

Al-Nahl



Ka'bah in 1880.



Ka'bah circa 1950

About Al-Nahl

The *Al-Nahl* (pronounced annahl) is published quarterly by Majlis Ansarullah, USA, an auxiliary of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islām, Inc., U.S.A., 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905, U.S.A.

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Al-Nahl is published on volunteer basis from the Ansar contributions for literature set at \$10/

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Ansar (Ansarullah News) is published monthly by Majlis Ansarullah U.S.A. and is sent free to all Ansar in the U.S.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

وَ اَوْحٰی رَبُّكَ اِلٰی النَّحْلِ اَنْ اتَّخِذِیْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُیُوتًا وَّ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَّ مِمَّا یَعْرِشُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾
ثُمَّ کُلِّیْ مِنْ کُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ فَاَسْلُکِیْ سُبُلَ رَبِّکِ ذُلُلًا ۗ یَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُوْنِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُهٗ
فِیْهِ شِفَآءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ ۗ اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِکَ لَآیٰةً لِّقَوْمٍ یَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾

And thy Lord has inspired the bee, *saying*, ‘Make thou houses in the hills and in the trees and in the trellises which they build, ‘Then eat of every *kind of* fruit, and then pursue submissively the paths prescribed by your Lord.’ There comes forth from their bellies a drink of varying hues. Therein is a cure for men. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who reflect. (The Holy Qur’an, 16[Al-Nahl]:69-70)

Quarterly
Al-Nahl
Vol. 18, No. 1-2
Q1Q2/2007

✧
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Al-Nahl is a
Publication of
Majlis Ansarullah,
U.S.A.,
An Auxiliary of the
Ahmadiyya Movement in
Islām, Inc.,
U.S.A.
✧

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(May peace and Blessings of Allāh be upon him)

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Master Prophet Muḥammad

(May peace and Blessings of Allāh be upon him)

From initiation of prophethood to immigration

Dr. Muḥammad Sharīf Khān, Philadelphia

Declaration of prophethood

Now the time has come to shake humanity awake from its long slumber, during which it had long forgotten its role in Allāh's creation. It was the time to remind man the purpose of his creation, his duty towards his fellow beings, obligations to poor, neighbors, and orphans; his creator, one Allāh, his provider and sustainer. It was time to teach him how to strike a balance between daily life and preparations for the life hereafter. Man had divulged wildly from the path of prophets, though he still revered them but forgotten their teachings. The house of Allāh, Ka'bah, specially built and sensitized for His worship, had been amassed with scores of gods. Instead of remembering his Creator, man would wile away time by sitting idle, gossiping, making fun of each other, cutting jokes, talking about women folk as if they were animals; when offended drawing swords, killing ruthlessly and mercilessly, forgetting long standing friendships and falling into deadly enmity, in a jiffy. Man would loot, steal and plunder others' wealth, as a source of lust and sustenance.

The glimmer of light Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) saw at the horizon in the darkness of cave Ḥirā, started spreading, and in the mist of dawn magnificence of Allāh started gradually becoming clearer and clearer,

as the darkness manifested in ignorance, lawlessness and apathy towards sufferings of fellow human beings, is dispelled. Muḥammad's (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) prayers and meditations in the solitude of the cave Ḥirā were readying to start an era of light and nobility. Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) had almost lost himself in thanking Allāh Almighty for His infinite kindness for which his meek and humble supplications were answered in such magnanimity. A sudden turn in events had almost stunned Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam), had not assurances of his loving wife Khadijah (raḍiyallāhu 'anhā) and learned uncle Warāqah, supported him to settle down from the anxiety, he would have been lost. From all that passed, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) knew that he was on the right tract. It further strengthened his enthusiasm and he resumed praying and supplication in the solitude of cave Ḥirā, asking for further guidance from his Allāh.

Second revelation

The Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) had been out for some days in the cave. In the evening, on his way back home, he heard a soft voice calling him "Muḥammad, Muḥammad!" He looked around; there was nobody; as he looked up, lo! There was the same figure that

Purpose of human creation

Allāh created man particularly to worship Him, meaning to obey His commandments:

[2:22] O ye men! worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you,, that you may guard against evil.

To believe

Human life is divided into two parts:

Worldly life (practical part) is limited to the material world, where choice depends on man's will and thinking. Man interacts with his fellow beings, recognizing their rights, and strives to create a friendly and cordial atmosphere in the society, each paying their dues, doing good deeds.

Life after death (the life hereafter) starts with the death of the material world. Man is left in His in his hands and power. He waits to be judged for the good or bad deeds he performed during his worldly life.

Belief in prophets: Allāh has been guiding human beings toward the right path through His messengers to create a neat and clean society. Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) falls last in the line of Allāh's appointed messengers. The continuity of faith entails continued effort to create a just society.

These are the three basic points to which the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) invited Meccans. As time passed, detailed laws and regulations were revealed and make up the Holy Qur'ān. Most important of these is to remember Allāh, the Almighty, in daily Prayers and supplications, which revives a person's pledge of allegiance to the

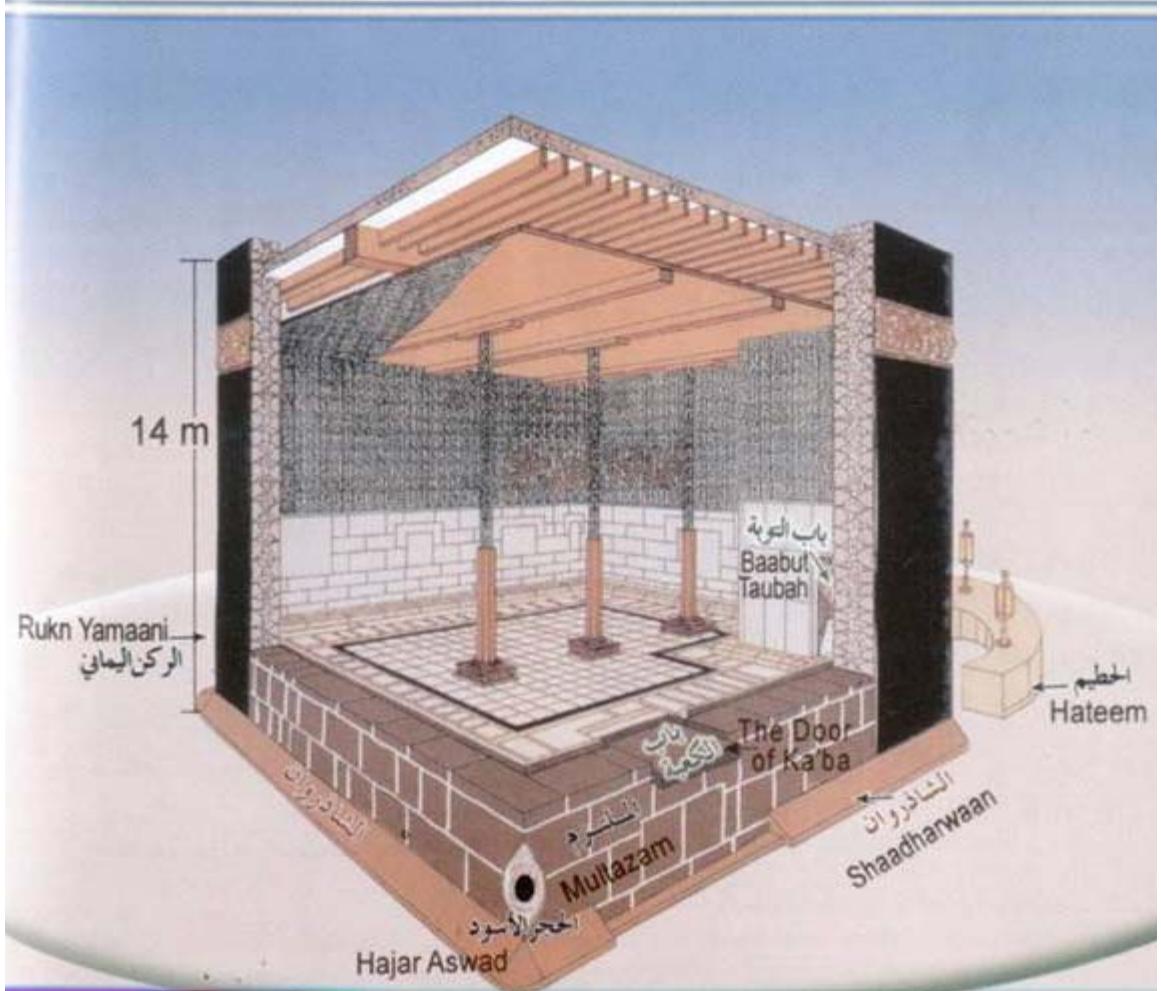
Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam)'s message.

