) made a stop at the **Zamzam** well. He (s) took water from **Zamzam** and drank it. This act was a *mustahab* practice, performed between the **Tawaf** prayer and the **Sa'i** between Safa and Marwa. As he drank, the Prophet (s) recited a specific *du'a*: "**Oh Allah, make it (Zamzam) a source of beneficial knowledge, vast sustenance, and healing from every illness and ailment.**" This *du'a* beautifully encapsulates the profound spiritual and material blessings associated with **Zamzam**. The miracle of **Zamzam** itself, gushing forth by Allah's command to quench the thirst of Prophet Isma'il (a.s.) when his mother, Lady Hajar (a.s.), was desperately searching for water, stands as an eternal testament to the power of sincere *du'a* and unwavering faith. It teaches humanity that even in moments of seemingly insurmountable despair, Allah's mercy and abundance are limitless, often manifesting after sustained effort and perseverance.

Next, the Prophet (s) directed his steps towards Mount Safa to commence the **Sa'i**. The companions held a lingering aversion towards Safa and Marwa. In the pre-Islamic era, idols were placed on these two mountains, and pilgrims would touch or kiss these idols as part of their rituals. Even after the idols were removed during the Conquest of Mecca, the memory of their presence caused a revulsion in the hearts of some Muslims towards these mountains. To cleanse this psychological taint and elevate their status, Allah revealed **Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayah 158**: "**Indeed, Safa and Marwa are among the symbols of Allah. So, whoever performs Hajj to the House or performs *Umrah*, there is no blame upon him for circumambulating between them.**"

As the Prophet (s) approached Mount Safa, he recited this *Ayah* loudly, proclaiming that these two mountains were not mere hills but **Sha'airullah**

(symbols of Allah). He then ascended Safa, turned towards the Ka'bah, and stood there for a considerable period, immersed in *du'a*. He recited profound supplications, including: "**La ilaha illallah wahdahu la shareeka lah, lahul mulku wa lahul hamd, yuhyi wa yumeet wa huwa hayyun la yamoot**" (There is no god but Allah, He is One, He has no partner; to Him belongs all sovereignty and praise; He gives life and causes death, and He is the Living, who never dies) and "**La ilaha illallah wahdahu, anjaza wa'dah, wa nasara 'abdah, wa hazamal ahzaba wahdah**" (There is no god but Allah, He is One; He fulfilled His promise, He helped His servant, and He alone defeated the confederates). Standing on Safa for a prolonged period, engaged in *du'a*, is a highly recommended and proven *mustahab* act for the increase of *rizq*.

The Prophet (s) then commenced the **Sa'i** between Safa and Marwa, covering the distance seven times (Safa to Marwa is one circuit, Marwa to Safa is the second, and so on). During this **Sa'i**, he (s) rode his camel, indicating that performing the **Sa'i** on a conveyance is permissible even without a valid excuse, though walking carries greater reward. A particular part of the **Sa'i** involves a short section between Safa and Marwa where men are *mustahab* (recommended) to perform *Harwala* (a brisk pace, like a fast walk or light jog). This practice originates from Lady Hajar's frantic search for water for her son, Isma'il. As she ran between the two hills, there was a dip in the ground where she would lose sight of her son. In her desperate anxiety, she would speed up to quickly get back into view of him.

However, a critical distinction, emphasized by the Prophet (s) himself and upheld in Islamic *Sharia*, is that *Harwala* is for men, not women. While women are encouraged to perform the *Sa'i* at a normal walking pace, they are not to engage in *Harwala*. This rule underscores the profound importance of *hijab* and modesty in Islam, even during sacred acts of worship and in the most revered places. The Islamic injunction for a woman's

modesty and cover takes precedence over her following the exact historical *Sunnah* of Lady Hajar (a.s.) in this particular action. The Prophet (s) conveyed that Allah would not tolerate a woman's immodesty, even in the sacred precincts of the Ka'bah, and that the sanctity of *hijab* is paramount, even surpassing the *Sunnah* of Lady Hajar (a.s.). This principle highlights the deep spiritual and ethical framework of Islam, where the preservation of a woman's dignity and modesty is a fundamental value.

As the Prophet (s) completed the seven circuits of the **Sa'i**, he made a statement that deeply impacted and astonished the companions, leaving them in a state of wonder and contemplation. This profound pronouncement set the stage for the next monumental event in his blessed life, ensuring the completion of the divine message and the clear establishment of its succession.

Chapter 194

The Farewell Pilgrimage: A New Path and an Uncompromising Guardian

The ***Hajjat al-Wida'*** (Farewell Pilgrimage) of the Prophet Muhammad (s) in Dhul-Hijjah 10 AH, while known as his final *Hajj*, also marked a momentous and permanent transformation in the very rites of pilgrimage, initiating a new era for the global *Ummah*. Having previously detailed the Prophet's (s) arrival in Mecca, his performance of *Tawaf*, *Salat al-Tawaf* at *Maqam Ibrahim*, drinking of *Zamzam* water, and the beginning of *Sa'i* between Safa and Marwa, the sacred journey continued its profound unveiling of divine will.

Following the completion of seven circuits of *Sa'i* between Safa and Marwa, the Prophet (s) paused atop the hill of Marwa. Customarily, he would stand for a prolonged *du'a* at this point, but on this occasion, his halt held a deeper significance. He turned, gesturing behind him, and declared that the Archangel Jibril (a.s.) had just descended with a new divine command, one that would redefine the pilgrimage for generations to come.

From the time of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), the prevailing method of *Hajj* required pilgrims to assume *Ihram* upon approaching Mecca and maintain

all its stringent restrictions—such as abstaining from hunting, using perfume, cutting hair or nails, wearing tailored clothes for men, or a *niqab* for women—continuously until all rites in Mina, including the sacrifice and shaving of the head, were completed. This meant pilgrims, particularly those traveling from distant lands, could remain bound by these prohibitions for weeks or even months. While this demanding form of worship had been observed for millennia, the advent of Islam as a universal religion, whose followers would flock from all corners of the earth, necessitated a dispensation.

The Prophet (s), in his profound compassion for his *Ummah*, had famously prayed to Allah during his ***Mi'raj*** (ascension) journey, 13 years prior to this *Hajj*, asking that his followers not be burdened beyond their capacity, unlike some previous nations. This plea, articulated in the Holy Qur'an, ***Rabbana wa la tuhammilna ma la taqata lana bih*** (**Our Lord, and do not burden us with that which we have no ability to bear - Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 286**), was now being fulfilled. Allah, in His infinite mercy, as affirmed in the Qur'an, ***Ma ja'ala alaykum fid-dini min haraj*** (**He has not laid upon you in religion any hardship - Surah al-Hajj, Ayah 78**), would alleviate this burden.

The divine decree, conveyed by Jibril (a.s.) mid-Hajj, was a revolutionary shift. It declared that for those coming from outside the sacred precincts of Mecca (defined as a 48 *miles* or 88 *kilometers* radius), the *Hajj* would henceforth be performed in two stages, known as *Hajj al-Tamattu'*. The first stage, an *Umrah*, involved performing the *Tawaf*, *Salat al-Tawaf*, and *Sa'i*. After the *Sa'i*, pilgrims were now permitted to shave or cut their hair (*halq* or *taqsir*) and then remove their *Ihram*, becoming *halal* from all its restrictions until the 8th of Dhul-Hijjah. On that day, they would re-enter *Ihram* for the second stage, the *Hajj* proper, which included the stand at Arafat, stay in Muzdalifah, and the rites in Mina. A key condition for this easier *Hajj al-Tamattu'* was that the pilgrim must offer a ***Qurbani*** (sacri-

fice).

For the residents of Mecca and those within the 88 km radius, the traditional *Hajj* (known as *Hajj al-Qiran* or *Hajj al-Ifrad*) would continue, requiring them to remain in *Ihram* from its assumption until the completion of all rites in Mina. For them, the ***Qurbani*** remained optional.

This sudden announcement at Marwa, instructing people to perform *halq* or *taqsir* and exit *Ihram*, created a stir. Many Muslims had arrived in Mecca with the intention of performing the traditional *Hajj*, having already entered *Ihram* with that mindset. The command seemed to contradict the existing Qur'anic verse, ***Wa la tahliqu ru'usakum hatta yablughal hadyu mahillah*** (**And do not shave your heads until the sacrificial animal reaches its place - Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 196**), which stipulated that one should not shave one's head until the sacrifice is made in Mina.

Amidst the bewildered crowd, several groups voiced their confusion and discontent. One group, adhering strictly to ancestral traditions, exclaimed, "Our fathers and grandfathers never performed such a *Hajj*! How can we remove our *Ihram* in the middle of the pilgrimage, engage in worldly pleasures, and then resume the *Hajj*?" Another individual, claiming immense *taqwa* (piety), approached the Prophet (s) with visible agitation, questioning how they could return to their wives, then rejoin the pilgrimage with traces of *ghusl janabat* (ritual bath) on their heads, deeming it an act against piety. The Prophet (s), aware of the hypocrisy beneath this individual's words, foretold that he would neither accept this ruling then nor later. A third group, driven by their deep love for the Prophet (s), argued, "How can we wear new clothes and perfume, when our beloved Prophet (s) is still in *Ihram*, his garments worn, his hair unkempt?" They felt it disrespectful to indulge in ease while the Prophet (s) himself bore the continuous hardships of *Ihram*.

To these varied objections, the Prophet (s) delivered a profound princi-

ple: "***Al-Amru Fawqal Adab***" (**The command is above manners/etiquette**). He emphasized that true reverence lies in unwavering obedience to Allah's direct command, even if it appears to contradict personal notions of piety or love. He clarified that those who had not brought sacrificial animals with them from their homes should now perform *halq* or *taqsir*, shed their *Ihram*, and become *halal* until the 8th of Dhul-Hijjah. For those who, like himself, had brought sacrificial animals, they were to continue in *Ihram* until the sacrifice was made in Mina. The Prophet (s) expressed a wish that if this command had come earlier, he too would have come without animals and performed *Hajj al-Tamattu'*.

Suraqa ibn Malik, a companion who had famously pursued the Prophet (s) during the *Hijrah* for reward but later converted, stepped forward and asked for clarity: "O Messenger of Allah, is this ruling for this year only, or for all times?" The Prophet (s), in a decisive gesture, interlocked his fingers and declared, "***DaKhalatil Umratu Fil Hajji Ila Yawmil Qiyamah***" (**The *Umrah* has entered the *Hajj* until the Day of Judgment**). This definitive statement established *Hajj al-Tamattu'* as the permanent and integrated form of *Hajj* for all pilgrims coming from outside Mecca, thus solidifying the divine changes for eternity.

Among the pilgrims continuing in *Ihram* due to having brought a sacrificial animal was a man named Abu ibn Khajra (or a similar name in some narrations), who suffered immensely from a severe head lice infestation. Observing his distress, the Prophet (s) was moved. This incident led to the revelation of another significant Qur'anic verse: ***Fa man kana minkum maridan aw bihi adhan min ra'sihi fa fidyatun min siyamin aw sadaqatin aw nusuk*** (**And whoever among you is ill or has an ailment of the head, then he must offer a ransom of fasting or charity or a sacrifice - Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 196**). The Prophet (s) then instructed the man to choose one of three options: fast for three days, feed six poor people, or sacrifice a sheep. This dispensation provided relief for pilgrims facing

unavoidable hardships within the confines of *Ihram*.

As these pivotal events unfolded, Imam Ali (a.s.) arrived in Mecca with his contingent from Yemen, having completed his mission as a *muballigh* and *qadi*. By the time he reached, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), who had not brought a sacrificial animal, had already completed her *Umrah al-Tamattu'*, removed her *Ihram*, and was in normal attire, perfumed. Entering her tent, Imam Ali (a.s.), still in his *Ihram* from Yemen, was surprised to see her state. Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) calmly explained that her father, the Prophet (s), had commanded it.

Imam Ali (a.s.) then immediately sought out the Prophet (s) for clarification. The Prophet (s) explained the new divine ruling regarding the two forms of *Hajj*. He then asked Ali (a.s.) about his intention when he assumed *Ihram* in Yemen. Imam Ali (a.s.) replied that, unaware of the specific details of the Prophet's (s) *Hajj* or the new rulings, he had made a general intention: "***Allahumma Ahilla Ka Ihlaal-al Nabiyyi***" (**O Allah, I enter *Ihram* as Your Prophet has entered *Ihram***). Hearing this, the Prophet (s) rejoiced, declaring, "***Ya Ali, Anta Shariktani Fi Hajjiy Wa Had'ee***" (**O Ali, you have shared in my *Hajj* and my sacrifice!**). As the Prophet (s) himself had brought 100 sacrificial animals, this meant Imam Ali (a.s.) would also continue in *Ihram* with him, sharing in his *Hajj al-Qiran* or *Ifrad* and its associated sacrifice. This moment underscored Imam Ali's (a.s.) unique spiritual connection and participation in the Prophet's (s) most sacred acts.

Soon after, Imam Ali (a.s.) sought permission to briefly leave Mecca to rejoin his caravan, which he had left just outside the city. Upon reaching them, he was dismayed to find that some members of the caravan had taken garments, part of the *Ghanimah*, *Zakat*, and *Khums* from Yemen, intended for the Prophet (s) and the *Baytul Mal*, and were wearing them, despite the sanctity of *Ihram* or their newly completed *Umrah*. Imam Ali

(a.s.) sternly ordered them to remove the garments, seeing this as a grave breach of trust and discipline.

When these caravan members later presented themselves before the Prophet (s) in Mecca, they complained bitterly about Imam Ali (a.s.), describing him as excessively harsh and unjust. In response, the Prophet (s) ascended a raised platform and addressed the entire assembly, emphatically defending Ali (a.s.). He declared, "***Innahu Khashinun Fi Dhatillah, Ghayru Mudahin Fi Dinillah***" (**Indeed, he (Ali) is strict in the way of Allah, uncompromising in the religion of Allah**). The Prophet (s) commanded the people to restrain their tongues concerning Ali (a.s.), asserting that Ali's (a.s.) firmness stemmed not from personal malice but from an absolute devotion to upholding divine law without compromise.

This profound statement, made openly before the declaration of *Ghadir Khumm*, served as a critical introduction to Imam Ali's (a.s.) unparalleled character and his designated role as the uncompromising guardian of Allah's religion. It was this very quality of unyielding adherence to divine truth that, throughout his life, attracted immense opposition and hostility, even from those who claimed to be friends of Islam. His commitment to justice and truth, regardless of personal cost, became a defining characteristic of his lineage. This uncompromising stance, exemplified by Imam Ali (a.s.), found its ultimate manifestation in his son, Imam Hussain (a.s.), who, inheriting his father's unwavering spirit, refused to compromise on the principles of Islam, choosing martyrdom in Karbala rather than submission to falsehood. The tragic journey of Imam Hussain (a.s.) from Medina, his poignant farewells to his grandmother Umme Salama (a.s.) and Umme Hani (a.s.), and Umme Salama's (a.s.) miraculous vision of the plain of Karbala through Hussain's (a.s.) divine insight, served as an agonizing foreshadowing of the ultimate sacrifice for the uncompromised preservation of Allah's divine law.

Chapter 195

The Farewell Pilgrimage: Prophecies and Eternal Lessons

The sacred journey of the *Hajjat al-Wida'* continued, a profound demonstration of divine mercy and comprehensive guidance for all of humanity until the Day of Judgment. As the Prophet Mohammad (s) meticulously led the pilgrims through the rituals, he (s) further clarified the diverse forms of the Hajj, ensuring its accessibility and perfection. Beyond the previously mentioned **Hajj al-Tamattu'**, which was now decreed as the permanent form for those coming from outside Mecca, the Prophet (s) also elucidated two other forms primarily for the residents of Mecca and its surrounding areas: **Hajj al-Qiran** and **Hajj al-Ifrad**.

Hajj al-Qiran required the pilgrim to bring their sacrificial animal with them from the point of *Ihram* until its slaughter. This ancient practice, originating from Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), emphasized the pilgrim's continuous commitment. For a resident of Mecca, the identification of a sacrificial animal often involved symbolic gestures, such as placing a garland of used shoes around its neck, signifying its purpose within the Hajj rites. **Hajj al-Ifrad**, on the other hand, was another form for Meccans, distinct

in that it did not require bringing a sacrificial animal from the outset.

A poignant incident during this Farewell Pilgrimage underscored the divine compassion embedded within these varied Hajj forms. Sayyidah Ayesha, finding herself in a state of ritual impurity (due to menstruation) upon reaching Mecca, was unable to perform the initial *Tawaf* and *Sa'i* of *Umrah* that were integral to *Hajj al-Tamattu'*. Deeply distressed by this inability to complete the rituals with the rest of the caravan, she (a.s.) expressed her sorrow to the Prophet (s). In response, the Prophet (s), demonstrating immense mercy and divine wisdom, instructed her to abandon her intention for *Hajj al-Tamattu'* and instead perform **Hajj al-Ifrad**. This form of Hajj bypassed the initial *Umrah* rituals, allowing her to proceed directly with the Hajj. After the completion of the Hajj, to alleviate her regret of not having performed an *Umrah*, the Prophet (s) directed her to perform a separate *Umrah* from Tan'im, a location just outside the sacred precincts of Mecca, which became a significant site for those wishing to perform subsequent *Umrahs*. This event not only provided ease for Sayyidah Ayesha but also established a crucial precedent, highlighting the Prophet's (s) flexibility in applying divine law to accommodate practical circumstances, especially for women. The site where Sayyidah Ayesha performed her *Umrah* later became known as Masjid-e-Ayesha, a testament to this profound dispensation.

Further illustrating the comprehensive nature of this final pilgrimage, the Prophet (s) addressed a long-standing misconception. In pre-Islamic times, trade and commerce were often seen as incompatible with the sanctity of Hajj. However, Islam, being a religion of ease and integrating the spiritual with the permissible aspects of worldly life, revealed its stance through the Holy Qur'an. During the *Hajjat al-Wida'*, the divine injunction was revealed in **Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayah 197**: **"There is no blame upon you for seeking bounty from your Lord during Hajj."** This verse unequivocally granted pilgrims the permission to engage in trade and

business, emphasizing that seeking *fadl* (bounty or favor) from Allah could encompass lawful commerce. The Prophet (s) explicitly declared this, removing any doubt or perceived contradiction between worship and livelihood. This teaching ensured that Hajj would not be a burden but a comprehensive experience, allowing pilgrims to manage their affairs while fulfilling their sacred obligations, a vital allowance for future generations.

The *Hajjat al-Wida'* was not merely a ritualistic exercise; it was a profound educational journey, a final and complete blueprint for the *Ummah*. Every action and declaration by the Prophet (s) during these days was imbued with prophetic foresight, establishing guidelines not only for those present but for believers until the end of time.

Before departing for Arafat, the Prophet (s) delivered a momentous sermon at the Ka'bah, holding its sacred door ring. He (s) began by reciting **Surah Muhammad, Ayah 18**: **"Do they await but the Hour to come upon them unawares? For already have come some of its portents."** With this divine prelude, he (s) proceeded to enumerate the **Signs of the Final Hour** (***Ashrat al-Sa'ah***), drawing the attention of the assembled multitude, with Salman al-Farsi notably standing closest to him.

The Prophet (s) foretold a time when: 1. **Prayers would be neglected or lost:** Not merely forgotten, but abandoned or performed without sincerity and proper attention, signifying a decay in the fundamental pillar of faith. 2. **People would follow their desires:** Carnal desires would become the guiding principle, overshadowing divine commands and moral precepts. 3. **Wealth would be revered:** Material possessions would become the measure of a person's worth and status, superseding piety, knowledge, or good deeds. 4. **Religion would be sold for worldly gain:** People would readily compromise their faith and principles for fleeting worldly benefits, sacrificing eternal truths for temporary profits.

The Prophet (s) then described the agonizing state of a true believer in such a time: **"Then the heart of a believer will melt within him, just as salt melts in water."** This profound analogy illustrated the immense sorrow and helplessness a sincere believer would feel witnessing such widespread sin and corruption, unable to rectify the pervasive moral decay. Salman al-Farsi, deeply moved, inquired, "O Messenger of Allah, will such a time truly come?" The Prophet (s) affirmed, **"Indeed, by Him in Whose Hand is my soul, it will surely come."** This prophecy served as a grave warning, prompting reflection and preparing the *Ummah* for the challenges of the future.

These prophetic utterances during the Farewell Hajj were not just warnings but also underscored the enduring legacy of the Prophet (s) and the indispensable role of his *Ahlul Bayt* as the torchbearers of truth. The challenges of the *akhir al-zaman* (end times) would necessitate steadfast leadership and sacrifice, qualities perfectly embodied by the *Ahlul Bayt*.

The life of Imam Ali ibn al-Hussein (a.s.), Imam Sajjad, stands as a living testament to these prophecies. Born to Sayyidah Shaharbano (a.s.), an Iranian princess, Imam Sajjad (a.s.) carried the spiritual lineage that would confront these very signs. His blessed mother, like the mother of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) (Sayyidah Narjis Khatoon, a Roman princess), had seen Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) in her dreams before her captivity, receiving glad tidings of her marriage to the Prophet's (s) grandson, Imam Hussain (a.s.). This parallelism signifies the universal reach and destined roles of these sacred lineages.

Imam Sajjad's (a.s.) sacrifice was unique; he did not undergo *shahadah* (martyrdom) in Karbala, but rather *qayd* (captivity). His subsequent journey in chains, presented as a "slave" in the court of Yazid, was a profound act of resilience. While kings prefer death to captivity, Imam Sajjad (a.s.) bore this ignominy with divine patience, for his captivity was

a critical means of preserving Islam. It was his unwavering stance that stemmed the tide of deviation and ensured the continuity of true faith in a society plunged into spiritual darkness.

Throughout his life, Imam Sajjad (a.s.) remained a beacon of servitude and spiritual guidance. His humility was legendary; despite his exalted status, he would travel for Hajj in caravans where he was unknown, serving pilgrims, tending to their animals, and setting up their tents. When pilgrims discovered his identity, he would move to another caravan, emphasizing that he traveled to serve, not to be served. This devotion to serving pilgrims, a practice often overlooked by those consumed by ritualistic piety, demonstrated the profound spiritual reward in selflessly aiding others. He taught that the reward for serving a pilgrim far surpassed that of merely performing *Tawaf* or other individual acts of worship. He once instructed a companion, who had stayed behind to guard the caravan's belongings while others performed *Tawaf*, that he had earned a greater reward than all of them combined. This profound insight revealed that true devotion often lies in humble service and compassion, aligning with the Prophet's (s) own emphasis on the spirit of worship over mere external forms.

The chapter concluded with a reflection on the blessing of passing away during a sacred journey, such as Hajj or *Umrah*. Such a death is likened to *shahadah*, bestowing immense spiritual merit upon the departed. It underscores the profound sanctity of these pilgrimages, making them a pathway to divine proximity even in death.

Chapter 196

The Grand Prophecy: Unveiling the Future at the Ka'bah

The blessed journey of *Hajjat al-Wida'* continued, a divine blueprint for all future generations. Following his entry into Mecca on the fourth day of Dhul Hijjah and the completion of his *Umrah*, the Prophet Mohammad (s) remained in the sacred city for three additional days. During this time, from the fourth to the seventh of Dhul Hijjah, important events unfolded, shaping the understanding of Islamic practice and foreshadowing profound societal shifts.

Among the incidents addressed by the Prophet (s) was the case of Sayyidah Asma bint Umays, who had given birth to Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr just before the pilgrimage. Her situation posed a question regarding her ability to perform the *Umrah* given her state. The Prophet (s), with his boundless wisdom and mercy, provided a clear resolution, guiding her through the ritual impurity and ensuring her participation in the sacred rites. This moment, though brief in historical accounts, underscored the compassionate and flexible nature of Islamic law, ensuring that even in times of difficulty, the path to worship remained accessible.

However, the most momentous event during these days was a profoundly significant sermon delivered by the Prophet (s) within the precincts of the Holy Ka'bah. Standing before the throngs of pilgrims, with his blessed hand grasping the ring of the Ka'bah's door, a posture that commanded full attention, the Messenger of Allah (s) turned to face the assembled multitude. He posed a poignant question, drawing their attention to the signs of the impending Hour, referencing the divine warning in **Surah Muhammad, Ayah 18**: "**Do they then await but the Hour, that it should come upon them unawares? But already have come some of its portents.**" The Prophet (s) proceeded to unveil a series of prophecies, foretelling the spiritual, moral, and social decay that would precede the Day of Judgment. These signs, far from being minor details, were presented as critical indicators of the future state of the *Ummah*.

The Prophet (s) outlined a stark vision of the future:

- **Spiritual Decay:** He spoke of the **neglect of prayers** and the **pursuit of desires**, where individuals would stray from divine injunctions and succumb to their carnal inclinations. Hearts would melt with sorrow, like salt dissolving in water, as believers witnessed widespread forbidden acts, yet found themselves powerless to effect change.
- **Moral Inversion:** The world would see a perverse **reverence for wealth**, and people would **sell their religion for worldly gain**. Trust would erode as **trustworthy individuals turned betrayers**, and **justice would be corrupted by unjust rulers** and their **fasiq (immoral) ministers**. Even the **knowledgeable would become oppressors**. The most disturbing inversion would be the widespread acceptance of **evil as good, and good as evil**.
- **Societal Breakdown:** Lying would become a trivial matter, a mere joke. The sacred obligation of *Zakat* (including *Khums*) would be perceived as a burden or fine, while public rights and communal wealth (*Fay'*) would be treated as personal spoils. Parents would be treated

with harshness, while kindness would be reserved only for friends.

- **Gender Roles and Modesty:** The Prophet (s) foretold a time of profound immodesty, where women would resemble men, ride mounts, and even drive their own conveyances, leading to divine displeasure and *la'natullah* (curse of Allah). He also warned against the increasing trend of women involving themselves in business alongside their husbands as a sign of the changing times.
- **Economic and Natural Anomalies:** Rain would fall out of season, and the markets of the world would become intertwined, yet trade would bring dissatisfaction and complaints, leading people to blame Allah for their lack of profit. The honorable would be humiliated, and the poor despised.
- **Prevalence of the Forbidden:** Men would adorn themselves with **gold and silk**, which is forbidden in Islam. **Interest** (***Riba***) and **bribery** (***Rishwat***) would become rampant in all transactions, making it impossible to conduct even the smallest affairs without them. **Divorces would multiply**, and the divine **Hudood** (**Islamic punishments/laws**) would be neglected.
- **Rise of Music and Misguidance:** Musical instruments and singing would proliferate and become openly displayed. In a profound and startling statement, the Prophet (s) identified the people who would surround and embrace these activities as "the best of my *Ummah*", indicating a tragic inversion of values where society would revere what is forbidden. He also warned of individuals learning the Quran for worldly gain and reciting it with musical accompaniment, or learning *fiqh* for purposes other than serving Allah.
- **Loss of Dignity for Believers:** The Prophet (s) prophesied that the **believers would become the most despised and humiliated** among nations. He spoke of eloquent reciters and worshippers who would criticize each other's prayers and Quranic recitations, being labeled by the heavens as *arjaf* (restless) and *najis* (impure). The wealthy

would refuse to help the poor, to the extent that a needy person would beg for aid between two Fridays without receiving any sustenance.

- **The Speaking of the "Ruwaibiza":** A striking sign mentioned was the "speaking of the *Ruwaibiza*"—meaning that unqualified, insignificant, and foolish individuals would gain prominence and speak on matters beyond their comprehension, while true people of faith would be few.
- **Environmental Calamities:** The earth would experience frequent **earthquakes and tremors**, causing people to mistakenly believe the calamity was unique to them, though it would be widespread.
- **The Futility of Material Wealth:** In a chilling prophecy, the Prophet (s) declared that the earth would eventually yield its hidden treasures, exhaling vast amounts of **gold and silver** – enough to build pillars – but at that time, these precious metals would be utterly useless. This would be the time of divine retribution, when worldly possessions would offer no salvation.

Throughout this monumental sermon, Salman al-Farsi, a beloved companion, repeatedly expressed his astonishment, asking if such degradation could truly befall the Prophet's (s) *Ummah*. To each query, the Prophet (s) solemnly affirmed, "**Yes, by Him in Whose Hand is my soul, it shall indeed come to pass.**" This repeated oath underscored the certainty of these prophecies, serving as a grave warning and a call for vigilance.

The Prophet (s) emphasized that during these times of overwhelming trials, when gold and silver would be meaningless, the only salvation would lie in turning towards the *Hujjat-Allah* (Proof of Allah)—the divinely appointed Imam. His very presence, as the speaker beautifully expounded, serves to avert divine punishment, akin to Allah's mercy that prevents the full wrath from descending when a pure soul is present. This profound truth connects to the impending appearance of Imam al-Mahdi

(a.s.), whose arrival would be the ultimate remedy for the spiritual and moral decline. This sentiment echoed the transformative repentance of individuals like Hurr ibn Yazid al-Riyahi, who, despite a lifetime of errors, found salvation by turning to the Imam before it was too late, demonstrating that the door of *tawbah* (repentance) remains open even in the gravest of circumstances, provided one turns to the divinely appointed guide.

Chapter 197

The Sacred Journey to Arafat: Upholding the Pure *Sunnah*

The Farewell Pilgrimage continued to unfold as a living testament to the Prophet's (s) divine mission, meticulously demonstrating each rite and correcting deep-seated pre-Islamic customs. Following his three-day stay in Mecca after performing the *Umrah*, the Prophet (s) prepared for the next pivotal stage of the *Hajj*. His own *Ihram* for *Hajj al-Qiran* or *Ifrad* had remained intact since his departure from Medina, as he had brought sacrificial animals with him. Imam Ali (a.s.), who had joined from Yemen with the intention to perform *Hajj* like the Prophet (s), also remained in the state of *Ihram*.

However, Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), having not brought sacrificial animals, had concluded her *Umrah* and exited the state of *Ihram* on the first day in Mecca, as per the newly established *Hajj al-Tamattu'*. This distinction was deliberate, a divine design to ensure that both forms of *Hajj—Tamattu'* for those without sacrificial animals, and *Qiran*/*Ifrad* for those with them—were clearly exemplified within the Prophet's (s) own blessed household, establishing their *Sunnah* for generations to come. The Prophet (s) had

even made Imam Ali (a.s.) a partner in his own sacrificial animals, affirming their shared spiritual journey.

On the 8th of Dhul-Hijjah, known as **Yawm al-Tarwiyah**, the day of preparation and deliberation, the Prophet (s) commanded all pilgrims to leave Mecca for Mina. Mecca, usually bustling, became remarkably quiet by midday as the vast multitude made their way to this adjacent plain. While the majority of pilgrims, having performed *Umrah* and discarded their *Ihram*, now re-entered the sacred state by donning their *Ihram* garments from various points in Mecca, including their homes or holy sites like *Maqam Ibrahim* or *Hajar Isma'il*, the Prophet (s) and Imam Ali (a.s.) continued their journey with their *Ihram* intact. The air was filled with the resounding *Talbiyah* as hundreds of thousands re-entered the ritual purity of *Hajj*.

Upon arriving in Mina, the Prophet (s) made his way to a cave, a testament to the simplicity of the era when Mina's terrain was predominantly mountainous with natural shelters, rather than the modern structures of today. Here, the Prophet (s) spent the day and night, performing the five prayers (*Dhuhr*, *Asr*, *Maghrib*, *Isha* of the 8th and *Fajr* of the 9th) in Mina. It was in this blessed cave, near what is now known as *Masjid al-Khayf*—a place where tradition holds 70,000 prophets have prayed—that a profound spiritual experience befell the Prophet (s). He entered a state of intense spiritual absorption, which was later revealed to be the moment of the revelation of **Surah al-Mursalat**. This *Surah*, famously known for the repeated verse, **"Woe on that Day to the deniers!"** (***Waylun Yawma'idhin Lilmukadhdhibeen***), served as a powerful reminder of divine retribution against those who reject the truth. Its placement between *Surah al-Dahr* (which discusses Imamate) and *Surah An-Naba'* (which discusses the Day of Judgment) underscores its deep theological significance, emphasizing the interconnectedness of Imamate and Resurrection.