Later, the angel Gabriel taught the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) how to cleanse the body before praying through ablution (wuḍū). In the beginning, Muslims would offer their Prayers individually in houses, or they would join to offer Prayers hidden in nearby mountain valleys. Once the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) and 'Alī (raḍiyallāhu 'anhū) were offering Prayer together in a valley, Abū Ṭālib (Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam)'s uncle, and Alī's father) happened to pass their way. At that time he knew nothing about Islām. He stood in amazement watching their movements. When they had finished, he asked the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam), "Nephew, what religion do you practice, and what were you doing?" The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) replied, "Uncle this is the way of Allāh and Prophet Abraham ('alaihissalām), we were offering Prayers to Allāh." Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) briefly explained and invited him towards Islām. Abū Ṭālib avoided further discussion by saying, "I cannot leave the religion of my forefathers." However, he addressed 'Alī (his son) saying, "Well, son, you are free to follow Muḥammad, I am confident he will lead you to good rather to anything evil."

Conversions

The first convert to Islām was the Prophet(ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam)'s wife Khadijah (raḍiyallāhu 'anhā); she never hesitated for a second to believe in him. Others that followed were Zaid

The Interior of the Ka'bah



(raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu) (his former slave), and ‘Alī (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu) (his cousin).

When the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) declared his prophethood, his bosom friend Abū Bakr (two years younger) was out of Mecca. He was known for his mild temperament, wisdom and righteousness. Because of

his morality he was most respected among Quraishites. Moreover, he was an honest wealthy person, he grew with Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam), and they would visit each almost daily. Abū Bakr knew Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) very closely from his childhood, than anybody else in

Mecca. When Abū Bakr returned home, he heard different stories about his friend, somebody told him of his friend's claim of being appointed as a prophet of Allāh, Abū Bakr at once announced his belief in him, and hurried to visit Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam). When he met Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam), thrice Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) tried to explain to him, but each time Abū Bakr insisted, "Only tell me, have you claimed to be a prophet?" Prophet's reply in affirmative prompted Abū Bakr (raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) to announce his belief in him.

At first Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) would meet truth seekers secretly in his house or at some place outside the city. The propagation was kept so secret that often even Muslims did not know among themselves of each other's conversion. Though Muslims tried to keep his/her belief secret, anyhow when ever a whiff of Islām reached Quraishites, they would just laugh the news away as a joke, and thought that it was Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam)'s some childish prank. They never heeded it for some time.

Conversion protocol

A person convinced of the truth of the message would decide to be converting to Islām, he would come to Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) and request him to take him in Islām. Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) would first explain to him what Islām meant, and ask him if he understood what he was going to do. Taking his answer in

affirmative, the initiation process was simple. Both would sit on ground facing each other. Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) would hold his right hand in his right hand, and tell him to repeat specific words of pledge after him, "I bear witness on oneness of Allāh, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His slave and His messenger. I will not associate any partner with Allāh. I will obey Muḥammad in every thing good. I would desist from every thing bad like theft, adultery, murder; I will not associate anything with Allāh, and will not tell a lie."

Protocol for initiation of women converts was slightly different. Hand of a lady was not held, and she would sit behind a curtain and repeat the initiation words after Holy Prophet.

Open invitation towards Islām

In the fourth year of prophethood Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) was ordained by Allāh the Majestic:

[15:95] So declare openly that thou art commanded to convey and turn aside from those who ascribe partners to Allāh.

[15:96] We will, certainly, suffice thee against those who mock

[15:97] Who set up another Allāh with Allāh, but soon shall they come to know.

Then Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) was ordained to reach out for his relatives:

[26:215] And warn thy nearest kinsmen,

[26:216] And lower thy wing of mercy to the believers who follow thee.

[26:217] Then if they disobey thee, say, 'I repudiate all connection with what you do.'

[26:218] And put thy trust in the Mighty, the Merciful,

[26:219] Who sees thee when thou standest in Prayer,

[26:220] And Who sees thy movements among those who prostrate themselves before Allāh.

[26:221] He is indeed the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

In response to this ordination, Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) climbed the Ṣafā Hill and called Quraishites tribes loudly by their names to gather. When all had gathered, he addressed them, “O Quraish! If I tell you that a large army is almost prepared to attack you from behind this hill, would you believe me?” Though it was an impossibility, but they unanimously cried out, “Yes, we would believe in you, because we have found you trustworthy and honest in your sayings.”

Then Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) announced, “Then listen! I tell you that Allāh’s punishment is drawing nearer. Believe in Allāh, and protect yourself from the punishment.” Instead of heeding the warning, Quraishites laughed at the Holy Prophet. His uncle Abū Lahab mockingly remarked, “Muḥammad! Woe to you, you called us to say this?” All of them went away jesting and joking.

After some days Holy Prophet directed ‘Alī to invite sons of ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib in a banquet. More or less 40 of his close relatives gathered. After the banquet Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) stood to speak, but Abū Lahab uttered some heinous words that scattered the guests away without hearing Prophet of Allāh.



Draping of Ka'bah in progress

Again, after few days, Holy Prophet invited his relatives again. He addressed them, “O sons of ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib! Look I have brought to you a good thing that nobody had ever brought to his tribe. If you act upon my teachings, you will get best of your life and religion. Now tell me who of you will help me.” All of them kept silent, only from one corner, a thin bony boy of ten years rose up to answer. With tears flowing from his eyes, he declared in his boyish determined voice, “Though I am the weakest and smallest of all of you, I will go with Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam).” It was young ‘Alī who spoke so boldly. Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) told the gathering, “If you are not prepared to listen to me, then listen to this innocent child.” Instead of taking depth of the advice, the audiences laughed. Abū Lahab addressed his elder brother Abū Ṭālib, “Now Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) orders you to follow your son and take advice from him.” As usual all of them went away joking and jesting at the weakness of Islām and Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam).

Dār Arqam—First Islāmic center

A center was established outside Mecca, where Muslims would gather to offer their Prayers, and think and discuss about for future propagation of Islām, silently and fearlessly. For this purpose house of a newly convert Muslim Al-Arqam ibn Abī al-Arqam was selected, because it was situated at a safe distance from the city, at the foot of Şafā Hill. Here Muslims would gather to offer Prayers, and to it seekers of truth would converge. In Mecca the house was known as Dārul-Akram, while in Islāmic history as “*Dārul-Islām*,” (House of Islām). Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) used this center for three years, until conversion of ‘Umar bin Al-Khaṭṭāb (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu), that strengthened Muslims and encouraged them to start propagation of Islām openly, and they started praying in Ka‘bah.

Antagonistic Quraishites

Quraishite had been observing silently rising rate of conversion to Islām with some concern. But when gradually people started talking about the new religion in streets and gatherings, they got worried, lest Islām may spread in Mecca and in its surroundings, and pose a threat to their supremacy.

Why Quraishites opposed Islām? Did Islām taught some thing bad or nasty? The answer is big “No.” There were several reasons based on their mean nature to oppose a religion who taught them to refrain from evil practices:

Quraishites were staunch idol worshippers. They did not love their idols because of spirituality. It was much for monitory gains, since they would earn

money by letting peoples worship idols they had kept in Ka‘bah on payment of fee, during pilgrim days. So they could not bear to hear anything against them, which may dilute their reverence. Ka‘bah which father Prophet Abraham (‘alaihi-salām) built to worship one Allāh, now which had been converted into a depositary of scores of different types and makes of gods. By believing in one Allāh, they were to refuse huge annual income, which they used to distribute among themselves.

Believing in Allāh also entailed them to observe common human values like: feeding the poor, being honest, giving women their rights, respecting parents and other relatives, spreading goodness, abstaining from evil. Quraishites rejected the message of Allāh, it required change in their way of life. They feared if they would feed poor, they would have to give away some of their wealth. If they recognize rights of women, they could no longer use and misuse them as they had been doing. No, the idea of obeying the Prophet of Allāh required more sacrifice than they were willing to give.

Religion is always against bad customs which are current in society.

Naturally, it is against vested interests of corrupt people who through their corruption and ill deeds and intimidations control society. Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) calls them to Allāh, justice and equality, abolishing bullying, threatening and assaulting the poor. It called for a society free of trickery, cheating and all types of malpractices. Islām boosted morality and goodness, and lifted the down trodden. Prophet’s mission was in flagrant

opposition to the interests of the elders in the society. They did every thing in their power to discourage Prophet. As is described in Holy Qur'ān:

[36:31] Alas for my servants! there comes not a Messenger to them but they mock at him.

Habits and customs of Arabs were deplorable, womanization, drinking, murder, were their routine daily practices, which Islām never approved. They regard it to be interference in their personal matters. Quraishites were acknowledged idol worshippers, Islām being strictly monotheistic, declared idols and their worshipers to fuel the hell fire, which infuriated them and they stood zestfully together to oppose Islām.

Quraishites were habitual sinners, adulterers, drinkers, fight mongers, murderers, and looters, they practiced almost all conceivable vices. Islām opposed all these practices and stood to overhaul the society. It was hard for Quraishites to change from easy life to hard way that Islām demanded. Since a Muslim needs to live honestly, lead life of spirituality, austerity and truthfulness, becoming mild, meek and humble, avoiding quarrels, stealing, cheating and molesting.

Quraishite were proud, claming to be specially created. They needed to keep slavery alive in society to serve them in day-to-day life, so that they could live in easy way. But Islām teaches equality, demolishes cult of high and low, creating worldwide brotherliness. Abolition of slavery was death blow to Quraishite exploiter society.