As the sun rose on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah, **Yawm Arafah**, the Prophet (s) began the journey from Mina to Arafat. This path, though physically short, held profound spiritual and historical significance. The journey passed through Muzdalifah, which lies within the boundaries of *Haram* (the sacred precinct). Arafat, however, is located outside the *Haram* boundary—a fact that had historically been a point of contention with the Quraish. The Quraish, due to their self-proclaimed superior status as guardians of the Ka'bah, often refused to go beyond Muzdalifah for *Hajj*, considering it beneath them to step outside the sacred precinct. This practice, known as *Hums*, was a distortion of the true *Sunnah* of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.).

The Prophet (s), however, meticulously followed the *Sunnah* of Prophets Ibrahim (a.s.), Isma'il (a.s.), and Ishaq (a.s.), who had always completed their *Hajj* by standing in Arafat. As his camel approached the boundary of the *Haram* before Arafat, the Quraish, observing his actions, grew anxious, wondering if he, too, would halt at Muzdalifah. But the Prophet (s) continued, leading the entire congregation past the *Haram* boundary into Arafat, unequivocally breaking this long-standing Quraishi deviation. He emphasized that Allah's command, as revealed to him by Jibreel, was to proceed **"from where all people proceed"** (***min haythu afada an-naas***), clarifying that "all people" referred specifically to Prophets Ibrahim (a.s.), Isma'il (a.s.), and Ishaq (a.s.), who had consistently performed the *Hajj* correctly. This action was a powerful declaration of the equality of all believers and a dismantling of racial or tribalistic hierarchies, a theme he would strongly emphasize in his subsequent sermon.

The Prophet (s) reached Namirah, a section of the vast plain of Arafat, early in the morning and pitched his tent. Though the actual standing in Arafat was to begin at midday (*Zawal*), he arrived well in advance. At the appointed time of *Zawal* on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah, a crucial moment for the rites of *Hajj*, the Prophet (s) commanded the cessation of the *Talbiyah*. He then instructed Bilal al-Habashi to give one *adhan* followed by two

iqamats, signaling the performance of *Dhuhr* and *Asr* prayers in succession (*Jam' bayn al-Salatayn*). This act was a clear *Sunnah*, universally accepted by all Muslims as permissible during *Hajj*. The prayers were offered in the spot where *Masjid Namirah* now stands.

Following the prayers, while seated on his camel, the Prophet (s) was offered a cup of milk by Sayyiduna Abbas, his uncle. The Prophet (s) visibly drank the milk in front of the vast congregation. This act carried a significant message: to demonstrate that he was not fasting, thereby establishing the permissibility, and even the *makrooh* (disliked) nature, of fasting on the Day of Arafat if it weakens one for the performance of the crucial *a'mal* (deeds) of the day. The core focus of *Yawm Arafah* is the *a'mal* of supplication and spiritual devotion, and not fasting. The Prophet (s) also clarified that as a *musafir* (traveler), he was performing *qasr* (shortened) prayers, even though Arafat today is considered part of the expanded Mecca, in his time it was distinct enough for prayers to be shortened.

During the standing in Arafat, a tragic accident occurred. Amidst the vast crowd, a pilgrim fell from his camel, breaking his neck and dying instantly. This marked the first death during the Prophet's (s) Farewell Pilgrimage. The Prophet (s) declared this pilgrim a *shaheed* (martyr) and proclaimed that he would be resurrected on the Day of Judgment in the very state of *Ihram*, reciting the *Talbiyah*. This divine assurance offered immense solace to the pilgrim's family and the *Ummah*, indicating the profound spiritual status of one who dies in the path of *Hajj*.

As sunset approached, marking the end of the standing in Arafat, a moment of profound spiritual significance, the Prophet (s) again intervened to correct another pre-Islamic custom. The Quraish and other privileged individuals would typically depart from Arafat before sunset to avoid the congestion of the main crowd. However, the Prophet (s) firmly instructed everyone, regardless of their status or wealth, to remain in Arafat

until the sun had fully set. Only then did he begin the movement towards Muzdalifah.

Leading the vast multitude, the Prophet (s) rode his camel, continually admonishing the pilgrims to proceed with tranquility and peace (***Sakina***). He repeatedly urged both riders and pedestrians to move slowly, cautioning camel riders against rushing and endangering those on foot. He even pulled the reins of his own camel so firmly that its head touched its humps, symbolizing his absolute insistence on calm and orderly progression. The journey from Arafat at sunset, often described as a "minor resurrection" due to its scale and spiritual intensity, was to be undertaken with utmost serenity, embodying the discipline and mercy of Islam.

The Prophet's (s) meticulous guidance throughout the journey from Mina to Arafat, his correction of entrenched customs, and his compassionate leadership transformed the *Hajj* into a profound spiritual and educational experience for the entire *Ummah*. Yet, this journey also carried a subtle, poignant parallel to the later suffering of his *Ahlul Bayt*. Just as the Prophet (s) showed immense concern for those falling from camels during the *Hajj*, one cannot help but recall the arduous journey of Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.) and Imam Sajjad (a.s.) after Karbala. Forced to ride bare camels at a furious pace, children fell from their mounts, crying out for their Grandfather. Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.), to ensure the survival of Imam Sajjad (a.s.) and the children, would herself fall from her camel, compelling the caravan to halt, ensuring the preservation of the sacred Imamate despite the unbearable pain and indignity. Such moments, even in the midst of joyous pilgrimage, served as a profound reminder of the sacrifices to come.

Chapter 198

Muzdalifah: The Night of Intercession and Divine Assurance

Having completed the profound spiritual standing at Arafat, the Prophet Muhammad (s) prepared his *Ummah* for the next crucial stage of the Farewell Pilgrimage. As dusk settled, the vast congregation, filled with the spiritual intensity of *du'a* and *istighfar*, began their movement towards Muzdalifah, also known as *Mash'ar al-Haram*.

The journey from Arafat to Muzdalifah was a significant test of patience and discipline. Despite the recent immersion in prayer and repentance, a certain eagerness, even a rush, began to manifest among some pilgrims. The routes were challenging, with narrow passes between mountains, and the sheer number of people made movement difficult. Observing the impatience and haste, the Prophet (s) firmly intervened. He instructed his companions, *" **Alaykum bi al-Sakinah!** "* (Be calm! Be tranquil!). So strong was his emphasis on maintaining peace and order that he deliberately reined in his camel, pulling its reins so tightly that its neck arched back, almost touching its chest, ensuring a slow and measured pace. He taught them that Hajj was not about crushing the weak or displaying one's

strength, but about proceeding with composure and respect for all.

Along the path, at a point between Arafat and Muzdalifah, the Prophet (s) dismounted briefly to attend to a personal need and then performed *wudu*. A companion, whether Fadl ibn Abbas or Usamah ibn Zayd, inquired if it was time for *Salat*. The Prophet (s) affirmed that for this particular night, the Maghrib and Isha prayers would be combined and performed only upon arrival at Muzdalifah, emphasizing that the command superseded any urgency to pray them earlier. This act firmly established the *Sunnah* of combining these prayers at Muzdalifah, regardless of how late it might become.

Upon reaching Muzdalifah, the Prophet (s) guided the pilgrims to camp. Bilal al-Habashi (r.a.) called out one *adhan* and two *iqamats*, and the Prophet (s) led the congregation in the combined Maghrib and Isha prayers. The night spent in Muzdalifah is considered to be of immense spiritual significance, with some traditions asserting its superiority even over *Shab al-Qadr* (Laylat al-Qadr). The Prophet (s) spent the entire night in deep *ibadah* (worship) and *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), exemplifying profound devotion. This was a night for intense supplication, and the recitation of the ***Tasbih of Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra*** (a.s.) is particularly emphasized as a virtuous act. The profound importance of observing the stay in Muzdalifah was underscored, as it was a divinely ordained resting point.

During this night of intense devotion, a profound and revealing incident occurred. Throughout his time in Arafat, during the journey, and through the night in Muzdalifah, the Prophet (s) incessantly supplicated to Allah for the forgiveness of his *Ummah*. Allah (SWT) accepted all of his supplications, except for one: the unconditional forgiveness of those who had violated the ***Huquq al-Nas*** (rights of people). Allah (SWT) informed the Prophet (s) that justice for the oppressed must prevail, and unless the op-

pressor sought forgiveness directly from the wronged individual or made amends, or unless Allah Himself compensated the victim to their satisfaction, such rights could not be overlooked. The Prophet (s) continued to plead for the *Ummah*, and finally, Allah (SWT) conveyed that He would ensure satisfaction for the wronged, either by inspiring the oppressor to seek forgiveness or by bestowing upon the victim such blessings in the Hereafter that they would willingly forgive.

At this moment of divine assurance, the Prophet (s) was seen to smile, and then to laugh. When asked why, he explained that he had witnessed Iblis (Satan) in a state of utter despair, rolling in the dust and throwing dirt upon his head in sheer frustration and rage. This was because Satan's primary means of misleading humanity was through instigating oppression and violation of *Huquq al-Nas*. The Prophet's (s) persistent *du'a* and Allah's conditional acceptance meant that even this pathway to damnation for the oppressor was now complicated by divine justice and the potential for compensation, thereby limiting Satan's ease of access to human souls.

As dawn approached on the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah, the Prophet (s) issued a specific instruction. He directed the weak, the elderly, women, and the sick to proceed early towards Mina, even before sunrise. This directive was a compassionate measure to ensure their safety and comfort, allowing them to avoid the inevitable rush and congestion that would occur as the entire congregation began to move. This was a demonstration of the practical application of Islamic compassion and wisdom, ensuring ease and safety for all, a departure from pre-Islamic customs where everyone would rush together at dawn.

Before the main departure, the Prophet (s) also instructed the pilgrims to collect pebbles for the *ramy al-jamarat* (stoning of Satan) from Muzdalifah. Though pebbles could be collected from other places, Muzdalifah was

indicated as a preferred and auspicious location.

The Prophet (s) then performed the Fajr prayer at Muzdalifah. After the prayer, he remained in supplication until the sun fully rose, patiently guiding his *Ummah*. This was another moment of reform: unlike the Quraysh, who would linger in Muzdalifah until the sun was high, the Prophet (s) waited only until sunrise before preparing to depart, balancing adherence to *Sunnah* with practical considerations of safety and preventing chaotic rushes.

The Prophet (s) then reiterated a profound truth concerning the diverse intentions with which people undertake the Hajj. Drawing from the Holy Qur'an, which distinguishes between those who seek only worldly gain and those who seek goodness in both this life and the Hereafter (***Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 200-201***), he prophesied about the pilgrims of the Last Age. He foretold that in later times, people would perform Hajj for varied reasons: the wealthy would undertake it for tourism and leisure, having abundant means for travel and recreation; the middle class would engage in it for trade and business, using the pilgrimage as an opportunity for material gain; and regrettably, the poor would perform it for show-off and display (*riya kari*), seeking social status rather than spiritual purification.

This prophetic warning underscored the crucial importance of *niyyah* (intention) in all acts of worship, particularly Hajj. The true essence of Hajj lies in seeking divine proximity and forgiveness, not in worldly pursuits or ostentation. The Prophet (s) emphasized that Hajj is a sacred journey of transformation, demanding humility, patience, and adherence to divine commands, reminding the *Ummah* that true salvation lies in sincere devotion and the rectification of one's inner state.

Chapter 199

The Farewell Sermon: A Prophetic Testament for Future Generations

Following the meticulous completion of the rituals of the ***Hajjat al-Wida'*** (Farewell Pilgrimage), the Blessed Prophet Mohammad (s), having fully demonstrated the prescribed rites, prepared to depart from the sacred city of Mecca. This final pilgrimage was not merely an act of worship; it was a profound testament, a living curriculum, and a strategic moment for the Prophet (s) to deliver critical messages to his *Ummah*. The very journey from Medina to the Ka'bah, and every action within it, became a definitive example, fulfilling the divine command: "***Khudhū 'annī manāsikakum***" (Take your rites from me).

This unique emphasis on the Prophet's (s) *fi'l* (action) during *Hajjat al-Wida'* is particularly significant in the principles of Islamic law. While both the Prophet's (s) *qaul* (saying) and *fi'l* (action) serve as ***Hujjat*** (proof) and form the bedrock of the ***Sunnah*** alongside the Holy Qur'an, there is a subtle yet crucial distinction. Generally, a direct *qaul* carries a more definitive weight, as a *fi'l* might be specific to the Prophet (s) (***khususiyyat***), its underlying reason or context unknown, or it might have been performed

under duress or specific conditions. For instance, the Prophet's (s) marriage to more than four wives was a ***khususiyyah***, an exception specifically granted to him. Similarly, an action like praying while lying down might have been due to illness, making it permissible only under such circumstances, not as a general rule. However, in the context of *Hajj*, the Prophet (s) explicitly elevated his *fi'l* to a universal model, instructing the *Ummah* to emulate his every action.

Furthermore, the Prophet (s) dispelled a common misconception about *Hajj* itself. He implicitly emphasized that *Hajj* is predominantly an act of 'doing' (***Hajj karna***), rather than extensive 'reciting' (***Hajj padhna***). Apart from the recitation of the ***Talbiyah*** ("***Labbayk Allāhumma Labbayk***..") and the two *rak'at* of ***Salat al-Tawaf***, the vast majority of *Hajj* rituals involve physical actions, not verbal recitations. This practical demonstration reinforced the accessibility of *Hajj* for all believers, regardless of their linguistic or memorization abilities, countering any notion that it was an overly complex or challenging spiritual endeavor.

As the Prophet (s) concluded the *Hajj* rites, he prepared for his final departure from Mecca. It is a ***mustahab*** (recommended) practice in Islam to leave Mecca as soon as possible after completing the Hajj, ensuring that the reverence and awe of the pilgrimage remain fresh and untainted by the mundane aspects of daily life. This departure would mark the Prophet's (s) last physical presence in Mecca, as he would return to Medina and eventually pass away there.

In preparation for this final departure, the Prophet (s) performed the ***Tawaf al-Wida'*** (Farewell Circumambulation) of the Holy Ka'bah. This was not a mere ritual; it was a deeply emotional and spiritually charged act. During this farewell, the Prophet (s) grasped the door-ring of the Ka'bah, and from this most sacred threshold, delivered a powerful sermon that resonated far beyond the immediate congregation. With a voice

that was miraculously loud and clear, he cried out, "***Ayyuhannas!***" (O people!), a call that reached not only those gathered within the mosque but also those in the bustling markets beyond. This extraordinary reach of his voice, attested to by companions like Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari, reflects both a divine miracle and the close proximity of the urban landscape of Mecca fourteen centuries ago, where markets bordered the sacred precinct.

This particular sermon was one of four pivotal addresses delivered by the Prophet (s) during this final pilgrimage. The first was given upon his arrival in Mecca, before the *Hajj* rituals commenced. The second was delivered in the plains of Arafat, during the peak of the pilgrimage. The third was this sermon at the Ka'bah door as he departed Mecca. The fourth, and arguably the most momentous, would be delivered later at Ghadir Khumm.

What distinguished this farewell sermon at the Ka'bah door, like the preceding ones, was its profound orientation towards the future. The Prophet (s) explicitly stated, "***Fal-yuballigh al-shahid al-gha'ib***" (Let the present convey to the absent). This profound instruction meant that the message was not primarily for the immediate audience gathered before him, but for generations yet unborn—for those who would come hundreds, even thousands of years later. The Prophet (s) foresaw the challenges and deviations that would afflict his ***Ummah*** and, through these sermons, sought to provide enduring guidance and warnings. He was communicating across the vast expanse of time, relying on the sincere among his companions to faithfully transmit his words.

The prophetic foresight embedded in these sermons becomes starkly apparent when one considers the subsequent history of Islam and the ***Ahlul Bayt***. The Prophet's (s) warnings about future events extended to profound injustices and trials that would test the very fabric of the Islamic

community. A poignant illustration of this foresight, and a direct consequence of the deviations from his path, is the tragic fate of his beloved daughter, Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra (a.s.).