In pretence to their false honor they would kill their girl child, which Islām

strictly prohibited.

Quraishites were highly influential and wealthy people in Meccan society. Though Holy Prophet was one of them, since childhood he kept himself aloof from malpractices current in Quraishite society. For his living, he would take merchandise of other's to Syria and other places. He was neither influential nor wealthy; he would earn his living by the sweat of his eyes brows. High ranking were not prepared to obey him, no matter how plausible his teachings were.

Quraishite were subdivided in tribes, intertribal rivalries and enmities were always brewing among them. Particularly Banū Umayyah and Banū Makhzūm strongly opposed Banū Hāshim, Holy Prophet's tribe. They thought converting to Islām would strengthen Banū Hāshim, that they were not prepared to allow, it was why these two tribes were sworn enemies of Islām, and were leader of opponents.

Strategic handling of Islām by Quraishites

Quraishites differ in opinion from each other how to handle Islām:

i. First were the relatively cool-minded elders. They wanted to solve the problem in a gentle way, by negotiation and persuasion. They were not prepared to obey a young man, and allow destruction of their ancestral religion by an upstart.

ii. Second category were of relatively younger, who were in favor of using force and intimidation.

iii. Third category, were of those who were almost mad in opposition—very malicious. They followed no code of conduct. They wanted to eradicate Islām

by hock or crock employing every conceivable wicked method. This group was dominant among Quraishites.

However, they all contributed in their way in the opposition drive against Muslims, increasing in intensity day by day, leaving heart rendering stories of atrocities committed against individual Muslims, which continued unabated till Hijrah.

Maneuvering of Quraishites

Quraishite met time and on, to seriously think how to tackle the problem facing them. Moderates who favored negotiations approached Abū Ṭālib in their effort to dissuade him either to take off his protecting hand from his nephew or persuade him to call off his mission.

A delegation of prominent Quraishites visited Abū Ṭālib and conveyed to him, “You are honored elder of our nation. We have come with a request to stop your nephew to propagate the new religion, or you should withdraw your support. Leave him to us to decide among us.” Abū Ṭālib spoke to them politely and soothed out their anxiety. They left cool headed.

Quraishite’s second delegation

Islām was drawing more and more people into its fold. Daily hard words were being used for idol worshippers and their idols, which they were to fuel hell fire; it put the Quraishite on a hot plate. They could not bear these words any longer.

Soon a second Quraishites delegate, comprising of relatively radical aliments, met Abū Ṭālib and protested, “Now the problem created by your nephew is touching the last bounds of our patience.

He calls us filthy, thoughtless and followers of Satan. He not only calls us and our idols the fuel of hell-fire, he even calls our forefathers thoughtless people. We cannot bear such insults any longer. If you are not taking off your protection from your nephew, then we are powerless to control our anger. We will fight you and your nephew until one of us is destroyed.”

This time tone of delegate was so harsh, that Abū Ṭālib sensed danger. He met Holy Prophet and besieged him, “O my nephew! You have grown up in my lap, since your childhood you are under my protection. Your sayings hurt your tribe; they are infuriated and much agitated. I sense great danger, lest they kill or harm you and me. You call their elders fools, and despicable. You declare them and their venerated idols to fuel hell fire! For your goodness I advise you to hold your tongue and abstain from saying such instigating things. Neither me nor you have the power to fight them.”

Holy Prophet realized that aging Abū Ṭālib was breaking under pressure of Quraishites and his worldly support was giving way. Holy Prophet maintained his composure and calmly replied, “Uncle, it is not that I am calling them names, these are facts revealed to me, I only convey them. I am ordained by Allāh to explain their wrongs, and guide and put them on right path. If I loose my life in doing so, I accept death happily. I cannot be scared to prevent doing my work by threats and intimidations. Moreover, uncle, if you feel weak and are tortured by their threats, you may take away your protective support. But I will not stop in

communicating Allāh’s message to them. By Allāh, if they place sun in my right hand and moon in the left, I will not refrain from carrying on my ordained duty. I will continue my mission until I am successful or I am killed in the effort.”

When Holy Prophet was speaking, his face lit up with rays of truth, as soon he completed his oration he stood up to leave. Abū Ṭālib called him back; as he turned back he saw his tear filled eyes. Abū Ṭālib hardly controlled his sentiments, chokingly said, “Okay, nephew! Go, continue your work. Till I live and have strength in me, I will stand with you.”

Third Quraishite delegate

Quraishites had so far not have been able to dissuade Holy Prophet from his mission, nor have been successful in persuading Abū Ṭālib to withdraw his support for Holy Prophet. This time they came with a novel solution in their minds. They took a young man ‘Umarah bin Valīd with them. Presenting him to Abū Ṭālib, they said, “Take this young man in place of Muḥammad, do whatever you like with him, declare him your son, etc. In return hand over Muḥammad to us. He has started a mischief in our forefathers’ religion, and has created hatred unrest among us. Accept this young man in ransom, and allow us do with Muḥammad whatever we like.”

Abū Ṭālib replied, “What a marvelous solution and justice! I take your son, nurture him, feed him, and give him other necessities of life, in return hand over my son to you that you may kill him!

What a marvelous solution you have come with! By Allāh it will never happen.”

Quraishite spokesman, Muṭ‘im: “Well, then Abū Ṭālib! Your tribe has tried to establish in every respect upon you, and so far they have refrained from any brawl, but you appear not to accept any of their offers.”

Abū Ṭālib said, “You are doing injustice to me, and Muṭ‘im, I see you are instigating your tribe treacherously against me and my nephew. Well, if your intentions are so, what can I say? Do whatever you like.”

Quraishite’s hard decision

Having been unsuccessful so far in getting breakthrough in their negotiations with Abū Ṭālib, Quraishites decided to adopt another strategy, before putting their dirty hand directly on Holy Prophet. They decided that each tribe should pressurize converts from them by boycotting, beating, disgracing and looting, until they return to their forefathers’ religion. They thought they will be able to break Muslims which will dishearten and deter Holy Prophet, and his religion will die its own death. If it failed to dishearten Holy Prophet, member of his own tribe will deal with him as they would like. When Abū Ṭālib came to know Quraishite’s decision, to counter it, he called a meeting of Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib. He discussed with them current state of affair, and told them, “Enmity of our opponent tribes has now surfaced openly. It now has become a matter of honor and prestige for us to protect Muḥammad.” Except Abū Lahab, who

was almost blind in enmity of Prophet, all agreed to the suggestion. Quraishite's decision infused fire in Mecca. Since terrorizing Muslims was now a tribal matter, it though controlled intertribal rifts, but it started an era of hard times for individual Muslims, who bore courageously and whole heartedly the horrific treatments which wicked and stone-hearted Quraishites could think of. They stood firm in their faith. Hard times continued till Hijrah to Yathrib.

Hard times for Muslims

Instances of cruelty to Muslims recorded in history are surely fewer than actually happened. However, to recount a few to give an idea how hard were those days on early Muslims, and how courageous each of them stood by their allegiance to their creator. They suffered all types of physical, moral, mental and social hardships. None of them is known to have conceded to the demand of Quraishites. Holy Prophet carried the burden of all that was happening, he was worried; he prayed, wept and supplicated before Allāh for the deliverance of Muslims from cruel hands of Quraishites. When somebody would complain, he would advise him to bear patiently.

Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) was from Banī Umayyah; he was nearing middle age and was a rich person. His uncle Ḥakam Bin Abī Ās would tie him with rope and beat him until he himself was tired. 'Uthmān could easily have held his uncle's hand and prevented him, but he bore the cruelty without uttering a word against his tormentor, since it was the advice of his master.

Zubair Bin Al-Awwām, a young man from tribe Asad. His cruel uncle would wrap a mat around him and blow smoke in his nose. Zubair would bear all this saying, "I have accepted the truth, how can I relinquish it for falsehood and ignorance?"

Sa'īd Bin Zaid, brother-in-law of 'Umar, a respected person of Banū 'Adī tribe. When 'Umar (yet not Muslim) came to knew of his conversion, he threw him down, rode his chest, was nearly to cut his throat. During the struggle 'Umar injured his sister. Finding her covered with blood, mounted down shamefully. He was so impressed by the courage of Sa'īd and his wife that he went straight to be converted to Islām.

'Abdullāh Bin Mas'ūd was from Tribe Hudhail, once he was beaten so badly in the courtyard of Ka'bah, that he bled all over.

Abū Dharr Ghifārī was beaten by Quraishites so severely that he fell down on ground, they could have killed him, 'Abbās Bin 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib saved him from his tormentors saying, "Don't you know he is from Banū Ghifār tribe, who live at the root to Syria. If his tribe knew of this incidence, they will block way of your trading caravans."

These are few examples of converts who belonged to respected Quraishite tribes. But what happened to the slaves and weak converts without any tribal prominence is so horrific, sufficient to raise one's hair. There was no one to protect them. Their tormentors invented each time new ways to torment them, as evil as their evil minds would possibly conceive.