Just days before the Prophet's (s) passing, the Angel of Death, ***Malak al-Maut***, arrived at Sayyidah Fatima's (a.s.) door. Even though he acts solely by divine command, he paused and sought permission to enter, a testament to the unparalleled sanctity and reverence commanded by the household of the Prophet (s). This profound respect from an angel, who never delays or deviates from his divine orders, stands in stark contrast to the horrific events that unfolded shortly after the Prophet's (s) demise.

The very door at which ***Malak al-Maut*** had sought permission was brutally assaulted, set ablaze, and broken. Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.), attempting to shield herself, was tragically crushed between the collapsing door and the wall, leading to the martyrdom of her unborn son, Muhsin ibn Ali (a.s.), and ultimately, her own early demise from the injuries. This unspeakable act of sacrilege, inflicted upon the most revered household in Islam, serves as a chilling fulfillment of the Prophet's (s) implicit warnings about future tribulations. The suffering of Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) in Medina, prematurely aging her and breaking her spirit, directly mirrored the later sufferings of her grandson, Imam Sajjad (a.s.), who too was aged beyond his years by the atrocities of Karbala. The burning of her door was a precursor to the burning of the tents in Karbala, the martyrdom of Muhsin the infant paved the way for the martyrdom of Ali al-Asghar (a.s.), and the assault on Sayyidah Fatima (a.s.) foreshadowed the brutal lashing of her progeny.

Thus, the Prophet's (s) Farewell Pilgrimage and his powerful, future-oriented sermons were not abstract theological discourses but urgent warnings against the very injustices that would befall his ***Ahlul Bayt*** and, by extension, the ***Ummah***. His final acts and words served as an enduring

testament, a guide for all times, emphasizing the path of truth and justice against the currents of oppression and deviation that he foresaw.

Chapter 200

Prophecies of Decay and the Steadfastness of Zaynab

The Prophet Mohammad's (s) ***Hajjat al-Wida'*** (Farewell Pilgrimage) was not merely a practical demonstration of pilgrimage rites; it was a profound testament, a living *hujjat* (proof) for all Muslims until the Day of Judgment. His every action and utterance during this momentous journey transcended the immediate audience, carrying messages specifically intended for future generations, particularly those who would witness the very end of times. This was evident in the series of profound sermons he delivered, which were far more numerous than the single *Khutbah Hajjatul Wida'* commonly known. While the historical accounts vary, it is understood that the Prophet (s) delivered at least three sermons on the plains of Mina, in addition to the climactic fourth at **Ghadir Khumm**. These addresses were strategically timed and delivered with a psychological astuteness unparalleled in human history.

Upon entering Mecca, the Prophet (s) did not immediately deliver a sermon, understanding that the pilgrims were preoccupied with the demanding rites of *Ihram* and the associated restrictions. He waited until they had

completed their initial circumambulation and other foundational *Umrah* rituals, allowing them to settle into a state of physical ease and mental receptiveness. Once a sense of tranquility pervaded the vast congregation, the Prophet (s) seized the opportune moment to address them. His first sermon on the land of Mina, delivered in this prepared atmosphere, was designed to ignite a crucial question in the hearts and minds of the *Ummah*: How would they navigate the inevitable misguidance (*gumrahi*) and tribulations of the future? This was not an immediate answer, but a deliberate provocation, preparing the ground for the ultimate declaration at Ghadir. The purpose was to ensure that the *Ummah* would not passively receive the divine directive, but actively seek the path to salvation.

Before commencing this momentous address, the Prophet (s) performed an extraordinary act that captivated the attention of the entire assembly. He began to weep, tears streaming down his blessed face, shedding them so profusely that the vast multitude of over 120,000 pilgrims (whose eyes collectively numbered more than 250,000) mirrored his grief, weeping alongside him. This profound emotional display was a deliberate, powerful means of drawing every gaze and every heart towards him, ensuring that not a single word of his subsequent sermon would be lost. It was a divine invocation, a spiritual magnet, compelling every soul to attune themselves to the urgent message he was about to convey.

With the *Ummah* thus fully captivated, the Prophet (s) began to unveil a series of grave prophecies concerning the spiritual and moral decay that would afflict humanity as the Day of Judgment approached. He likened the state of faith to a plant: initially pure and thornless, then mixed with thorns, and finally, only thorns would remain, signifying the complete obliteration of genuine belief and practice.

He foretold: * **Oppressive Rulers:** The leadership of the *Ummah* would

fall into the hands of tyrants and oppressors, who would rule with injustice. * **Miserly Wealthy:** Those blessed with wealth would become excessively stingy and covetous, hoarding their riches rather than fulfilling their responsibilities. * **Corrupt Scholars:** Knowledgeable individuals, the inheritors of prophetic wisdom, would pursue worldly gains, becoming greedy and neglecting their sacred duty to guide the *Ummah*. * **Deceitful Poor:** The poor would resort to dishonesty and falsehood, losing their integrity in their struggle for survival. * **Degenerate Elderly:** Even the elderly, traditionally revered for their wisdom and piety, would succumb to immorality, becoming *fajir* (sinful and corrupt). He illustrated this with a poignant analogy of a cat that eats nine hundred mice and then goes for Hajj, implying that even such an act of repentance is better than the obstinacy of these aged individuals. * **Shameless Youth:** Young men, in the prime of their lives (around 16-18 years old), would abandon all sense of modesty and become *behaya* (shameless), openly engaging in sin. * **Foolish Women:** Women, too, would become *ahmaq* (foolish or ignorant), susceptible to manipulation by external, Islam-inimical forces. The Prophet (s) did not describe them as shameless, but rather as easily exploited, unwitting tools in the hands of those who seek to undermine Islam. This implied a deeper concern about their manipulation rather than their intentional sin. * **Neglect of *Zakat*:** The fundamental obligation of *Zakat* would be abandoned, or its payment would become a rare and grudging act, severing the vital bond of social welfare. * **Open Display of Sins:** Sins would not only be committed but openly displayed and even glorified, as if they were acts of pride, broadcasted for all to witness. * **Loudness in Mosques:** The sanctity of mosques would be violated by excessive noise and idle chatter, undermining their spiritual tranquility. * **Prioritizing Worldly Affairs:** People would elevate worldly concerns above religious knowledge, trampling upon divine injunctions in their pursuit of transient gains. * **Forbidden Becoming Lawful:** The *haram* (forbidden) would be treated as *halal* (lawful), particularly

ill-gotten gains such as usury (*riba*) and bribery, which would be considered like *mal-e-ghanimat* (lawful war bounty), reflecting a perversion of religious understanding. * **Lack of Compassion and Respect:** There would be no mercy between the young and the old, and the young would cease to respect their elders.

The Prophet (s) then solemnly declared that when these conditions pervaded the *Ummah*, Allah's (SWT) curse would descend upon them, bringing continuous afflictions and internal strife. He referenced **Surah Al-An'am, Ayah 65**: **"Say: 'He has the power to send on you a torment from above you or from beneath your feet, or to divide you into parties, and make you taste the violence of one another.'"** The torment from above was interpreted as phenomena like solar eclipses, while the torment from beneath the feet symbolized earthquakes and landslides. Most devastatingly, the third form of torment would be internal division, where Muslims would fight and kill one another, finding themselves engaged in bitter civil wars without the need for external enemies. This internal strife, the Prophet (s) warned, would be the most painful form of divine punishment.

This prophetic warning found its most tragic and vivid manifestation in the events of Karbala. The speaker emphasized that while lesser transgressions might bring forth some of these signs (e.g., an eclipse or an earthquake), the monumental sin and injustice of Karbala brought forth all forms of divine displeasure simultaneously. The sun was eclipsed, the earth trembled, and ultimately, Muslims slaughtered the family of their Prophet (s).

In this dark prophecy, the extraordinary steadfastness of Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.) shone forth. Unlike brave men who might lose their composure in the face of losing a young son, seeing their home ablaze, or experiencing an earthquake, Sayyidah Zaynab (a.s.) remained a beacon of

resilience. After the massacre of Karbala, as the women and children were being led captive, the courageous daughter of Ali (a.s.) walked among the fallen, identifying the tiny, trampled bodies of the infants and young children. With immense fortitude, she asked Sayyidah Kulthum (a.s.) to help her pick up the bodies, only to discover that the 'sleeping' children were in fact tiny corpses, their chests bearing the gruesome marks of horses' hooves. Overwhelmed, she cried out to her brother, Imam Hussain (a.s.), lamenting that in his absence, his sisters were forced to collect the scattered remains of their loved ones. Sayyidah Zaynab's (a.s.) unwavering patience and profound courage, despite suffering unimaginable loss and witnessing the ultimate betrayal, underscored her unique divine strength and exemplified the true meaning of *sabr* in the face of total devastation. Her very existence and actions became a living interpretation of the Prophet's (s) warnings and a testament to the purity and resilience of the ***Ahlul Bayt***.

Chapter 201

A Vision of the Future: The Prophet Foretells the End Times

As the Farewell Pilgrimage, *Hajjatul Wida'*, continued, the Beloved Prophet Muhammad (s) utilized every precious moment to convey profound messages to his *Ummah*. Having delivered two crucial sermons earlier, he now stood poised to deliver a third, equally vital address that would prepare his followers for the ultimate message of *Ghadeer Khumm*. The very nature of the *Hajj* meant pilgrims were deeply engrossed in its rites, yet the Prophet, with his unparalleled wisdom, found a way to deliver these foundational teachings without detracting from the sacred duties of the pilgrimage. His method ensured that while the acts of *Hajj* were perfected, the hearts and minds of the believers were also prepared for the weighty truths he was about to unveil.

This third major sermon, as narrated by Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari, was a prophetic exposition of the corruptions and challenges that would afflict the Muslim *Ummah* in the *akhir al-zaman*, the End Times. The Prophet spoke with such clarity and fervor that his voice echoed not only throughout the Masjid but reached the people in the markets outside, stirring

deep emotions in the hearts of his listeners, many of whom wept openly.

After outlining the gradual deterioration of the Islamic society, detailing how various segments—from rulers and capitalists to scholars, the elderly, youth, and women—would succumb to various failings, a group of companions turned towards the Prophet, their faces etched with concern. "O Messenger of Allah," they implored, "when will all these corruptions occur?"

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny, responded by delineating the specific signs that would mark the onset of these tumultuous times. He began by stating that such an era would commence when:

People would begin to **delay their prayers** (*ta'kheer al-salawat*). They would **follow their desires** (*ittiba' al-shahawat*), abandoning divine guidance for personal whims. **Various types of beverages and social gatherings** (*qahwat*) would become widespread, signifying a rise in general indulgence and distractions from spiritual focus. Children would openly **insult and curse their parents** (*shatm al-abaa wal-ummahat*). **Unlawful wealth** (*haraam*) would be regarded as **legitimate spoils of war** (*ghanima*), implying a complete absence of conscience or guilt in acquiring ill-gotten gains. Just as a warrior in a battlefield felt pride in acquiring *ghanima*, so too would people boast of their *haraam* earnings. Conversely, the obligatory charity, **Zakat**, would be seen as a **burden or a heavy tax** (*maghram*) rather than a spiritual obligation. **Men would excessively obey their wives** (*ita'at al-zawjat*), prioritizing their wives' desires over sound judgment and religious principles. **Neighbors would oppress each other** (*jafaa' al-jaar*), leading to a breakdown of communal harmony. **Ties of kinship would be severed** (*qata'at al-arham*). **Compassion would diminish among elders**, and **modesty would be scarce among the youth** (*qilla al-rahma min al-kibar, qilla al-hayaa min al-sighaar*). People would vie to

build extravagant and tall structures (*shadd al-bunyan*). **Servants and subordinates would be subjected to injustice** (*dhulm al-abid wal-imaa*). **Testimonies would be given based on personal desires** (*shahadat bil-hawa*), and **judgments would be passed unjustly** (*hukm bil-hawa*). A man would **curse his own father** (*yaseed al-rajul abahu*), and **brothers would harbor envy towards each other** (*yahasid al-rajul akhahu*). **Business partners would betray one another** (*ya'mil al-shuraka bil-khiyanah*), leading to a pervasive lack of trust. **Loyalty** (*wafa'*) would become extremely **rare**. **Fornication and adultery** (*zina*) would become **widespread**. **Men would imitate women in their dress and adornment** (*yatuzayyina al-rijal bil-nisaa'*), and the **veil of modesty would be lifted from women** (*fasil buhunna qina' al-hayaa*), leading to excessive immodesty. **Arrogance and pride** would infest hearts like poison. **Good deeds** (*ma'roof*) would **diminish**, while **sins and crimes would be committed openly** (*zahar al-jaraiim*), not necessarily increasing in quantity, but in their public display, severely corrupting society. **Major religious obligations would be trivialized**, and **grave sins would be normalized** (*hawwanat al-aza'im*). People would **seek praise and recognition through wealth** (*talab al-madh bil-mal*), using money to buy reputation rather than earn it through sincere actions for Allah. They would **spend their wealth happily on corrupt and unlawful activities** (*anfaq al-mal lil-khina*), particularly on music and frivolous entertainment. **Preoccupation with worldly life** would lead people to **forget the hereafter** (*shaghalu bil-dunya anil-akhirah*). **Piety and God-consciousness** (*war'a wa taqwa*) would **decrease**, while **wickedness and chaos** (*shar wa maraj*) would **increase**. **Believers would be disgraced and humiliated**, while **hypocrites would attain honor and respect** (*asbah al-mu'minu dhalilan wal-munafiqu 'azizan*). **Mosques would be grand and full of the call to prayer**, but the **hearts of the worshippers would be empty of true faith** (*masajiduhum ma'mura bil-azan wa qulubuhum khaliyatun min al-iman*). Believers would endure **extreme humiliation and degradation** (*balagh al-mu'minu minhum al-lahwan*). Peo-

ple would have **human faces but hearts like devils** (*wujuhuhum wujuh al-insan wa qulubuhum qulub al-shayatin*). Their **words would be sweeter than honey**, but their **hearts would be more bitter than bitter melon** (*kalamuhum ahla min al-'asal wa qulubuhum amar min al-handhal*). Ultimately, they would be like **wolves in sheep's clothing** (*wahum dhi'abun 'alayhim thiyab*).

The Prophet then recited a verse from the Quran, conveying a direct divine message: that Allah would question humanity in the End Times, saying, "Have you become so bold against My mercy?" This indicates God's displeasure and warning against the audacity of people in sinning, emboldened by divine patience.

Yet, amidst this dire prediction, the Prophet offered a ray of hope, revealing God's promise of mercy: "If it were not for certain sincere worshippers (*mukhliseen*) among you, I would not grant a moment's respite to the world." And, "If it were not for the *taqwa* and piety of the truly pious, rain would not descend from the heavens, and vegetation would not grow from the earth." This profound statement underscored the pivotal role of the *Ahlulbayt* and sincere believers in holding back divine punishment and ensuring the continuation of God's blessings upon the world. It reminded the listeners that while society might plunge into corruption, there would always remain a pure core of individuals whose sincere devotion and piety would act as a shield against complete destruction.

The speaker then drew an emotional parallel, illustrating the depth of this divine principle with the tragedy of Karbala, particularly the martyrdom of **Ali Asghar (s)**. The heavens and earth wept at his sacrifice, a testament to its profound impact and the purity of that innocent blood. It served as a stark reminder of how the righteous, even in their suffering, preserve God's grace for humanity.

The Prophet concluded his momentous sermon with a timeless injunc-

tion: "Whoever desires the proximity of their *Maula* (Lord/Master), that cannot be achieved without *amal* (deeds), and *amal* is not complete without *aql* (intellect/wisdom)." This final, comprehensive statement emphasized that true spiritual closeness to God, His Prophet, and His Imams is attained only through righteous actions, and the perfection of those actions depends fundamentally on the cultivation of intellect and wisdom. This *khutbah*, therefore, served not merely as a prophecy of future decline but as a profound call to individual and collective action, ultimately laying the groundwork for the paramount importance of *Imamate* in guiding the *Ummah* towards true salvation and reform. With these words, the Prophet concluded his address, marking a pivotal moment in his Farewell Pilgrimage, a moment that would forever resonate through the annals of history, foreshadowing the challenges and the ultimate divine solution for humanity.

Chapter 202

The Farewell Sermons: Eradicating Pre-Islamic Wrongs and Championing Women's Dignity

Following the monumental third sermon of the Farewell Pilgrimage, which foretold the challenges of the End Times, the Blessed Prophet (s) continued to deliver crucial messages to the vast assembly of Muslims. It is important to note the various historical accounts regarding the precise number, timing, and location of these sermons. While some accounts speak of one comprehensive **Khutbat al-Wida'** (Farewell Sermon), others meticulously detail multiple addresses on different days—specifically the 9th, 10th, and 11th of **Dhu al-Hijjah**—and at different sacred locations like **Arafat** and **Mina**. These variations in historical narration, often stemming from different perspectives of witnesses and scribes, have presented challenges for scholars throughout history. However, the consistent and core messages conveyed by the Prophet (s) remain universally acknowledged, underscoring their profound importance as his final, conclusive instructions to the **Ummah**.

These sermons, delivered before an unparalleled gathering of over a hundred thousand Muslims, were not merely formal addresses but divine directives, intended to solidify the foundations of the Islamic society and rectify lingering injustices from the Age of Ignorance (*jahiliyyah*). The Prophet (s) began with an address of profound humility and devotion, praising Allah (SWT) and seeking His assistance, then declared, "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, the One, He has no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger." He then enjoined the faithful, stating, "**O servants of God, I enjoin you to fear Allah (SWT) and to adhere to His obedience.**" He emphasized the unity of humanity, stating, "**O people, indeed your Sustainer is one, and your father is one. All of you are from Adam, and Adam was from dust.**" This powerful statement sought to dismantle the deep-seated pride and tribalism that characterized pre-Islamic Arab society, asserting that nobility was solely based on **taqwa** (God-consciousness), not lineage or ethnicity. He emphatically declared, "**There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a non-Arab over an Arab, except by virtue of piety.**"

A poignant moment arose when the Prophet (s) subtly hinted at his impending departure from this world. He said, "**O people, listen to me, for I do not know whether I shall ever meet you again in this place after this year of mine.**" This veiled premonition stirred deep emotions among the companions, many of whom began to weep, understanding the profound significance of his words. This implicit farewell also prepared the **Ummah** for the continuation of divine guidance through his appointed successors, the **Imams**.

The Prophet (s) then systematically dismantled key pillars of *jahiliyyah* that contradicted Islamic principles:

Firstly, he addressed the pervasive evil of **riba** (usury or interest). He de-

clared, "**All usurious transactions of the Age of Ignorance are hereby abolished. The first usury that I abolish is that of al-Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib.**" This pronouncement not only condemned usury as fundamentally illicit but also retroactively nullified all pre-existing usurious contracts, demonstrating the absolute commitment of Islam to economic justice, starting with his own family.

Secondly, he moved to the highly sensitive issue of blood feuds. He proclaimed, "**All blood feuds of the Age of Ignorance are hereby abolished. The first blood feud that I abolish is that of Rabee'a ibn al-Harith ibn Abd al-Muttalib.**" Rabee'a was the son of **al-Harith**, the Prophet's (s) uncle and elder brother of his father, Abdullah. This bold declaration aimed to end the endless cycles of vengeance that plagued Arab tribes, forgiving even the blood of his own kin. While Islam prescribed **qisas** (just retribution) for intentional murder to ensure justice, the Prophet (s) made a clear distinction, forgiving the retaliatory killings of the *jahiliyyah* era to usher in an era of peace and forgiveness.

Thirdly, the Prophet (s) addressed the manipulation of the sacred calendar, a practice known as **nasi'** (postponement or intercalation). In *jahiliyyah*, tribes would alter the sequence of sacred months—during which warfare was forbidden—to suit their own needs for battle or trade. The Prophet (s) declared with utmost finality, "**Indeed, time has reverted to its original state as it was on the day Allah created the heavens and the earth.**" He clarified that there were indeed twelve months, four of which were sacred: **Dhu al-Qa'dah**, **Dhu al-Hijjah**, **Muharram**, and **Rajab**. This pronouncement put an end to the chaotic calendar manipulations, ensuring that all religious observances, particularly the **Hajj**, would be performed at their divinely appointed times.

A significant portion of the Prophet's (s) sermon was dedicated to the rights and treatment of women. He said, "**O people, you have rights**

~~**over your women, and they have rights over you.**" He emphasized the~~ sanctity of marriage, stating, "**Indeed, you have taken them as a trust from Allah, and you have made their private parts lawful to you by the Word of Allah.**" He then delineated specific rights and responsibilities:

- **Women's responsibilities:** They should not allow anyone into their homes whom the husband dislikes without his permission, nor should they commit open acts of indecency.
- **Men's responsibilities:** Men are obligated to provide their wives with food and clothing in a reasonable manner.
- **Addressing disobedience:** The Prophet (s) outlined a measured approach for dealing with a wife's extreme disobedience: first, admonition; second, avoiding sharing the same bed; and third, light, non-injurious physical admonition, emphasizing that if they reform, no further action should be taken. This instruction, often misunderstood, was given within strict parameters to prevent abuse and was intended to be a final, last resort, focusing on behavioral correction, not punishment or harm. The essence was to maintain the dignity and sanctity of the marital bond.

The Prophet (s) concluded this crucial section by emphasizing that the treatment of women was not merely a matter between spouses but a matter of accountability to Allah (SWT). He urged men to "**fear Allah concerning women and treat them well.**"

The profound teachings of the Prophet (s) on women's rights are beautifully exemplified by the lives of the women of his blessed household and the **Ahlul Bayt**: **Sayyida Khadijah**, who stood as his unwavering support; **Sayyida Fatima Zahra**, the embodiment of purity and the continuity of his progeny; **Sayyida Zainab al-Kubra**, a paragon of courage and resilience; **Sayyida Umme Kulthum**; and other revered women like **Sayyida Rabab**, **Sayyida Layla**, and **Sayyida Umme al-Banin**. These

~~women, whether from the Prophet's immediate family or those who joined~~ the **Ahlul Bayt** through marriage, demonstrated extraordinary levels of piety, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to Islam. Their lives served as living testimonies to the principles laid out by the Prophet (s) in his Farewell Sermons, showcasing that the ideal Islamic woman is one who upholds her dignity, fulfills her responsibilities, and stands firm in her faith, becoming a source of honor and strength for her family and the **Ummah**. Their legacy continues to inspire generations, demonstrating that true greatness in women lies not in worldly acclaim but in their adherence to divine guidance and their profound connection to Allah (SWT).

Chapter 203

The Culmination of the Farewell Pilgrimage: Foundations of Justice and Unity

As the momentous Farewell Pilgrimage (**Hajjatul Wida'**) drew to its close, the Prophet Muhammad (s) continued his series of profound sermons, delivering final, comprehensive instructions to the vast multitude gathered. This particular address, believed to have taken place on the Day of Arafat, represented a pivotal culmination of his teachings, sealing the spiritual and social foundations of the nascent Islamic *Ummah*. The Prophet's words echoed the Quranic injunction: **"So when you have completed your rites, remember Allah as you remember your fathers, or even more intensely."** (**Al-Baqarah, 2:200**). This verse itself served as a potent reminder for the pilgrims: the pilgrimage was not merely a ritual or a nostalgic return to ancestral customs, but a profound spiritual journey focused on remembering Allah with utmost devotion, surpassing even the ingrained human tendency to boast of lineage.

The delivery of such an extensive sermon to hundreds of thousands of

people in an era without modern amplification presented a unique challenge. The Prophet's words were relayed by individuals with powerful voices, who would repeat each phrase as it was uttered, ensuring the message reached the furthest corners of the vast assembly. While this method ensured widespread dissemination, it also led to minor variations in the precise wording recorded by different narrators. The true essence, however, remained consistent: the *Hajj* itself does not automatically absolve one of sins; it requires conscious effort and internal purification from the individual.

Reiterating earlier pronouncements, the Prophet (s) began by emphasizing the fundamental equality of all humanity: **"O people, your Lord is One, and your father is One. All of you are from Adam, and Adam was from dust. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab, nor a white person over a black person, nor a black person over a white person, except by *taqwa* (God-consciousness)."** This powerful declaration dismantled the tribal and racial prejudices deeply entrenched in *jahiliyyah* society.

He then systematically abolished all vestiges of the pre-Islamic era: **"Every custom of *jahiliyyah* is beneath my feet. And the first blood feud I abolish is that of Harith ibn Abd al-Muttalib."** By beginning with his own family's claim, the Prophet set the ultimate example of sacrificing personal interests for the sake of divine justice. He clarified that intentional killing necessitated retribution—the payment of 100 camels as blood money—but warned vehemently against exceeding this, stating that such excess would be an act of *jahiliyyah*. This instruction sought to end the endless cycles of vengeance that had plagued Arab society.

The Prophet (s) also cautioned against the subtle temptations of *shaytan*. He stated that *shaytan* had despaired of being worshipped on the Arabian Peninsula after the advent of Islam, but found immense satisfaction in

tempting believers to commit minor sins. This served as a warning to be vigilant against even seemingly small transgressions, as they contribute to *shaytan*'s ultimate goal. He reiterated the prohibition of **nasi'** (tampering with the sacred months), ensuring the sanctity of the lunar calendar in accordance with divine law.

A significant portion of his sermon was dedicated to the rights of women. The Prophet (s) emphasized that women were a **trust from Allah** given to men, underscoring the profound responsibility that came with this trust. He outlined mutual rights and responsibilities, guiding men on addressing marital disputes while stressing the importance of treating women with kindness and fearing Allah concerning them.

Turning to financial ethics, the Prophet (s) declared: **"A believer's wealth is not permissible for another believer unless given with a willing heart."** He underscored that the wealth of a fellow Muslim is sacred, akin to consuming the flesh of one's dead brother (a comparison used in the Quran to describe the abhorrence of backbiting). This principle extended to all interactions, emphasizing the inviolability of private property and the necessity of sincere consent in all financial dealings. Furthermore, he emphasized the critical importance of fulfilling contractual obligations: **"If someone has a trust (*amanat*) with you, you must return it. And remember, a debt (*qarz*) must be repaid. And whoever takes on a guarantee (*zamaanat*) is responsible for it."** These clear directives laid down the bedrock of economic integrity and mutual accountability within the Muslim community.

The Prophet (s) then issued a stark warning against internal strife: **"Beware! Do not revert to disbelief after me by striking each other's necks!"** This deeply profound statement highlighted that internal conflict among believers was tantamount to a rejection of the core tenets of Islam, even if outwardly they professed faith. He lamented that non-Muslim nations

often united for their causes, while Muslims sometimes failed to maintain unity and brotherhood.

Regarding inheritance, the Prophet (s) affirmed divine decree: **"Indeed, Allah has fixed for every heir his portion of the inheritance."** He warned against altering these divinely ordained shares through personal preference or tribal custom. He also stated that a will (**wasiyyah**) should not exceed one-third of a person's property, emphasizing that the remaining two-thirds were solely for the rightful heirs according to Allah's decree. This instruction provided clarity on a matter often fraught with dispute in pre-Islamic societies. He further condemned the practice of individuals changing their lineage or a freed slave claiming a different master, stating that such actions incurred Allah's curse and rendered their deeds unacceptable.

In a powerful rhetorical exchange, the Prophet (s) sought to impress upon the assembly the profound sanctity of the principles he was outlining. He asked them: **"What day is this?"** The crowd replied: "The sacred day." He then asked: **"What city is this?"** They replied: "The sacred city." And then: **"What month is this?"** They replied: "The sacred month." Having established their acknowledgement of these sacred entities, the Prophet (s) declared with utmost solemnity: **"Indeed, Allah has forbidden your blood, your property, and your honor upon one another, just as the sanctity of this day, this city, and this month is sacred."** This declaration elevated the protection of a Muslim's life, wealth, and dignity to the same level as the most revered places and times in Islam, warning that these prohibitions would remain until the Day of Judgment.

He emphasized the principle of individual accountability, stating: **"No one shall be punished for the sins of another, nor shall a son be held accountable for the crimes of his father, nor a father for his son's."** This struck at the root of *jahiliyyah* vengeance, which often punished entire

families or tribes for the actions of one individual.

Finally, the Prophet (s) delivered a universal command that would resonate throughout history: **"Let those who are present convey this message to those who are absent."** This established the responsibility of every Muslim to transmit the teachings of Islam across generations and geographies. He then declared, **"There will be no prophet after me, and no *Ummah* after you."** This profound statement underscored the unique and ultimate responsibility placed upon the Muslim *Ummah* to uphold and propagate the divine message until the end of time.

Having delivered his complete message, the Prophet (s) raised his hands in supplication, his blessed armpits visible, and prayed: **"O Allah, bear witness that I have conveyed Your message."** Following this, Bilal al-Habashi gave the call to prayer, and the Prophet (s) led the congregation in the *Dhuhr* prayer, fulfilling the essential ritual of *Waqf al-Arafat* (standing on Arafat).

The Farewell Pilgrimage concluded with an emphasis on remembering Allah more intensely than one remembers one's forefathers, contrasting the spiritual focus of Islam with the tribal pride of *jahiliyyah*. The Prophet (s) concluded the sermon with a comprehensive reminder for all believers, extending beyond the immediate audience: **"Worship your Lord, establish your prayers, fast your month (Ramadan), and obey your leaders (or fulfill Allah's commands), and you shall enter Paradise."** This final instruction underscored the balanced importance of both ritual worship and social responsibility in attaining divine pleasure.

Chapter 204

The Final Instructions: Departing Mecca and Embracing Imamat

The Farewell Pilgrimage, a momentous journey in the life of Prophet Muhammad (s), drew to its conclusion, leaving behind a profound legacy of guidance and practical lessons for the *Ummah*. This sixteenth and final discourse on *Hajjatul Wida'* aimed to distill the essence of its culminating moments, preparing the believers for the significant events that were soon to unfold.

As the rituals of Hajj were completed, the divine instruction descended upon the Prophet: **"Faidha qadaytum manasikakum fadhkuru Allaha kadhikrikum abakum aw ashaddu dhikra"** (**"And when you have completed your rites, then remember Allah as you remember your fathers, or with a more intense remembrance." – Holy Qur'an, 2:200**). This verse underscored the paramount importance of *dhikr*—the remembrance of Allah. The speaker emphasized that *dhikr* is not merely the recitation of **"Subhanallah"** or **"Alhamdulillah"**; it encompasses the deeper consciousness of Allah's omnipresence in every action, a state akin to offering *salat* (prayer) as if one sees Allah, or at least, knowing that Allah sees

them. This constant awareness was to permeate the believers' lives, transforming every mundane act into an act of devotion.

The *Hajjatul Wida'* also served as a moment to clarify a critical aspect of supplication. The **Holy Qur'an** differentiates between two types of individuals: those who pray for only worldly good (**"Rabbana atina fid dunya hasanah" - "Our Lord, grant us good in this world"**), and those who pray for good in both this world and the Hereafter (**"Rabbana atina fid dunya hasanah wa fil akhirati hasanah wa qina adhaban nar" - "Our Lord, grant us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and protect us from the punishment of the Fire." – Holy Qur'an, 2:201**). The Prophet (s) encouraged believers to ask for both, refuting the misconception that true piety necessitates a complete detachment from the world. He underscored that Allah desires to bestow blessings in both realms, and the *Ummah* should wholeheartedly seek them.

Crucially, the question of how to attain "good in this world" was implicitly answered, pointing towards the upcoming declaration at Ghadir Khumm. The "good" in this *dunya* would manifest through the establishment of divine justice and the leadership of the *Ahlul Bayt*, particularly through the *Wilayah* (guardianship) and *Imamat* of Imam Ali (a.s.). This profound connection highlighted that true worldly felicity and security could only be achieved under the guidance of the divinely appointed Imams, a state often associated with the awaited reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.), but fundamentally rooted in the concept of *Imamat* itself.

Beyond the profound spiritual guidance, the Farewell Pilgrimage also addressed practical matters, demonstrating the Prophet's divine wisdom and the mercy inherent in Islamic law. On the day of Eid al-Adha, with pilgrims exhausted from the arduous rituals, many inadvertently performed the sequence of stoning the *Jamarat*, sacrificing animals, and shaving heads out of order. When approached by companions seeking clari-

fication, the Prophet (s) mercifully affirmed the validity of their actions, stating that unintentional deviation from the prescribed sequence did not invalidate the Hajj. This act highlighted the divine compassion and flexibility in cases of forgetfulness or ignorance.