Bilāl Bin Rabāḥ, an Abyssinian slave

belonged to Umayyah Bin Khalaf. His stone-hearted master would wait until noon, when summer sun got bright and hot, and Meccan stony ground was almost red in midday sun. He would take Bilāl out, bare his body and throw him down on hot ground, he would lash him severely, until tired, and would say, “Pray to Lāt and ‘Uzzā, I will let you go.” But Bilāl would repeat, “Aḥad, Aḥad!” (Allāh is one, Allāh is one). Khalaf would place large hot stone at his chest repeating, “Pray to Lāt and ‘Uzzā for your redemption.” But he would repeat, Aḥad, Aḥad!” Umayyah would fly in rage, would tie a rope around Bilāl’s neck and hand it over to the street urchins. They would drag Bilāl in stony streets of Mecca, injuring his back, drenching his body all over in blood. Bilāl was steadfast in saying, “Aḥad, Aḥad!” (Allāh is one, Allāh is one). Until one day Abū Bakr paid handsome amount to secure Bilāl’s freedom (for more on Bilāl, see Ahmadiyya Gazette, U.S., January 2007, pp. 15-21).

Lubīnah, a slave girl belonged to Banū ‘Adī tribe. ‘Umar (before converting to Islām) would beat her intensely, until tired, after taking breath he would resume beating. She would retort only by saying, “‘Umar, if you are not converted to Islām, Allāh would not let this tyranny of your go unpunished.”

Zanīrah was a slave girl of Banū Makhzūm. Abū Jahl, her tormentor, beat her so severely that she lost her sight. Abū Jahl would taunt, pointing to her eyes, “If Islām is a true religion, she got it, and we are good to remain without it.”

Ṣuhaib Bin Sinān Rūmī, a former slave, now a free man, and well off,



The Black Stone (Al-Ḥajarul-Aswad)

because of his business., had no tribal links in Mecca. He was freely beaten by Quraishites, some times so intensely that he would loose his senses.

Khabbāb Bin Al-Arat was a freed slave, ironsmith by trade. Once Quraishites got hold of him and threw him on red hot coals from his kiln, riding his chest, so that he may not turn his sides. The tormentors continued until coals cooled down by fluid from his burns. Later Khabbāb would show his burnt back, which was all white with scars. Often Quraishite would not pay dues for Khabbāb’s services.

‘Ammār, his son Yāsir and wife Sumayyah were free from bondage, but were poor. They were former slaves of Banī Makhzoom. This family of three was target of intense atrocities committed by Quraishites. One shudders reading details of their plight; however they stood fast to their religion. Once when all the three were being tormented, Holy Prophet passed that way and observed their plight, he could not bear the

horrible sight, he addressed them tenderly, “O family of Yāsir! Endure in patience; Allāh has prepared for you a palace in paradise for bearing these hardships in this world.” Old man Yāsir soon succumbed to the punishment. While Abū Jahl struck Sumayyah, his wife, with a spear at her thigh, which pierced to reach her private parts, killing her at the spot, in great agony.

Now ‘Ammār was the only one left out of this poor family. He had witnessed horrible punishment which his parents received and met their death, it weakened him, he was terrified. His tormentors would punish the helpless boy, saying, “Until you disown Muḥammad, we will continue to punish you.” After all ‘Ammār was a human being, because of human weakness, he was broken. He momentarily conceded to tormentor’s demand, and was released. He rushed to the presence of Holy Prophet, weeping and repenting.

Holy Prophet compassionately asked, “Ammār! What is the matter with you?”

‘Ammār, crying, “O messenger of Allāh! Alas, I am ruined, they tormented me so severely that fearing death I uttered some words against you.”

Holy Prophet: “Now, how you find your heart?”

‘Ammār: “O messenger of Allāh! My heart is still held firmly in believing in you, as it was ever, and is full of love for Allāh and his messenger.”

Holy Prophet: “If it is so then it is okay. Allāh will forgive your slip.”

Belief in Allāh the Almighty strengthened hearts of Muslims since they feared only Him. They could easily have defended and avenged their

sufferings from the hands of Quraishites, but Holy Prophet forbade them to raise their hand in defense. It is the beauty of Islām: complete submission and surrender to the will of Allāh!

Personal afflictions of Holy Prophet

Though Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib had willy-nilly conceded to ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib’s call to help protect Holy Prophet, enmity of some soon surfaced. Prophet’s uncles Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab pulled themselves out of the bond of their tribe and took charge of opposition to Prophet’s mission. Nobody dared to put hand on Holy Prophet openly. However, miscreants playing in wicked hands of Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab would not let go a chance to disgrace the Prophet. Holy Prophet would never headed afflictions to his person, however, he would grieve on the sufferings of Muslims, and for their salvation he would pray and supplicate to Allāh Almighty. It was a great torment and matter of great personal concern to him to see poor weak Muslims being tortured ruthlessly. He could do nothing but pray and supplicate before Allāh for their relief and salvation. He would meet the afflicted and advised them to tolerate hardships calmly and patiently, seeking strength through prayers and supplication from Allāh the Almighty.

Prophet’s uncles Abū Lahab and Abū Jahl being his staunch enemies, they instigated other factions of Quraishites to threaten Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib to take away their protection from Prophet, or prepare to face the consequences. Though they had not been successful to do any substantial harm,

they were constantly hatching plans after plan to oppose Prophet without exposing themselves in public.

During Ḥajj (pilgrim) days, the opponents started planning to devise ways to deter them from nearing and hearing the Prophet, since they knew that Prophet's teachings touch and attract pure hearts. However, Quraishites met at Walid Bin Mughīrah's house to hatch out a plan.

It was an open discussion, some of the suggestions were:

To propagate among pilgrims not to listen to Prophet, because he is a soothsayer, a magician, a wizard, an astrologer, insane, a poet.

As most of these allegations were hard for them to prove in Prophet's person and in his teachings, they were dropped one by one. To preserve their credibility and nobility, they never wanted to say anything which they could not prove. At last it was agreed to propagate among Ḥajj congregation that Muḥammad is a magician, his magic separates son from father, brother from brother, husband from wife. Whosoever listens to him carries germs of separation and disunity. They propagated this idea so widely, that during pilgrimage, it was at that tips of every Quraishite's tongue, old and young. It created a dangerous reaction among Arabian tribes against Holy Prophet.

Quraishites never stopped there; they instigated Meccan street urchins and other reckless people to create trouble for Muslims and Holy Prophet during pilgrimage. For that the miscreants would jeer and laugh at Holy Prophet when he would pass through the streets. They would concoct heinous stories



The Black Stone (Al-Ḥajarul-Aswad)

about the Prophet and propagate in public. Prophet's neighbors pelted stones and threw filth in his home; they spread thorns in front of his door. When they knew that the Prophet had been annoyed by their misbehavior; they would laugh and jeer at him. Once someone threw a stinky filthy thing in Prophet's house, Prophet himself carried it out admonishing, "O sons of Manāf! Is it the way you treat your neighbors?" But it all fell on deaf ears.

Meanwhile, Quraishite decided to call Prophet Mudhammad (infamous, despicable) instead of Muḥammad (the praised one, loved one). They were not ashamed for a second, that the person whom up to recently they venerated and praised for his honesty and truthfulness, now they called him by infamous names. When it came to the knowledge of Prophet, he smiled and remarked, "My name is Muḥammad, the one who is praised and loved, how at the same time I could be infamous and despicable? See how Allāh has protected me in my name."

Once Prophet was praying near Ka'bah, 'Uqbah Bin Abī Mu'ait suddenly went mad. He put a cloth around Prophet's neck and wrung, Prophet was almost choked. When Abū Bakr heard of this, he rushed in and protected the Prophet, pushing away 'Uqbah, addressing Quraishites who were sitting looking on, "Do you kill a man because he says Allāh is my provider?"

At another occasion, when Prophet was preaching and announcing unity of Allāh, Quraishite gathered around him. They were wrathful and noisy, so much so that his voice became inaudible. Hārith Bin Abī Hālah (son of Khadijah), when heard the scuffle, he rushed to protect the Prophet; somebody from the crowd attacked him with a sword and killed him at the spot.

Patience, Patience, Patience

It became harder and harder for Muslims to stay in Mecca. Holy Prophet never cared for his personal difficulties, however, he was much worried and in pain for the plight of Muslims, especially the weaker ones. He knew that nations have to pass through tough tests to emerge stronger. He would advise Muslims to persevere with patience, he would narrate plight of that befell to the followers of previous prophets, how they were tortured and tormented and at the end they emerged victorious.

Once Holy Prophet was reclining against wall of Ka'bah surrounded by a party of Muslims. Some one asked, "O Prophet of Allāh! We are suffering a very harsh treatment from the hands of Quraishites, why don't you pray for the punishment of our tormentors?" Prophet

pulled himself up, his face turned red, he replied, "See! People before you were treated more harshly, their flesh was scraped from their bones with teeth of iron combs, but it never deterred them from their faith. There were also peoples before you, whose bodies were sawed to split in two halves; this treatment never slipped them from their faith. Soon time is coming when Allāh's will be done! A camel rider will travel from Ṣan'ā (Yemen) to Ḥaḍramaut (Southern Arabian Coast), fearlessly, except fearing Allāh. But you are in hurry and getting impatient."

At another occasion 'Abdur-Raḥmān Bin 'Auf and other companions came to meet Holy Prophet. 'Abdur-Raḥmān asked Holy Prophet, "O Prophet of Allāh! When we were idol-worshippers we were most honored and respected in Mecca, nobody dared to look at us with evil eye. But now as Muslims we have become despicable, vulnerable, weak, defenseless and downtrodden. We suffer atrocities from the hands of the meanest of the society. So, O Prophet of Allāh! Please, allow us to defend ourselves."

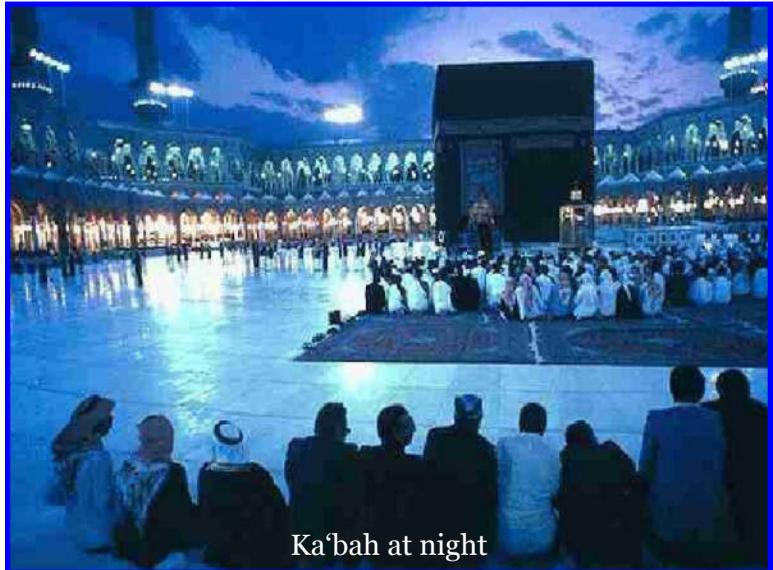
Holy Prophet: "Allāh orders me to observe forbearance, so I cannot allow you to fight against oppressors. Bear it and preserve patience."

Ḥamzah Bin 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib joins Muslims

So far poor and weak in Meccan society had joined Holy Prophet. None of them, except Abū Bakr, had some influence among Quraishites. In the sixth year of prophethood an elite from Quraishites came into the fold of Islām to strengthen Muslims.

Ḥamzah Bin ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, Holy Prophet’s uncle had a powerful sturdy personality. He was known for his velour, strength and nobility. He was a great hunter. He would leave home early in the morning, with bow and arrows, and set out for hunting in the wild. He would return in the evening, would go round Ka’bah, and spend some time with his Quraishite friends gossiping in the courtyard of Ka’bah before going home. He had a soft corner for Holy Prophet in his heart and loved him, but he was still among idol worshipper.

One evening when Ḥamzah came home, a maid told him, “Haven’t you heard today Abū Jahl in his furry has called names and used filthy tongue for your nephew Muḥammad, who kept quiet, not returning his abuses.” Hearing this, Ḥamzah flew in rage. It instigated his sense of family honor. He went straight to Ka’bah, went round it and headed straight to the group where Abū Jahl was sitting. He struck him on head with bow saying, “I hear today you abused Muḥammad, hear I am on his religion from now on, what he says, I also say. If you have any courage, now speak to me!” Abū Jahl’s friends rose up to defend him. It was nearly to start a fight, when Abū Jahl, impressed by Ḥamzah’s courage, stopped them saying, “Ḥamzah speaks the truth. Today I really over stepped with Muḥammad.” The matter



Ka’bah at night

was dropped.

When Ḥamzah returned home, he started thinking the words he uttered in furry, “I am on the religion of Muḥammad,” pounded in his head and resounded in his ears. He wondered what to do now. He was man of honor, at last he decided to relinquish idol worship and accept Islām. He headed straight to Dār Arqam and joined Muslims. With his joining the Muslims, the Muslims were greatly strengthened.

‘Umar Bin Al-Khaṭṭāb follows

Hardly few days had passed after the conversion of Hamzah that Allāh granted another joy to Muslims.

‘Umar Bin Al-Khaṭṭāb was well known for strength of his character, morality and nobility. He was well known staunch antagonist to Muslims. Some time blinded by his enmity, he would treat weak and poor Muslims wrathfully. Now he was almost loosing patient with

Muslims. Until one day he decided to settle the account once for all by killing Holy Prophet. He took his unsheathed sword and went out in fury in search of Holy Prophet.

When he was looking here and there for Holy Prophet, some one alarmed by his get up, asked him, “Umar! Where are you heading, with bare sword in hand?”

‘Umar: “I am looking for Muḥammad, to settle the problem once for all.”

Some one: “After killing Muḥammad will you be able to bear the wrath of Banū ‘Abdi Manāf? First take care of your own house. Your sister Fāṭimah and brother-in-law have become Muslims.”

Infuriated by the news, ‘Umar at once turned towards his sister’s house. As he neared it, he heard Khabbāb Bin Al Arat reciting verses from Holy Qur’ān in a melodious voice. It confirmed the news he just heard, he banged the door open. Meanwhile, hearing noise at the door, Fāṭimah hid the pages of Holy Qur’ān.

‘Umar shouted, “I hear you have left religion of your forefathers?” Saying this, he jumped at his brother-in-law, threw him on the ground, straddled him, was about to stab him with sword. Fāṭimah went forward to protect her husband and was injured in the scuffle.

Fāṭimah shouted daringly, “Yes, yes ‘Umar! We have converted to Islām, do whatever you can, we are never to revert!”

Though ‘Umar was hard hearted, but under hardness there loomed love and compassion that sparkled out as he heard his sister’s courageous declaration, and looked at her. Lo! She was covered all over with blood, because of cut on her hand. The scene horrified ‘Umar, he

cooled down and asked, “Well, show me what you were reading from.”

Fāṭimah: “I would not show it, lest you destroy it.”

‘Umar: “No, no, show it to me. I will definitely return it to you.”

Fāṭimah: “But you are unclean. You need to clean yourself before touching Qur’ān, first take bath, and then I will show it to you.”

After ‘Umar had taken his bath, Fāṭimah took the leaves of the Qur’ān and placed them before him. These were the opening verses from Chapter “Ṭā Hā:”

[20:1] In the name of Allāh, the Gracious, the Merciful.

[20:2] Ṭā Hā

[20:3] We have not sent down the Qur’ān to thee that thou shouldst be distressed;

[20:4] But as a reminder to him who fears Allāh;

[20:5] And a revelation from Him Who created the earth and the high heavens.

[20:6] He is the Gracious Allāh Who has settled Himself firmly on the throne.

[20:7] To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, and whatsoever is between them, and whatsoever is beneath the moist subsoil.

[20:8] And if thou speakest aloud, He hears it and also if thou speakest in a low voice, For He knows the secret thoughts of man and what is yet more hidden.

[20:9] Allāh—there is no Allāh but He. His are the most beautiful names.

[20:10] And has the story of Moses come to thee?

Continuing through the text, when he reached the following verses:

[20:15] ‘Verily , I am Allāh; there is no Allāh but I, so worship Me alone and observe Prayer for my remembrance;

[20:16] Surely, the Hour is coming and I am going to manifest it, that every soul may be recompensed for its labors.

Suddenly Umar’s sleeping conscious woke up. He could not help declaring: “What a wonderful and sacred text!”

When Khabbāb (who was hiding) heard these words, he jumped out, and thanked Allāh Almighty loudly saying, “It is all the result of prayers of Allāh’s prophet. By Allāh, it is only yesterday that I heard Holy Prophet praying, “O Allāh! Grant to Islām either ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb or ‘Amr Bin Hishām (Abū Jahl).” ‘Umar was growing impatient every minute to meet Holy Prophet. He requested Khabbāb, “Lead me quickly to Muḥammad.” He was so out of his wits that he still held his unsheathed sword.

Holy Prophet was staying in Dār Arqam. ‘Umar almost flew toward the place and knocked forcefully at the door. When companions saw ‘Umar standing with unsheathed sword through the slits in the door panes, they were reluctant to open the door.

Holy Prophet: “Open the door.”

Ḥamzah: “Open the door. If he comes with good intentions, well and good, otherwise I will cut his head with his own sword.”

The door was opened. ‘Umar entered. Holy Prophet went forward to greet him. He caught ‘Umar by the corner of his shirt, gave a strong pull and said, “‘Umar! What are your intentions? Why you have come here? By Allāh, I see you are not shaped for the hell.”

‘Umar: “O Prophet of Allāh, I have

come to embrace Islām!”

Holy Prophet jubilantly cried out “Allāhu Akbar” (Allāh is the greatest!), followed by the Muslims, their thunderous voices echoed through the valleys of Mecca announcing greatness of Allāh.

‘Umar was in prime of his life, 33 years of age, he had well built body with majestic appearance. He was daring and courageous person and was chieftain of his tribe Banū ‘Adī. His tribe acted as Quraishite’s emissary to strike truce among warring tribes, and collecting ransom money. When he embraced Islām; total number of Muslims was about forty. His conversion strengthened Muslims so that they started offering Prayers in open in the courtyard of Ka‘bah.