Moreover, the Prophet (s) addressed specific circumstances involving his wives: * **Aisha's *Umrah***: She had not performed *Umrah* upon arriving in Mecca. The Prophet (s) arranged for her brother, Abd al-Rahman, to take her to Tan'im (now Masjid Aisha) to assume *ihram* and perform *Umrah*, even late at night, demonstrating accommodation for individual circumstances. * **Umm Salama's *Tawaf***: Due to illness, she performed *Tawaf* (circumambulation) while riding on a camel. The Prophet (s) affirmed the permissibility of *Tawaf* by riding for those unable to walk, extending this leniency to all pilgrims facing similar physical challenges. * **Safiyya's *Tawaf al-Wida'***: As the pilgrimage concluded and the caravan prepared to depart, it was discovered that Safiyya was in her menstrual cycle and therefore unable to perform the Farewell *Tawaf* (*Tawaf al-Wida'*). The Prophet (s) declared her exempt from this *Tawaf*, reassuring her that her departure was permissible. This divine dispensation underscored the ease and practical nature of Islamic teachings, especially for women.

As the time for departure from Mecca approached, the Prophet (s) emphasized another *mustahab* (recommended) act: to visit the interior of the Kaaba. While not obligatory, he expressed that it was unfitting for a pilgrim to leave Mecca without entering the sacred House itself, a practice that has become difficult to perform in modern times due to various restrictions.

In a poignant demonstration of his unwavering commitment to the *Ummah*, the Prophet (s) chose a specific route for exiting Mecca. He had entered from *Ma'lah*, the higher ground, and exited through *Musaffalah*, the lower ground. Various interpretations explain this: to seek maximum blessings

by traversing different paths, to allow more people to witness his departure, to follow the path of Prophet Ibrahim (s), or to gain a prolonged view of the Kaaba from the elevated path, signifying his profound love for the House of Allah.

However, amidst these expressions of devotion to the Kaaba, the Prophet (s) delivered a truly powerful statement, elevating the sanctity of human life above even the Sacred House. He declared that the life, honor, and property of a Muslim are more sacred than the Kaaba itself, a crucial message against internal strife and the shedding of innocent blood within the *Ummah*. This emphasized the paramount importance of protecting the rights and dignity of every Muslim.

This profound love for the Kaaba and commitment to divine principles was later echoed in the actions of Imam Hussain (a.s.). When Imam Hussain (a.s.) departed Mecca for Kufa, knowing the perilous path ahead, he chose the *Musaffalah* route. Not only that, but he rode with his back to the direction of travel, looking back at the Kaaba until it was no longer visible. This act, while seeming counter-intuitive, was a testament to his immense love for the House of Allah, preferring to keep it in sight as long as possible, even as he was compelled to leave it to uphold the greater cause of justice and preserve the essence of Islam.

Finally, just before Imam Hussain's departure from Mecca, a deeply moving incident occurred. Abdullah ibn Ja'far, the husband of Sayyida Zainab (s.a.), met with Imam Hussain (a.s.). Though older and respected, Abdullah offered not only his own sons, Muhammad and Awn, but also the heartfelt plea to Imam Hussain (a.s.) to use them as a sacrifice for the cause if needed. This act epitomized the profound selflessness and devotion of the *Ahlul Bayt* and their loyal companions, willing to offer their most cherished possessions for the sake of Allah's religion and the *Imam* of their time.

The conclusion of the Farewell Pilgrimage thus transitioned from the sacred rituals to the practical and spiritual obligations of the *Ummah*, hinting at the succession of leadership and the challenges that lay ahead, all underpinned by divine mercy, profound love, and the ultimate sacrifice for truth.

Chapter 205

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As the Farewell Pilgrimage, *Hajjatul Wida'*, reached its culmination, the Prophet Muhammad (s) performed the final rituals, including the farewell circumambulation of the Kaaba, known as *Tawaf al-Wida'*. This particular Hajj was profoundly significant, bearing three distinct names that encapsulate its monumental importance: *Hajjatul Wida'* (the Farewell Pilgrimage), for it was the Prophet's final pilgrimage and his farewell to the *Ummah*; *Hajj al-Tamam* (the Pilgrimage of Completion), signifying the completion of the Islamic revelation; and most crucially, *Hajj al-Balagh* (the Pilgrimage of Conveyance), marking the final, divinely commanded conveyance of a pivotal message concerning the leadership of the *Ummah*.

Amidst these final sacred moments, a series of profound divine communications unfolded, underscoring the urgency and gravity of the impending declaration. The **Ayat al-Balagh** was revealed: ***"O Messenger! Convey that which has been sent down to you from your Lord; and if you do not, then you have not delivered His message at all; and Allah will protect you from mankind."*** (**Qur'an 5:67**) This verse, repeatedly revealed during the pilgrimage, at different stages such as Arafat and Mina, signified an imperative command that transcended all prior instructions.

The recurrence of this command, along with the Prophet's *apparent* temporary pause in delivering the message in its full explicit form, was not born of fear for his own blessed life. Rather, it was a profound testament to his wisdom and deep concern for the nascent *Ummah*. The Prophet (s) understood the immense implications of this final message for the stability and unity of the Muslim community, especially given that many had only recently embraced Islam. He was not afraid for himself, but for the potential harm that an immediate, unprepared declaration might inflict upon the tender roots of the Islamic faith and the cohesion of his followers. His delay was a strategic measure to ensure the message would be received in the best possible light, preserving the *Ummah* from internal strife and preserving the integrity of Islam itself.

This delicate balance between divine command and the fragile state of the community can be understood through an analogy from the Kaaba's own history. During the reconstruction of the Kaaba by the Quraysh before the advent of Islam, a portion of its original sacred foundation, known as *Hateem*, was left outside the main structure due to the Quraysh's limitations in resources and understanding. Yet, entering this semi-circular area is considered equivalent to being inside the Kaaba itself, fulfilling a divine desire. Similarly, the Prophet's initial restraint in the declaration of succession, despite the divine command, was a form of protective wisdom, akin to how a part of the sacred structure was adapted for the benefit of the people, aiming to prevent greater discord within the newly formed *Ummah*. Indeed, the Prophet (s) himself expressed a wish to rebuild the Kaaba according to the original plan of his forefather, Prophet Ibrahim (s), but refrained due to the recent conversion of the Quraysh, fearing that such a drastic change might alienate them from Islam. This exemplifies his foresight and prioritization of the *Ummah's* faith over even the most sacred structural matters.

Months before the Farewell Pilgrimage, as narrated by esteemed scholars

like Sheikh Mufid and Sayyid Ibn Tawus, and affirmed by Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.), the Archangel Jibreel (a.s.) conveyed a direct divine command to the Prophet (s). This command, received in the months of Shawwal or Dhul Qa'dah of 10 AH, just four months before his passing, explicitly stated two final imperatives: first, to demonstrate the Hajj rituals to the *Ummah*; and second, to appoint his divinely chosen successor during that very Hajj. This pre-Hajj instruction meticulously set the stage for the epochal event that was to follow.

Upon completing the core rituals of Hajj, the Prophet (s) moved towards the area of Ghadeer Khum, a place between Mecca and Medina. It was here, at a time when the desert heat was so intense that people wrapped their cloaks around their feet, that the Prophet (s) ordered the entire caravan to halt. A makeshift pulpit was constructed from camel saddles, and the vast multitude gathered. With the entire *Ummah* assembled, the final, unequivocal revelation of the **Ayat al-Balagh** descended, this time accompanied by the verse: ***"And Allah will protect you from mankind."*** This divine assurance removed any remaining concerns about the *Ummah's* immediate reaction, paving the way for the ultimate declaration.

From this elevated platform, the Prophet Muhammad (s) delivered a comprehensive sermon, known as the **Khutbah of Ghadeer**. This address was not solely focused on succession; it was a holistic summation of Islamic teachings, reiterating fundamental obligations. He emphasized the importance of upholding prayer (*salat*), giving *zakat* (charity), and performing Hajj correctly. Critically, woven into this tapestry of universal Islamic commands was the explicit declaration of **Wilayah** (spiritual authority and guardianship) for Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.). Raising Ali's hand, he proclaimed, "***Man Kuntu Mawlahu fa Hadha Aliyyun Mawlahu***" (Whosoever I am his *Mawla*, Ali is his *Mawla*). This momentous declaration, made publicly and unequivocally, served as the formal appointment of Ali (a.s.) as his spiritual and temporal successor,

completing the divine message and establishing the framework for the *Ummah's* guidance after his demise.

This declaration at Ghadeer Khum was the culmination of the Prophet's prophetic mission, a fulfillment of the trust placed upon him by Allah. The event underscored Islam's provision of three pillars for the *Ummah's* unity: the **Qur'an**, the **Kaaba**, and the **Ahlul Bayt**. While the first two are universally accepted, the recognition of the **Ahlul Bayt's** unique status and authority, as declared at Ghadeer, became a point of divergence among Muslims, leading to the various trials and tribulations that would befall the Prophet's pure household. The Prophet's profound foresight into these future challenges, evident in his initial caution, found tragic fulfillment in the subsequent sufferings of the **Ahlul Bayt**, such as the martyrdom of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) on the 25th of Rajab. This profound suffering, often marked by humiliation and oppression at the hands of unjust rulers, stands as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made to preserve the true message of Islam as conveyed at Ghadeer Khum.

Chapter 206

The Culmination of Prophecy: The Grand Sermon of Ghadeer Khum (Part 2)

The majestic narrative of the Farewell Pilgrimage, or *Hajjatul Wida'*, reached its spiritual zenith at Ghadeer Khum, transforming it into *Hajj al-Balagh* – the Pilgrimage of Conveyance. As the vast multitude gathered, having journeyed from Mecca, the stage was set for the culmination of divine revelation. The significance of this moment had been underscored by repeated divine injunctions, particularly the potent **Ayat al-Balagh** (**Qur'an 5:67**), which had previously compelled the Prophet (s) to deliver a message of profound importance despite his concern for the fledgling *Ummah's* unity.

The atmosphere at Ghadeer was charged with anticipation, though many were unaware of the momentous declaration about to unfold. The Prophet (s), having ensured that all pilgrims—those who had gone ahead and those who lagged behind—were assembled, prepared to deliver his definitive sermon. This discourse, as the **Qur'an** itself alludes, was the ultimate responsibility, a divine trust that weighed heavily upon him. Indeed, it is narrated in the *Tafsir of the Masumeen* that the verses of **Surah Alam**

Nashrah (**Qur'an 94:5-8**), "Did We not expand for you your breast, and relieve you of your burden which weighed down your back? And did We not raise high for you your mention? So, when you have finished, then appoint (a successor), and to your Lord turn with eagerness," were revealed in anticipation of this very moment, commanding the Prophet (s) to appoint his successor once his prophetic mission was complete. While some interpretations differ, the profound implication within the tradition of the **Ahlul Bayt** ties this *Surah* directly to the appointment of a successor following the conclusion of his earthly duties.

With the divine mandate clear and the promise of protection from Allah (**Qur'an 5:67**: "...and Allah will protect you from the people") reaffirmed, the Prophet (s) commenced his sermon. He began by declaring his complete servitude to Allah, acknowledging His Lordship and his own status as a servant. He then recounted the divine urgency of this message, revealing that Jibreel (a.s.) had descended upon him multiple times, even three times, conveying Allah's command to deliver this message without fail. The gravity of the situation was such that the Prophet (s) expressed that had he failed to convey this, his entire prophethood would have been in vain, and a severe divine punishment would have befallen him, which none could avert. This profound sense of duty, rather than personal fear, had caused his *apparent* hesitation.

The Prophet (s) then addressed the gathering, stating, "O people! I have not been remiss in conveying whatever has been revealed to me." He then explicitly declared, "O people! Now I announce to you that which Allah has commanded me. Indeed, Ali ibn Abi Talib is my brother, my successor, and my inheritor, and the Imam after me. His position to me is like that of Harun to Musa, except that there is no prophet after me. He is your *Wali* after Allah and His Messenger." To further solidify this divine appointment, he immediately recited the **Qur'anic** verse: **"Indeed, your *Wali* is Allah and His Messenger and those who have believed—those**

who establish prayer and give *zakat* while they are bowing [in prayer]" (**Qur'an 5:55**). He affirmed that Ali (a.s.) was the one who fulfilled this description, having given *zakat* while in the state of *ruku*.

The Prophet (s) further explained his earlier apprehension to deliver this message. He stated that he sought Allah's forgiveness for his reluctance, knowing that there were among them hypocrites and those who would mock the message. He spoke of individuals who outwardly professed Islam but inwardly harbored malice, calling him "an ear" – one who believes everything he hears. He affirmed his knowledge of each one of them and could even point them out or name them if he wished, but he chose not to for the sake of the *Ummah's* unity, and because Allah also did not wish their identities to be exposed. He then reiterated that this declaration was not his own initiative but a clear divine command.

He stressed that the *Wilayah* and *Imamat* of Ali (a.s.) and the Imams from his progeny, until the Day of Judgment, were incumbent upon all: the Muhajirin, the Ansar, those who would follow them in goodness, the non-Arabs, the Arabs, the free, the enslaved, the young, the old—indeed, upon every believer in Allah. Their commands were obligatory, their words binding, and their rulings enforceable. He invoked blessings upon those who would follow them and curses upon those who would oppose them, promising forgiveness for those who believed and followed and a severe torment for the disobedient.

Reiterating his own supreme status as the Seal of Prophets and the ultimate **Hujjah** over all creation, the Prophet (s) warned against any doubt in his message. He emphasized the unparalleled virtues of Ali (a.s.), proclaiming him to be the most excellent of all human beings after the Prophet (s) himself, the one through whom Allah bestows sustenance, and the one whose existence is the reason for the continued existence of creation. He condemned those who would reject this declaration, declar-

ing them twice cursed and twice subjected to Allah's wrath, a divine condemnation that would extend until the Day of Judgment. He identified Ali (a.s.) as the *Jamb Allah* (Side of Allah), the one whom the disbelievers would regret abandoning on the Day of Judgment, as mentioned in **Qur'an 39:56**.

The Prophet (s) then linked the understanding of the **Qur'an** to the **Ahlul Bayt**. He urged the people to ponder the **Qur'an**, focusing on its clear verses (*muhkamat*) and warning against following its ambiguous verses (*mutashabihat*) without proper guidance. He affirmed that he had clarified the **Qur'an's** warnings and interpretations for them through Ali (a.s.), "whose hand I hold, and who is standing beside me, and on whose shoulder my hand rests." He then once again explicitly stated, "He of whom I am *Mawla*, Ali is his *Mawla*." He emphasized that Ali (a.s.) was his brother, his executor, and his helper, and that Allah had revealed a verse concerning his *Wilayah*.

Prophet Muhammad (s) also addressed the vastness of divine laws, *halal* (lawful) and *haram* (unlawful). He explained that due to their sheer number, even he, despite being a Prophet for 23 years, could not enumerate all of them in detail. He therefore entrusted this knowledge and its explanation to Ali (a.s.) and the Imams from his pure progeny, who would continue to guide the *Ummah* until the Day of Judgment. This underscored the perpetual need for infallible guides after him.

A poignant and prescient warning was then delivered regarding future deviation. The Prophet (s) revealed that after him, leaders would emerge who would lead people to Hellfire. He explicitly condemned them and their followers, describing them as "Companions of the *Sahifa* (document)" – a reference to a clandestine pact drawn up by certain individuals in the Kaaba during that very Hajj, plotting to undermine the Prophet's succession. He prophesied that these conspirators, some of whom were present

in the vast assembly, would be recognized by their actions. He commanded the present generation to convey this message to the absent, and to all future generations until the Day of Judgment, urging fathers to pass it on to their children.

Finally, the Prophet (s) concluded his momentous sermon by emphasizing the enduring importance of basic Islamic duties: "Establish prayer (*salat*), give charity (*zakat*), enjoin good (*amr bil ma'ruf*), and forbid evil (*nahi anil munkar*), exactly as Allah has commanded you." He urged them to fear Allah (**Taqwa**) and ensure they died as Muslims. He also reminded them to believe in Allah, His Messenger, and "the Light" – explaining that this Light was initially in him, then transferred to Ali (a.s.), and subsequently passed down through his progeny, culminating in the Imam al-Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), who would restore divine justice.