‘Umar’s conversion agitated Quraishites. They surrounded ‘Umar’s house. ‘Umar came out to face them, arguments and counter arguments followed. Some had nearly attacked ‘Umar, but strong and resolute stance of ‘Umar Bin Al-Khaṭṭāb kept them at bay. Siege of ‘Umar’s house continued until Meccan chieftain ‘Aṣ Bin Vā’il came to intervene saying, “What is the matter, what is the matter?” Some one replied, “‘Umar has changed his religion.”

‘Aṣ Bin Vā’il took control of delicate situation saying, “Ok, even then there is no need of making fuss. I grant ‘Umar my protection.” His declaration calmed the situation, people thinned out one by one.

‘Umar, because of ‘Aṣ’s protection lived peacefully for some time. However, ‘Umar’s self respect and valour did not tolerate long to live under an umbrella.

He soon met ‘Āṣ and told him that he pulls himself out of his protection. Later, ‘Umar bore frequent beatings in the streets of Mecca, with honor, without lowering eyes before anyone. Soon his son ‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Umar, who was yet a child, followed him to embrace Islām. He later grew into one of the top most learned persons.

Quraishites lure Holy Prophet

Quraishite had watched conversion of Ḥamzah and ‘Umar with despair, raising their concern about Islām many folds. Alarmed by the situation, they intensified their consultations with each other, to find ways and means to contain Islām from spreading any further. They sent ‘Utbah Bin Rabī‘ah, a good negotiator, as their emissary to persuade Holy Prophet to stop propagation of Islām. But ‘Utbah returned rather impressed by Holy Prophet, which alarmed the Quraishites, the most.

At last they decided to talk directly to Holy Prophet. All Quraishite elders gathered in the courtyard of Ka’bah and sent for Holy Prophet, with the message, “Come, elders of your tribe want to talk to you.” Holy Prophet, who was always in the look out for such chances to address elders together, and deliver message of Islām, came readily.

After customary exchange of salutations, Quraishite began, “Muḥammad! See, because of you, we are partitioned and enmities among us are growing. You are trying to interfere in the religion of our forefathers and calling them and our gods by names, and say that they will fuel the hell fire. What else greater damage can you render to our

ancestors and respected gods? We wonder what we should do with you. Here are our offers, choose as you like:

If you are doing all this so as to amass money and grow rich, then we are ready to give all the riches you want. That will make you the richest person in Arabia.

If you need respect, we are ready to acclaim you our leader.

If you want to become king, we are ready to declare you our king.

If all this fuss is because of some ailment you are suffering from, or you are under some evil spell, we can get you treated and bear the expenses, whatsoever.

If you are after some beautiful girl, we can search one for you throughout Arabia, and present her to you.”

Holy Prophet heard all offers quietly, when they had finished, he addressed them:

“O party of Quraishite! I need none of that which you have offered. I am not ill or under some evil spell. I am but a messenger of Allāh, with a message to you. My heart is filled with sympathy for you. If you negate the message, then I will wait for the decree of my Allāh to happen.”

Quraishites: “It means, Muḥammad, you do not accept our offers. Ok, if you want to make us believe in your prophethood, you know our country is waterless and treeless, is littered with countless dry stony deserts and rocks. Nothing could be seen for miles around except innumerable sand dunes. If you are messenger of Allāh, ask Him to change Arabia into a land like Syria and Iraq, with flowing streams and rivers, with fertile fields and waving crops. If

you do all this, we will happily be convinced of your prophethood.”

Holy Prophet: “Listen, as I have said, I am just a messenger of Allāh, with a duty to lead you to right path, and let you know what is good and what is bad for you. I tell you, if you will accept Allāh’s message, then surely He will reward you with lands that you are wishing for.”

Quraishites: “Well, if it is also not possible, let us see an angle descend on you from heaven, and see you have magnificent palaces to live in, and see you possess heaps of gold and silver. But we see none of it is provided to you, rather you move about in bazaars as we do, looking for your sustenance. Then what is that special with you, that may convince us that you are messenger of Allāh?”

Holy Prophet: “I never claimed to have that which you have just said. I am a humble messenger of Allāh. Yes, as I have told you, and I repeat, if you will believe in me, you will definitely be rewarded in good in this world and the hereafter.”

Quraishites laughed and mocked, “Then bring the punishment upon us that you promise, let a part of sky fall on us. Let us see an army of angles descend from heaven and gather around you.” They declared, “By Allāh, from now on either you will live or we.” Holy Prophet left them with a heavy heart.

Hardly Holy Prophet had left, Abū Jahl



stood up flowing in rage and declared, “O the party of Quraishites! You see how insolently Muḥammad has turned down all of your offers. I tell you, he will never refrain from his mischief. From now on, by Allāh, I will not rest until I crush his head. I do not care what Banū ‘Abdi Manāf will do with me afterward.” None of Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib was present in the gathering, except Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab.

Quraishite supported him in unison, “We have no objection. You are free to do whatever you like with Muḥammad.”

Dignified Prophet

Holy Prophet was surrounded by blood thirsty enemies, who had tyrannical designs against him, always looking for a chance to bodily harm him. But Allāh the Almighty protected him from any harm from their hands, as had been promised in Holy Qur’ān:

[5:68] O Messenger! convey to the

people what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord; and if thou do it not, thou has not conveyed His Message. And Allāh will protect thee from men. Surely Allāh guides not the disbelieving people.

Having boasted "...I will not rest until I crush his head....," next morning Abū Jahl stood in the way lifting a heavy rock in his hands that Holy Prophet took every morning to pray in the Ka'bah. As Holy Prophet passed, Abū Jahl was so impressed by Prophet's dignity that he could not move from his place.

At another occasion Abū Jahl bought some camels from a visiting camel trader named Arāshah. Knowing he had no support in Mecca, Abū Jahl refused to pay the agreed price. The man was new to the place; he had nobody to turn for help. He sought help from Quraishite elders, who were gossiping in the courtyard of Ka'bah. They thought of a mischief. They told Arāshah to seek help from Muḥammad Bin 'Abdullāh, and sent a man to follow him to note what happens. Arāshah went round asking people for the where about of Holy Prophet.

Arāshah met Holy Prophet, related his story and requested him for help to recover payment from Abū Jahl. Holy Prophet instantly went to help him. He knocked at Abū Jahl's door. Abū Jahl came out, was stunned to find himself face to face with Holy Prophet, and stared at his face in amazement.

Holy Prophet: "This man says you owe some money to him, he is a traveler, why don't you pay him?"

Abū Jahl's face changed color, and said, "Muḥammad, just wait! I will bring the money." He went inside the house,

and brought the money, promptly handed it over to Arāshah. Arāshah thanked Holy Prophet for his help. He went back to the Quraishites to thank them for directing him to Holy Prophet. The Quraishites were dumfounded and looked at each other in amazement.

They asked the man who was sent to follow Arāshah, "What happened."

He narrated: "By Allāh, I have witnessed a strange happening. When Muḥammad knocked at the door, Abū Al-Ḥakam came out, seeing Muḥammad, he acted as if he was a lifeless robot. As soon Muḥammad told him to pay what he owed, he promptly paid the amount without saying anything."

Soon Abū Jahl came to join the party. Everybody turned to him, "Abū Al-Ḥakam! What happened to you that you got so terrified at the sight of Muḥammad?"

Abū Al-Ḥakam: "By Allāh! I saw a furious camel on Muḥammad's side; I was so scared, I thought, if I hesitated, it will crush my bones?"

Quraishite's strange solution for patch-up

Frustrated Quraishites constantly worked to safeguard their interests in the wake of curbs which Islām imposed on their vested interests. They were constantly giving serious thought to the problem.

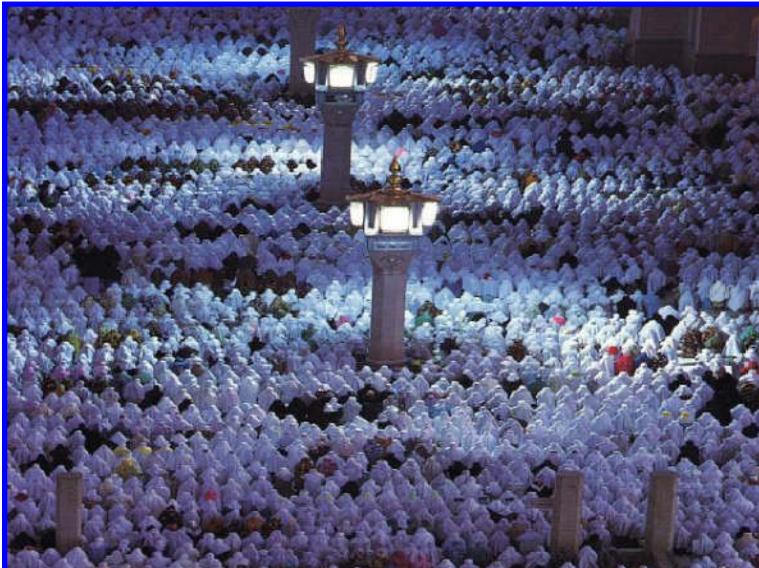
In such a frenzy, some prominent Quraishites, Walīd Bin Muḡhirah, 'Aṣ Bin Vā'il and Umayyah Bin Khalaf discussed the problem and went to meet Holy Prophet.

Quraishites: "Muḥammad! Differences among us are growing to the extent that

our national unity is at a stake. Can't something be done for reconciliation?"

Holy Prophet: "How?"

Quraishites: "Main difference between you and us is the way of worship. We have a solution. We can reciprocate each other in our worship. When you worship your Allāh, include our's also, we will include your's in our worship. One benefit of this arrangement will be that whosoever of us is at right path, will benefit the other."



Holy Prophet smiled and said, "Just think how it is going to happen. Having belief in one Allāh, how I can worship your so many gods in whom I don't believe; how you can worship my one Allāh, in whom you don't believe, while worshiping your so many gods." The party returned dumbfounded.

To this affect Chapter Al-Kāfirūn was revealed:

[109:1] In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

[109:2] Say, 'O ye disbelievers!

[109:3] 'I worship not as you worship,

[109:4] 'Nor do you worship as I worship.

[109:5] 'Nor do I worship those that you worship,

[109:6] 'Nor do you worship Him Whom I worship.

[109:7] 'For you your religion, and for me my religion.

Quraishites intensify their opposition

The Quraishite were highly ignited and

desperate, because of their repeated failures with Holy Prophet.

First they failed to pursue Abū Ṭālib to withdraw his protection.

Then they failed to separate Banū 'Abdi Manāf from Holy Prophet.

So far, their atrocities could not deter even a single Muslims from his faith.

Conversion of Ḥamzah and 'Umar made them realize that though most of their leaders were against Islām, they were highly vulnerable to fall in its lap, due to its rationality and appeal to reason.

They failed to pursue King Najāshi to banish Muslims from his protection in Abyssinia.

Their several parleys with Holy Prophet had ended in failure.

One after another failures made Quraishites desperate. At last they resolved to sever all ties with the Holy Prophet and his protecting tribe, Banū Hāshim. They decided to confine all of

them in a place so as to destroy them, and impose social and economic sanctions on them

In the seventh year of prophethood, Quraishites signed a declaration with the following understandings:

Nobody in future would strike relationship with Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib.

Nothing will be sold to them, nor bought from them.

Nobody will be allowed to pass anything edible to them.

Nobody will maintain any tie with them.

This ban will remain in place until Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib take away their protection and support for Muḥammad and hand him over to Quraishites, so that they may do whatever they like with him.

The declaration was written and signed by forty leaders of Quraishites, and was displayed at the wall of Ka'bah as an important national document.

A hard test

With such strong measures against 'Abd Manāf, Quraishites expected Abū Ṭālib to surrender. Sensing grave danger to the person of Holy Prophet, Abū Ṭālib took his tribe and Muslims in the protection of a valley between two hills. The valley belonged to him and was known as Shi'b Abī-Ṭālib. He knew nook and corner of it. He closed all the openings from where enemies might pass through to harm Muslims in the darkness of the night. Thus, two main Meccan tribes along with Muslims were practically severed from the society.

Abū Ṭālib, his brother Ḥamzah, and

some men of Banī Hāshim took turn to guard the Prophet at night. Abū Ṭālib was always moving the Prophet's bed from one place to another to keep its location secret. So, days and months passed by, the besieged were in perfect isolation. They suffered from the pains of hunger and deprivation. During pilgrimage the besieged would go out and buy food and clothes. Quraishite tyrants would buy all kinds of food, etc., to prevent the besieged from buying it.

During trying bitter time in the valley, Abū Ṭālib stood by Holy Prophet as solid as rock. He was a fearless, resolute elder, loved his nephew more than his sons. One night, sensing danger, Abū Ṭālib woke up Holy Prophet and told his son 'Alī to sleep in Prophet's bed. He took Holy Prophet to a safer place to sleep.

The valley was a sort of an open sky prison, the outlets were guarded by Quraishites, not allowing anybody to enter or leave. History records hair raising accounts of the hardships endured by the besieged; one can't help but marvel at their courage and strength. Sometimes food was so scarce that they were obliged to eat leaves of trees, grass and anything that came in their hand. Sa'd Bin Abī Waqqās, one of the besieged, later narrated, "One night I was very hungry, my foot touched something soft, because of darkness I couldn't tell what it was, I just put it in my mouth and swallowed it, (thinking it a piece of date)." At another occasion he found a piece of dry leather, he washed it and roasted it and ate it. When hungry children cried for food, the Quraishite guards would laugh and rejoice loudly at their plight.

However, out in the city common man never shared Quraishite's enmity against the besieged; they disapproved from the very beginning of the Quraishite's decision of segregation. They could not do anything but grumble. Some daring ones would occasionally sneak in the valley, carrying food for their besieged relatives, when caught punishment would not deter them.

The awful siege lasted for almost three years, however, during Ḥajj days, when there is general amnesty around Ka'bah. Muslims would go out in the city, meeting their relatives and doing their chores, buying edibles, etc.

While Muslims were boldly bearing the brunt of the atrocities, Allāh Almighty soothed their bleeding hearts by wondrous miracles and tidings of future victories.

Miracle of the splitting of the moon

It was a refreshing evening after a very hot day; Holy Prophet was out in the valley with a party of believers and non-believers. Non-believers asked Holy Prophet to show them some miracle. At that time full moon was shining in the clear blue sky, lighting the valley.

As they stood facing moon, marveling at its beauty, Holy Prophet, after a short pause, suddenly raised his index finger towards the moon, moved it across the shining moon as if cutting it into right and left halves. Lo! The moon according



to Prophet's signal split in two halves. Both halves moving against each other across the sky, after some time full moon was restored. This unbelievable miracle strengthened belief of Muslims and left non believers in wonder and desperation.

Freedom from siege

Three years of hardships in the valley could not deter Muslims from their belief, however, each day that passed of three years hanged heavy on Quraishites' conscious outside. Their concerted resolve gradually started weakening. Now mostly they were looking for an excuse to call off the siege, Allāh Almighty soon provided one.

One fine morning, Holy Prophet woke up happy, visited his uncle Abū Ṭālib and said, "My Allāh, this night, has told me that the paper on which Quraishite's declaration against us was written, is hanging in Ka'bah has been consumed by termites, except the name of "Allāh"

nothing is left readable.

Abū Ṭālib's heart was filled with belief; he hurried to Darun-Nadwah, at the Ka'bah, where the Quraishi leaders sat.

Seeing Abū-Ṭālib coming, they got up respectfully. They expected that he had come to surrender and accept his defeat. However, their expectations dashed to ground when Abū Ṭālib proceeded, "How long your cruel pact against us would stand? This morning my nephew has told me that Allāh has effaced the writings of the document except His name, "Allāh." Go and bring out the document. Let us see how far my nephew is correct."

Abū Jahl: "And, if he proves to be a liar?"

Abū Ṭālib with confidence and belief, "I'll hand over my nephew to you."

Abū Jahl: "Okay."

When the document was brought, its writings were found to have been effaced, as conveyed by Abū Ṭālib. It was almost rendered unreadable except the word "Allāh." All the Quraishites were dumbfounded.

At last someone of the Quraishites picked up the courage and spoke out, "O the Quraishites! Is it reasonable that we are enjoying life, and our brothers are bearing hardships down in the valley? This agreement has been cruel from the very beginning, and we were against it, now time has come to discard it." The speaker was supported by several voices, except Abū Jahl who countered saying, "No, no, this decision is still valid and stands, nobody can abrogate it."

Somebody replied, "No, now it stands null and void. Even when it was written we never supported it." As hot discussion was continuing, Muṭ'im Bin 'Adī grabbed

the document and tore it in several pieces. Abū Jahl and his few supporters looked on dumbfounded.

The Quraishites took their arms and headed for the valley. All the besieged came out protected by rescuer's swords.

The siege ended in 10th year of prophethood.

A year of grief

Three years of perpetual rigors in the desolate valley hanged heavy on the health of companions in general. However, especially elderly were mortally affected by malnutrition, lack of rest, heat, dryness and other hardships sustained in the intensity of summer and winter, without any protection against forces of nature. It made them vulnerable and weak. Despite their deteriorated health, they bore happily the rigors with determination. However, soon after freedom, their strength succumbed.

Holy Prophet sustained two great losses soon after deliverance from the valley. First his loving and faithful wife, Khadījah, then loving and caring uncle, Abū Ṭālib, died one after the other. These were great losses to Holy Prophet within a year. Holy Prophet named the 10th year of prophethood as 'Āmul-Ḥuzn (year of grief).

Abū Ṭālib Bin 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, Holy Prophet's uncle, took up Prophet's guardianship, after the death of his grandfather, 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. Abū Ṭālib kept his promise he made at the deathbed of his father regarding young Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam), in letter and spirit. He protected Holy Prophet against high odds,

throughout his life. Abū Ṭālib was more than uncle to the Prophet. He would often say, “When I look at Muḥammad, he reminds me of my lovely brother ‘Abdullāh,” (father of Holy Prophet). Abū Ṭālib would guard Holy Prophet when he was resting. He would keep changing position of Prophet’s bed, lest enemies may know his location and attack in darkness of night. He blocked all secret passages leading into the valley so as to protect Prophet from sudden attack from outsiders. He was all devoted to the protection of Holy Prophet. Prophet in turn reciprocated in the same terms with love and devotion, as he would have loved his father, would always turn to him for counsel.