The sermon concluded with a powerful prayer, seeking Allah's mercy upon the believers and His wrath upon the disbelievers. Having delivered this comprehensive address from the saddle of his camel, the Prophet (s) then descended to a tent specially prepared for receiving allegiance. This monumental event, the public and explicit declaration of Ali's *Wilayah*, was the ultimate seal on his prophetic mission, completing the divine message and laying the foundation for the leadership of the **Ahlul Bayt** for all time.

Chapter 207

The Culmination of Ghadeer Khum: Wilayah, Authority, and Enduring Legacy

The momentous events of Ghadeer Khum, recognized as *Hajj al-Balagh*, stood as the profound culmination of the Prophet Muhammad's (s) divine mission, a declaration of such paramount significance that its echoes continue to resonate throughout history. This pivotal moment, where the foundational message of Islam was perfected, finds its roots deeply embedded in the Qur'anic revelations, particularly **Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:67)**: "**O Messenger! Convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people.**" and **Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:3)**: "**This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.**" These verses, among others, underscore the divine imperative and the ultimate completion of the faith tied directly to the proclamation at Ghadeer.

The historical authenticity of the Ghadeer event is unparalleled in Islamic history, attested by an overwhelming body of evidence. Historical accounts document the presence of between 125,000 and 140,000 pilgrims at

this gathering. From this vast multitude, 110 companions of the Prophet (s) and 84 *Tabi'in* (the generation succeeding the companions) narrated the event. Furthermore, over 370 renowned scholars of Islam have meticulously documented the incident in their diverse works across the centuries. The close connection between the Ghadeer declaration and specific Qur'anic verses is affirmed by numerous exegetes (*mufassireen*); for instance, 30 *mufassireen* confirm the revelation of **Qur'an 5:67** concerning Ghadeer, while 23 attest to **Qur'an 5:3** being revealed at that very site. This continuous chain of transmission, spanning from the companions to scholars across fourteen centuries, establishes Ghadeer Khum as an indisputable historical fact, a phenomenon with no parallel in its corroborated narration within the annals of Islamic history. The sheer volume of scholarly works dedicated to this event, such as *Abqaat al-Anwar* in Persian and *Al-Ghadeer* by Allama Amini—a monumental twenty-volume Arabic work based on twenty-five years of exhaustive research across global libraries—serves as irrefutable testimony to its significance.

Despite this overwhelming evidence, some, unable to outright deny the event, sought to alter its meaning. The primary target of this misinterpretation has been the crucial word "**Mawla**" in the Prophet's declaration: "**Man Kuntu Mawlahu fa Hadha 'Aliyyun Mawlahu**" ("Whomsoever I am his *Mawla*, Ali is his *Mawla*"). Opponents attempted to confine the meaning of *Mawla* to mere "friendship" or "love," thereby stripping the declaration of its intended import of authority and guardianship. However, this interpretation collapses under the weight of contextual evidence and the Prophet's (s) own actions.

The context of Ghadeer Khum itself refutes such a narrow interpretation. The Prophet (s) halted a vast caravan in the scorching, desolate desert heat—conditions so severe that, as an old Arab proverb states, "a vulture would abandon its egg." To gather such a massive congregation under such extreme duress for a simple announcement of affection would have

been illogical and unnecessary. Furthermore, the Prophet's (s) preamble to his declaration, where he asked the pilgrims: "**Alastu Awla bil-Mu'minin min Anfusihim?**" ("Am I not more deserving over your souls than you yourselves?"), unequivocally pointed towards an authority that surpassed mere friendship. The resounding affirmation from the crowd cemented this understanding of his *Wilayah* (authority). The subsequent prayer, "**Allahumma waali man waalaah, wa 'aadi man 'aadaah**" ("O Allah, be a friend to his friends and an enemy to his enemies"), further clarifies that the declared bond was one of governance and allegiance, not simply camaraderie. Moreover, the immediate punishment of Harith ibn Nu'man, as referenced by **Qur'an 70:1-3**, after he vocally challenged the Prophet's declaration and explicitly questioned the divine nature of Ali's (a.s.) appointment, unequivocally establishes the gravity of the declaration and its implications for spiritual and temporal authority.

The true essence of Ghadeer Khum lies in the concept of *Wilayah*—divine authority, guardianship, and comprehensive leadership—which extends beyond mere *mahabbah* (love). While love for Ali (a.s.) and the *Ahlul Bayt* is a fundamental tenet of Islam, it was proclaimed from the very beginning of the Prophet's (s) mission. Ghadeer, however, served as the formal transfer of the Prophet's (s) spiritual and temporal authority to Imam Ali (a.s.), ensuring the continuation of divine guidance after him. This *Wilayah* demands not only love but also obedience and allegiance to the Imam's commands, making him the legitimate successor in all aspects of leadership.

The strategic choice of Ghadeer Khum as the site for this declaration was also divinely ordained. Following the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet (s) was making a swift return to Medina, reportedly due to intelligence about a conspiracy among certain hypocrites in Mecca to prevent him from making the succession announcement. It was at Ghadeer Khum, a vital junction where various tribal routes diverged, that Angel Jibreel

(a.s.) delivered the insistent divine command to halt and make the proclamation immediately, rather than waiting to reach Medina. This location ensured that the message reached the maximum number of returning pilgrims, who would then disperse to their respective regions, carrying the divine decree far and wide.

Upon gathering the vast throng, the Prophet (s) delivered an extensive sermon from a makeshift pulpit constructed from camel saddles or stones. He stood with Imam Ali (a.s.) by his side, at one point raising Ali's (a.s.) hand high for all to see. In his address, he reiterated fundamental Islamic duties, warned against future deviations, and emphatically declared the *Wilayah* of Ali (a.s.) and his descendants, stressing its obligatory nature for all believers. Following the sermon, a formal *bay'ah* (pledge of allegiance) was initiated, with people lining up to greet Ali (a.s.) and acknowledge his authority. The Prophet (s) also emphasized the inseparability of the **Qur'an** and the **Ahlul Bayt** as the **Thaqalayn** (two weighty things), ensuring that true guidance would forever be found in adherence to both.

The *Ahlul Bayt* consistently defended the message of Ghadeer throughout their lives, using it as a *hujjah* (argument) for Imam Ali's (a.s.) rightful leadership. Lady Fatima al-Zahra (s.a.) famously reminded the people of Medina of her father's (s) declaration at Ghadeer, challenging their selective amnesia. Narrations from subsequent Imams, including those passed down through chains of female narrators known as *Hadith al-Fawaatim*, highlight the deep conviction within the *Ahlul Bayt* regarding the divine mandate of Ghadeer. These narrations serve not only as historical evidence but also as a testament to the unwavering commitment of the *Ahlul Bayt* to preserve and convey the true message of Islam, even in the face of immense adversity.

The legacy of Ghadeer, particularly the failure of many to uphold its true

meaning, casts a long shadow over Islamic history, leading to profound consequences. The speaker subtly but powerfully draws a parallel between the scorching heat of Ghadeer Khum, under which the Prophet (s) made his vital declaration, and the subsequent sufferings of the *Ahlul Bayt*, particularly the tragic events of Karbala. The image of the Imam Hussein (a.s.) and his family left on the burning sands under the blazing sun, the relentless cruelty, and the disregard for their sanctity, can be seen as a bitter fruit of the deviation from the path of *Wilayah* established at Ghadeer. The sufferings of Lady Zaynab (s.a.) and Lady Rubab (s.a.) after Karbala, forced to endure the elements and humiliation, epitomize this tragic trajectory. Their unwavering commitment to *Wilayah*, even in the face of unspeakable grief, underscores that true faith demands not just love, but complete submission and obedience to the divinely appointed Imam. The speaker reiterates that the core message of Ghadeer Khum is not just love but absolute *Wilayah*, the complete adherence to the divinely ordained leadership of Imam Ali (a.s.) and his infallible descendants. This *Wilayah* remains the lifeblood of the *Ummah*, and its preservation is paramount for continued divine protection and guidance.

Chapter 208

The Covenant Sealed: Ghadeer's Unwavering Truth and its Immediate Repercussions

The momentous event of Ghadeer Khum, recognized as *Hajj al-Balagh* (the Pilgrimage of Conveyance), reached its culmination as the vast assembly of pilgrims gathered around the Prophet (s). With the divine command conveyed through **Ayat al-Balagh** (**Qur'an 5:67**), the Prophet (s) brought his comprehensive sermon to a close, yet its impact was only just beginning to unfold. The subsequent days were dedicated to the formal pledge of allegiance, the *bay'ah*, to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), solidifying his declared *Wilayah* and *Imamat*.

As the Prophet (s) concluded his address, he observed the immense gathering, noting those who attempted to slip away from the monumental occasion. Immediately, he dispatched individuals to bring them back, ensuring no one present could claim ignorance or absence from this pivotal declaration. His meticulous attention underscored the gravity of the event, with his eyes and ears attuned to the reactions of the crowd, leaving

no room for misunderstanding or evasion.

Recognizing the sheer number of pilgrims—over a hundred thousand—which made individual hand-to-hand *bay'ah* an impractical and time-consuming endeavor, the Prophet (s) outlined a collective, oral affirmation. He emphasized the profound significance of *taqwa* (God-consciousness), urging all to remember the Day of Judgment, the reckoning, and the ultimate reward or punishment. He reminded them of the omnipresence of Allah, the Master of all creation, before whom every deed, good or evil, would be weighed. He reiterated that while their numbers were vast, they were to unify under one singular oath.

Addressing the multitude, the Prophet (s) commanded them to collectively proclaim their acceptance: "We hear, we obey, we are pleased, we submit to what You have conveyed from our Lord and our Cherisher regarding Ali, the *Amir al-Mu'minin*, and the Imams from my progeny." This verbal covenant established a binding commitment, a shared responsibility to uphold the divine mandate of *Wilayah*. The Prophet (s) then instructed them to greet Imam Ali (a.s.) as *Amir al-Mu'minin*, a title of supreme authority that would echo through history. This was not a mere greeting of love, but an acknowledgment of his divinely ordained leadership.

Following this collective declaration, the Prophet (s) himself descended from the makeshift pulpit, and Imam Ali (a.s.) joined him. A line formed, with groups of pilgrims coming forward to offer their individual *bay'ah*, stretching the process over three days. The Prophet (s) meticulously oversaw this process, ensuring that the essence of the covenant was understood and affirmed by all. During this period, even the most dedicated of companions and the Prophet's wives, the *Umm al-Mu'minin*, were brought forth to publicly affirm their allegiance to Imam Ali (a.s.).

It was during this period of the *bay'ah* that a momentous incident oc-

curred, serving as a divine confirmation of the entire event. A man named Harith ibn Nu'man al-Fihri approached the Prophet (s) on his camel, boldly challenging him. He acknowledged accepting the oneness of Allah, the prophethood of Muhammad, the five daily prayers, *zakat*, fasting, and *Hajj*. However, he vehemently questioned the appointment of Ali ibn Abi Talib as the leader, demanding whether this command came from Allah or from the Prophet himself. When the Prophet (s) unequivocally affirmed that it was indeed a divine command, Harith, filled with defiance, prayed aloud: "O Allah! If what Muhammad says is true and is from You, then send a stone from the sky upon me, or inflict upon me a painful torment!" No sooner had he uttered these words than a stone fell from the sky, striking him dead. This harrowing event was a direct fulfillment of the Qur'anic verses revealed in **Surah al-Ma'arij (70:1-3)**: **"A questioner asked about a torment about to befall. Upon the disbelievers—there is no one to avert it. From Allah, the Lord of the ascending pathways."**

This incident powerfully underscored the divine authority of the Ghadeer declaration, removing any doubt about its celestial origin. Some, in an attempt to discredit this event, argue that **Surah al-Ma'arij** is a Makki Surah (revealed before the *Hijrah*), implying it cannot relate to the Medani event of Ghadeer. However, the term "Makki" denotes revelation before *Hijrah*, not necessarily in Mecca. This argument, common in discussions seeking to undermine the *Wilayah* of the *Ahlul Bayt*, is readily refuted by a deeper understanding of Qur'anic revelation and historical context.

The profound message conveyed by Harith's fate was that while acknowledging fundamental tenets of Islam like *Tawhid* (oneness of God), *Risalah* (prophethood), prayer, fasting, *zakat*, and *Hajj* are crucial, they are incomplete without the acceptance of *Wilayah*. To reject the divinely appointed leadership of Imam Ali (a.s.) and the Imams from his progeny, after such clear pronouncements, was tantamount to disbelief, incurring divine wrath. This highlights the indispensable nature of *Wilayah* as the

cornerstone of true faith.

The days following Ghadeer were marked by a sense of foreboding as well. While the Prophet (s) tirelessly ensured the *bay'ah* to Ali (a.s.), some individuals present began to plot against the newly established order. Historical accounts allude to a secret pact by 14 hypocrites (9 from Quraysh and 5 from outside) who conspired against the Prophet (s) and his divine mission. This conspiracy, initially aimed at preventing the Ghadeer declaration, shifted its focus to undermining Ali's authority after the declaration was made. This underscores the immediate repercussions of the Ghadeer event, revealing the deep-seated opposition to the *Wilayah* of the *Ahlul Bayt*. For deeper understanding of these sensitive events, it is highly recommended to consult scholarly works such as *Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilali* and *Hayat al-Hayawan*.

The rejection of the Ghadeer covenant, though immediately challenged by divine intervention, set in motion a chain of events that would profoundly impact the future of Islam. The tragic events of Karbala, centuries later, are seen as a direct consequence and culmination of this initial deviation from the divinely ordained path of *Wilayah*. Imam Hussein (a.s.)'s steadfastness in Karbala, despite facing overwhelming odds, was a testament to the principles of *Wilayah* first declared at Ghadeer. In Karbala, Imam Hussein (a.s.) purposefully refrained from overt miracles to deny his adversaries any excuse, yet even the restive horses and camels in his camp quieted at his command, a subtle sign of his authority. This illustrates the continuity of divine signs and the unwavering commitment of the *Ahlul Bayt* to the truth established at Ghadeer, even unto ultimate sacrifice. The suffering endured by the *Ahlul Bayt* throughout history, culminating in the martyrdom of figures like Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.), whose body was tragically desecrated on the Baghdad bridge, serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring consequences of rejecting the *Wilayah* established at Ghadeer.

Chapter 209

The Shadow of Conspiracy and the Light of Zaynab

The pivotal declaration at Ghadeer Khum had just concluded, marking the completion of the divine message through the explicit appointment of Imam Ali (a.s.) as the successor to the Blessed Prophet (s). Yet, even amidst this triumph, the ever-present reality of mortality, a fundamental aspect of human existence, hovered. The Qur'an, in its wisdom, had already prepared the *Ummah* for this inevitable truth, revealing verses like **Qur'an 3:144**: "**Mohammad is not but a messenger. Messengers have passed on before him. If he dies or is killed, will you turn back on your heels?**" and **Qur'an 21:34**: "**And We did not grant to any human being before you immortality; so if you die, will they be immortal?**" These *ayat*, though revealed intermittently over time, served to gently prepare the believers for the Prophet's (s) eventual departure, reinforcing that even the greatest of messengers was subject to the same human fate.

This understanding becomes crucial when addressing certain objections raised by adversaries regarding the authenticity of key events in Islamic history, particularly those related to Ghadeer. A common point of con-

tention revolves around the classification of Qur'anic *surahs* and *ayat* as "Meccan" or "Medinan." Critics argue that if certain *ayat* associated with events like the Harith ibn Nu'man incident (which occurred after Ghadeer in Medina) are found in *surahs* classified as Meccan (e.g., **Surah al-Ma'arij**), then the incident itself must be fabricated. However, this argument stems from a misunderstanding of the terms "Meccan" and "Medinan." These classifications refer not to the geographical location of revelation but to the *period* of revelation. Any *ayah* or *surah* revealed *before* the Prophet's (s) *Hijrah* to Medina is termed "Meccan," irrespective of its exact location of descent. Conversely, any *ayah* or *surah* revealed *after* the *Hijrah*, even if it descended in Mecca during a subsequent pilgrimage or visit, is termed "Medinan."

Islamic scholarship consistently affirms that numerous *surahs*, though primarily classified as Meccan, contain Medinan *ayat*, and vice versa. For instance, while **Surah al-Baqarah** and **Surah Ali 'Imran** are entirely Medinan, many other large *surahs* were revealed in stages, some parts Meccan and others Medinan. This is evident in examples such as **Surah al-Isra**, a Meccan *surah* that contains a verse related to *Mi'raj*, which occurred in Mecca but whose meaning and implications are tied to the later Medinan period. Similarly, **Surah Maryam**, a Meccan *surah* descended during the Muslim migration to Abyssinia, contains a Medinan *ayah* concerning *Pul Sirat* (the Bridge of Hell). The same holds true for **Surah al-Hajj**, **al-Furqan**, **al-Naml**, **al-Qasas**, **al-'Ankabut**, **al-Qamar**, and even the early Meccan *surahs* like **al-Muzzammil** and **al-Muddaththir**, all of which contain verses revealed during the Medinan era. This established principle negates any argument that the Harith ibn Nu'man incident, which clearly occurred after the *Hijrah*, could not be authenticated simply because the associated *Surah al-Ma'arij* is generally termed Meccan.

Following the monumental declaration at Ghadeer Khum, as the vast assembly began its journey back towards Medina, the insidious shadow

of hypocrisy loomed large. A sinister plot was brewing among a group of fourteen individuals, aiming to assassinate the Prophet (s) before he could reach Medina. The route from Ghadeer to Medina included treacherous mountainous terrain, particularly the challenging passes between Sana'ees and Chura'ees, an ideal location for an ambush. The conspirators planned to exploit the cover of darkness during a nighttime journey, intending to cause the Prophet's (s) camel to stumble and fall into a ravine, leading to his demise. They had even prepared a container filled with stones to agitate the camel.

However, Allah, in His infinite wisdom and protection, had already apprised His Messenger (s) of this wicked scheme. The Prophet (s) subtly prepared for the encounter. He summoned **Hudhayfa al-Yamani**, famously known as *Sahib al-Sirr* (the keeper of the Prophet's secrets), and **Ammar ibn Yasir**, instructing Ammar to lead his camel from the front while Hudhayfa followed closely behind. As they navigated the dark, narrow mountain pass, the conspirators put their plan into action, hurling stones to startle the camel. The Prophet's (s) camel momentarily faltered, but through a miraculous intervention, the Prophet (s) spoke to the animal, reassuring it and guiding it forward.

At that very moment, a powerful flash of lightning, sent by divine command, illuminated the dark ravine. In that brilliant flash, Hudhayfa (r.a.) clearly saw the faces of all fourteen conspirators. The Prophet (s) then, in a hushed tone, revealed their names to Hudhayfa. Initially, Hudhayfa found it almost impossible to believe that such seemingly prominent individuals, who appeared to be devout Muslims, could harbor such malicious intentions. Yet, the Prophet's (s) knowledge was undeniable. The Prophet (s) chose not to expose these individuals publicly, understanding that such an action might lead to accusations of eliminating rivals once power had been consolidated—a common practice in worldly regimes. Instead, he preferred to leave their fate to Allah. This deeply profound

strategy meant that Hudhayfa (r.a.) became the sole confidant of the Prophet's (s) secret, and throughout his life, he notably abstained from participating in the funeral prayers of any of these fourteen individuals. This discreet practice was so well-known that **Umar ibn al-Khattab** would often observe Hudhayfa's actions, and if Hudhayfa abstained from a funeral, Umar would follow suit, recognizing that the deceased must have been among the hypocrites identified by the Prophet (s).

The treachery did not end there. Upon reaching Medina, these fourteen conspirators, who had already committed to overturning the Ghadeer declaration, expanded their circle, gathering support until their ranks swelled to approximately four thousand individuals. They convened a secret meeting and formally drafted a cursed document, known as *Sahifa al-Mala'eena*. This vile pact, beginning with "*Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*" and concluding with "*Alhamdulillah Rabbil Alameen*", explicitly detailed their commitment to nullify the *bay'ah* (allegiance) given to Imam Ali (a.s.) at Ghadeer Khum and to prevent his rightful succession.

The information regarding this highly secretive meeting and the treacherous document came to light through an extraordinary source: **Umm Kulthum bint Abi Bakr**, the daughter of Abu Bakr. She was at the time married to Zubayr ibn al-Awwam (and later to Talha), and the secret meeting was held in her house. As she overheard the discussions, she carefully noted every detail of the conspiracy. Her integrity and commitment to truth compelled her to relay this crucial information to Hudhayfa, who then informed the Prophet (s). This act of bravery by a woman within the very household of the conspirators stands as a testament to the diverse ways in which individuals contributed to the protection of Islam, even from within the heart of hostile factions.

As the narrative of these conspiracies unfolds, the calendar turns to the auspicious **1st of Sha'ban**, a month dedicated to the Holy Prophet (s). On

this day, a profound event occurred: the birth of **Lady Zaynab (s.a.)**, the daughter of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Lady Fatimah (s.a.). The family rejoiced at her arrival, yet a subtle sorrow mingled with their happiness. It is narrated that when the Prophet (s) took his newborn granddaughter into his arms, tears streamed down his blessed face. When asked about his sorrow, he explained that his tears stemmed not from sadness but from an awareness of the immense trials and tribulations this child would endure.

When it came to naming the newborn, the Prophet (s), just as he had done for Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.), awaited divine instruction. Soon, the Archangel Jibreel (a.s.) descended, conveying Allah's command to name her "Zaynab."

Later, the Prophet (s) brought Lady Zaynab (s.a.) into the mosque, holding her for all to see. In a deeply symbolic and poignant declaration, he referred to her as "the daughter of Khadijah," the revered First Lady of Islam and the mother of Lady Fatimah (s.a.). This appellation was not merely a familial reference but a profound declaration of Lady Zaynab's (s.a.) destined role. The Prophet (s) drew a direct parallel between Lady Khadijah's (s.a.) monumental sacrifices and unwavering support in the nascent stages of Islam, which had protected and sustained the faith, and Lady Zaynab's (s.a.) future mission. Just as Khadijah (s.a.) had given her wealth and life for Islam, Zaynab (s.a.) would similarly safeguard its essence through unparalleled sacrifice, including the loss of her loved ones at Karbala and her subsequent brave stand.

The Prophet (s) then spoke with deep emotion, subtly foreshadowing the immense suffering that awaited Lady Zaynab (s.a.). He alluded to the sanctity of a mother, implying that no child would ever dare to disrespect their mother, deprive her of food or water, bind her hands, imprison her, or strike her. These words, laden with prophetic insight, served as a stark, veiled warning of the brutal realities Lady Zaynab (s.a.) would face in

the aftermath of Karbala: her thirst, her captivity, the chains that bound her, and the lashes she endured, all while embodying the dignity and resilience of her grandmother, Lady Khadijah (s.a.).

The birth of Lady Zaynab (s.a.) on the 1st of Sha'ban also serves as a reminder of the vital role of women in the propagation and preservation of Islam. Just as Umm Kulthum bint Abi Bakr, from within her home, uncovered a major conspiracy, Lady Zaynab (s.a.) would, through her powerful oratory and unwavering steadfastness, challenge tyrannical power and ensure the message of Imam Husayn (a.s.) reached distant lands. The example of these women highlights that the responsibility of "enjoining good and forbidding evil" (*Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahy anil Munkar*) extends to all, regardless of gender or societal role, and can be fulfilled even from within the confines of one's home. The Prophet (s) further encouraged the *Ummah* to utilize the auspicious day of 1st Sha'ban for acts of goodness, emphasizing fasting as a means of "helping" him, and engaging in various acts of charity and reconciliation, thus preparing the believers for the profound spiritual journey that awaited them.

Chapter 210

The Prophet's Final Illness and Last Directives

After the momentous declaration at Ghadeer Khum and the completion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Messenger of Allah (s) made his return journey to Medina. As was his blessed custom, upon reaching the outskirts of Medina at the end of Dhul Hijjah, he paused to offer a prayer of gratitude, thanking Allah for the safe return and the fulfillment of his mission. This marked the beginning of the 11th year of the Hijri calendar, a period that would witness the final two months of his earthly life. He was then in his sixty-third year, having spent twenty-three years delivering the divine message.

Immediately upon his return, the Prophet (s) began to prepare for what would be his final major military expedition: the formation of **Jaysh Usamah** (Usamah's army). Its purpose was to avenge the martyrs of the Battle of Mu'tah, which had occurred three years prior. In a decision that surprised many, the Prophet (s) appointed Usamah ibn Zayd, a young man aged between seventeen and nineteen, as the commander of this army. This appointment, overlooking older and more experienced companions,

caused murmurs and reluctance among some. Despite the growing opposition, the Prophet (s) vehemently insisted on Usamah's command, repeatedly urging the army to depart. So profound was his conviction that he was heard to say, "*L'an Allah man takhallafa 'an Jaysh Usamah*" (May Allah curse those who lag behind Usamah's army), highlighting the divine imperative behind this mission. The army eventually departed Medina, but only to encamp a mere three miles outside the city, at Jurf, where they lingered, their departure stalled by the worsening health of the Prophet (s).

Around the 11th or 12th of Safar, the Prophet's (s) final illness began. It was a severe affliction that would last for approximately two weeks, leading to his eventual demise on the 28th of Safar. Even in his weakened state, the Prophet (s) consistently inquired about the status of Usamah's army, his concern for the mission paramount.

During this period of increasing debility, a pivotal incident, often referred to as *Yawm al-Khamis* (The Calamity of Thursday), unfolded. On a Thursday, just a few days before his passing, the Prophet (s), in a moment of clarity despite his illness, requested a pen and paper. He expressed his desire to write a document that would forever prevent the *Ummah* from falling into misguidance. However, this sacred request was met with an unfortunate dispute among those present. Some voices claimed the Prophet (s) was delirious due to his illness, while others insisted on the necessity of obeying his command. It is famously reported that one companion, Umar ibn al-Khattab, remarked, "*Hasbuna Kitabullah*" (The Book of Allah is sufficient for us). Distressed by the commotion and division, the Prophet (s) ordered everyone to leave his presence.

Despite his extreme weakness, the Prophet (s) managed to deliver several profound directives in the days leading up to his passing. On Friday, supported by Imam Ali (a.s.) and his uncle Abbas (a.s.), he made

his way to the Mosque. There, he once again reiterated the vital **Hadith al-Thaqalayn**, reminding the *Ummah* that he was leaving behind two weighty things: the Book of Allah and his **Ahlul Bayt**. He emphasized that as long as they clung to these two, they would never go astray and would meet him at the Pond of Kawthar on the Day of Judgment. This sermon stressed the unwavering importance of adhering to the *Ahlul Bayt* and warned against deviating from their path.

On Saturday, though his voice was faint and his body trembled with weakness, the Prophet (s) delivered another significant sermon. He made it clear to the *Ummah* that there was no special kinship with Allah that would exempt any believer from accountability. Salvation, he declared, was solely achieved through righteous deeds and *taqwa* (God-consciousness), not through mere claims of lineage or association. He sought to dispel any complacency among the followers of the *Ahlul Bayt*, warning them against the false hope that their love for the *Ahlul Bayt* alone would guarantee paradise without the accompanying righteous actions.

In a poignant display of his exemplary character, the Prophet (s) then opened himself to accountability. He asked if he had wronged anyone, physically or financially, or if anyone had a claim against him, urging them to seek retribution in this life rather than waiting for the Day of Judgment. One man stood up, claiming the Prophet (s) owed him three *dirhams* for a wedding gift he had promised. The Prophet (s) immediately settled the debt. Another claimed three *dirhams* that the Prophet (s) had spent on his behalf, which was also promptly paid. Then, a man named Sawada ibn 'Amr came forward, stating that during a procession, the Prophet (s) had accidentally struck him with a stick, causing him pain, and he now wished to strike the Prophet (s) back in kind. The Prophet (s) immediately uncovered his abdomen, revealing his blessed skin. Overwhelmed with emotion, Sawada rushed forward and kissed the Prophet's (s) body, declaring his true intention was not revenge but

the profound desire to touch and kiss his blessed form. This act moved everyone present to tears. The Prophet (s) continued to emphasize accountability, even disclosing a minor theft of three *dirhams* from the public treasury by a companion, ensuring justice for all. He also prayed for a companion who admitted to excessive talking and backbiting, and the companion was miraculously cured.

On Sunday morning, the Prophet's (s) condition worsened considerably. Despite his earlier instructions to avoid administering medicine for this particular illness, some of his wives, in a moment of perceived concern, prepared and forcibly administered a concoction while he was unconscious. Upon regaining consciousness, the Prophet (s) was deeply displeased, asserting that no one present should be exempt from taking this medicine, with the sole exception of his uncle, Abbas (a.s.). This incident underscored the gravity of disobeying the Prophet's (s) direct commands.

Monday, the 28th of Safar, was the day of his passing. The Prophet (s) cleared his chamber, allowing only Imam Ali (a.s.) and Lady Fatima (s.a.) to remain. He rested his head in the lap of Imam Ali (a.s.) for an extended period. In his final instructions, he called for Bilal and provided a list of fifteen personal items—his armor, sword (Dhu al-Fiqar), turban, two walking sticks, two cloaks, two sandals, two horses (Ghafla and Sawaha), and two mules—instructing Ali (a.s.) to take possession of them, a premonition of their future usurpation. He also passed his blessed ring to Ali (a.s.).

With his head still in Ali's (a.s.) lap, the Prophet (s) then conveyed a solemn covenant to him. He foretold the immense injustices and sufferings that would befall the *Ahlul Bayt* after his departure, extracting promises from Ali (a.s.) to remain patient and silent in the face of various forms of oppression, including the usurpation of his rights, the suffering

of Lady Fatima (s.a.), and the alteration of religious laws. This comprehensive covenant revealed the Prophet's (s) deep concern for the future of Islam and the trials his family would endure.

In his final moments, the Prophet (s) called for his beloved grandchildren, Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.). He embraced them tenderly, instructing them to take a last look at him, signifying the imminent and complete separation. Lady Fatima (s.a.) was present, bearing witness to these heart-wrenching moments. She was told that she would be the first of his family to join him in the afterlife. As his blessed soul prepared for its ascent, Lady Fatima (s.a.) sought to engage him, mentioning her revered grandfather, Abu Talib. The Prophet (s) briefly opened his eyes, indicating that it was a time for Qur'an, not poetry. With profound significance, he recited the verse from **Qur'an 3:144**: "*Muhammad is not but a messenger.* [*Other*] *messengers have passed on before him. If he dies or is killed, will you turn back on your heels? And he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allah at all; but Allah will reward the grateful.*"

The Messenger of Allah (s) departed this world on Monday, the 28th of Safar, 11 AH, between noon and afternoon. Immediately following his passing, two unseen voices were heard. One was angelic, instructing the *Ahlul Bayt* not to wash the Prophet's (s) body, declaring him inherently pure. The other was demonic, subtly advising against washing him, suggesting that washing was for the impure. Imam Ali (a.s.) immediately rejected the demonic whisper, reaffirming that the washing of the deceased was a religious command, even for the purest of souls.

Imam Ali (a.s.) personally performed the *ghusl* (ritual washing) of the Prophet (s) and enshrouded him in three pieces of Yemeni cloth. The Prophet (s) was then laid to rest in the very chamber where he passed away. Imam Ali (a.s.) led the funeral prayer (*Salat al-Janazah*) for the Prophet (s) privately, as an Imam cannot be led in prayer by another. Sub-

sequently, other companions performed their individual funeral prayers, as the small chamber could not accommodate a large congregation. The sacred burial was completed on Tuesday, the 29th of Safar.

The Prophet's (s) passing marked an unparalleled moment of grief for the *Ummah*, especially for his beloved **Ahlul Bayt**. Lady Fatima (s.a.) endured profound sorrow, foreshadowing the immense suffering she would experience in the days and years that followed. This period, though marking the Prophet's (s) physical departure, is but one chapter in his eternal biography, with subsequent events, including the concept of *Raj'ah* and the grievances of the *Ahlul Bayt*, to be explored in the continuation of his sacred life story.

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