When Abū Ṭālib was at his death bed, Holy Prophet would visit him regularly. Once when he was visiting him, Abū Jahl and other infidels were also there. Abū Ṭālib addressed them, “O the group of Quraishites! You are honored Allāh’s creation. I advise you to treat Muḥammad kindly after I am gone, because he is a man of high morals. He is honored among Arabs because of his truthfulness and goodness. To speak truth, he has brought us a message, though we do not accept it with our tongues but our hearts accept it. I have stood with Muḥammad throughout my life, and have protected him in hardship and happiness; if I am allowed to live longer I will continue to do the same. And, O Quraish! It is my advise to you



also, do not give him trouble, rather help him, it is better for you.” Soon after Abū Ṭālib died.

Like Abū Ṭālib, Khadijah, daughter of Khuwailid, wife of Holy Prophet, stood with him for fifteen most trying years. She gave all that belonged to her to her husband. She stood with him in thick and thin. She never doubted him. She was the first to acknowledge his prophethood. She had seen him receiving revelation from Allāh, and helped him overcome his anxiety. Prophet was bestowed with children by her. Both husband and wife loved each other. Naturally, Holy Prophet was deeply grieved at her death. Whenever she was mentioned, Holy Prophet’s eyes were filled with tears in grief, and he would praise her, saying, “Khadijah was the best women of her time.” Whenever an animal was slaughtered in the house, a portion of it was always sent to her friends. Once Hālah, sister of Khadijah, visited Prophet’s house and asked for entry. Holy Prophet hurriedly stood up

saying, “The voice is like that of Khadijah, it appears her sister Hālah has come.” During the war of Badr, Holy Prophet’s son-in-law, Abū Al-‘As was imprisoned. His wife Zainab (Holy Prophet’s daughter) sent her necklace as ransom to get him freed. The necklace was given to her in her dowry by her late mother, Khadijah. When Holy Prophet saw the necklace, he remembered Khadijah. His eyes welled up with tears. He said to the companions, “If you like, return this Khadijah’s memorial necklace to her daughter.” Khadijah died at an age of 65 years.

Tabligh—the propagation of Islām

Holy Prophet never let go any chance to spread message of Islām, in and outside Mecca. Not disgusted by Quraishite response, never disheartened by the antagonistic reaction of his audiences, nothing deterred him from his duty. Nature took its own course, when one from a tribe accepted Prophet’s call, he would spread the message in his tribe, and thus message percolated usually wining over conversions. Abū Dharr Ghifārī’s conversion triggered conversions in his tribe. The migrants to Abyssinia, won conversions there, while Abū Mūsā Ash‘arī carried Islām to far away Yemen.

Holy Prophet turned his attention to the tribes in the surroundings of Mecca, especially during Ḥajj days. He was sometimes accompanied by Abū Bakr, ‘Alī or Zaid Bin Hārith. Equally determined were the Quraishites to carry on their mission of mischief. Holy Prophet’s real uncles, Abū Lahab and Abū Jahl, would usually follow the

Prophet. When Holy Prophet would start preaching, they would start making noise and say, “Do not listen to this man, he has turned away from religion of his forefathers, now he wants to change yours.” When listeners would see that Prophet’s own relatives oppose him, they would refuse to hear him.

An interesting episode depicts the fear, desperation and restlessness of Quraishites. Ṭufail Bin ‘Amr, an honored chieftain of tribe Daus, who was also a renowned poet, visited Mecca. Meccan feared he might fall prey to the Prophet. They warned him from the imminent danger, telling him, “You have come in Mecca at a time when a miscreant has created great commotion and split in the city. He has separated son from father, brother from brother, and wife from husband. We fear, because of your literary taste, you may fall in his trap enchanted by his words. We warn you not to listen to his words.” Ṭufail got frightened because of the horrible picture they painted. He plugged his ears with cotton, lest he may hear enchanter’s voice and fall into his trap.

Early in the morning, Ṭufail went in Ka’bah. He asked people about Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam). Somebody told him about the Prophet, who was praying in a corner. He stood there observing him, liked his changing postures. He went slowly towards him. Though his ears were plugged, still he could hear slightly what Prophet was reciting. He thought, “May my mother loose me (a kind of curse), I am a sane man. I can distinguish right from wrong. There is no harm if I hear what he is saying.” He pulled out the

plugs and sat to hear what Holy Prophet was reciting.

When Holy Prophet had finished praying, he followed him. On the way, he requested Holy Prophet to recite more from what he was reciting in his Prayer. Prophet recited more verses and preached him about oneness of Allāh. Ṭufail was highly impressed and was instantaneously converted to Islām.

Ṭufail: “O messenger of Allāh! I enjoy high place in my tribe, people eagerly hear me. Pray that they are guided to Islām through me.” Holy Prophet prayed for him and allowed him to leave.

Back home, Ṭufail preached his father and wife, they were converted. However, his tribe flatly refused to listen to him, and started opposing him.

Ṭufail again visited Holy Prophet and said, “O Messenger of Allāh! My tribe has opposed me, and is increasing in opposition day by day. Curse them.” Holy Prophet raised his hands and prayed, “O my Allāh! Guide people of Daus.” Holy Prophet advised Ṭufail, “Go to your tribe and continue preaching softly and compassionately.” Later at the time of Battle of Khaiber, the whole Daus tribe was converted and they immigrated to Medina. Renowned companion Abū Huraira belonged to the Daus tribe.

Holy Prophet, on his preaching mission, visited tribe Banū ‘Amir Bin Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah. Fortunately he was not followed by any of the Quraishites, this time. Holy



Prophet preached them about oneness of Allāh, and persuaded them to support Islām. Buhairah Bin Firās, one of the tribe men told his companions, “By Allāh, if this man comes under my control, I can win over whole of the Arabia.”

Then he asked Holy Prophet, “If you overpower your opponents with our help, will there be a part for us in your kingdom or not?”

Holy Prophet replied, “Kingdom is in Allāh’s hand, He gives it to whom He likes.”

Buhairah Bin Firās: “How strange, we will fight Arabs, and kingdom falls in others’ hand! Go away, we don’t need you.” Such disheartening remarks would not deter Holy Prophet from his mission. Holy Prophet did his best to convey the message of Allāh. He did everything in his power to win over, but all was negated. How strange, nobody was prepared to listen to a man; whose

believers when afterward were given worldly kingdoms, on mere mentioning of their name would put the strongest of them to shudder. Strange are the ways of Allāh Almighty!

Holy Prophet carried on his duty even when he was besieged in the valley. At first he concentrated only on the Quraish, later he switched over to other tribes also. Days of Ḥajj provided great opportunity to impart the message. Holy Prophet would visit places where pilgrims would stay around Mecca, like ‘Ukāz, Majannah (or Mijannah) and Dhul-Majār. He would go from tent to tent introducing Islām to the occupants.

Mission to Ṭā’if

Ṭā’if, a renowned city, about 40 miles in the southeast of Mecca, was populated by Banū Thaḳīf tribe. The City was of the size of Mecca, mostly wealthy and powerful people lived there. Most of them had blood relations with Quraishites. Most of the oases lying between Mecca and Ṭā’if were owned by Meccan chieftains.

Holy Prophet and Zaid Bin Ḥārith visited Ṭā’if on a Tabligh mission. There they stayed for ten days, meeting prominent people of the city, one after the other. Invariably Prophet’s message was negated and jeered upon. In the last, Prophet met principal person of the city, ‘Abd Yālīl, who flatly refused to listen to him, and mockingly replied to his invitation to join Islām by saying, “If you are true, I have no courage to talk to you, and if you are a liar, then there is no use to talk to you.” Fearing that youth of the city may be impressed by Holy Prophet, he warned, “It will be better that you

leave from here, since nobody is prepared to listen to you.” He instigated street urchins to follow Holy Prophet, who followed the Prophet, making noise, chanting slogans and pelting stones at him. Prophet’s body bled all over. They followed Holy Prophet to about three miles, taunting, jeering and pelting stones. Whenever Holy Prophet tried to rest, volley of stones would intensify. At about three miles from the city, there was a grove belonging to two Meccan chieftains ‘Utbah and Shaibah. By the time cruel street urchins were tired and turned back. Holy Prophet rested under a tree, and prayed,

“O my Allāh! I complain only to thee of weakness of my strength, weakness of my decision, and my powerlessness to defend myself against people. O my Allāh! You are most compassionate, and protector of weak and helpless, you are my sustainer. I pray to thee to take me under your protection. You are remover of darkness of hearts, and reward men with good in this world and hereafter.”

As soon as the Holy Prophet finished his prayer, there came the angle of mountains and asked, “Allāh the Almighty has sent me. If you say, I may move the side hills on Ṭā’if city so to crush its inhabitants in between.”

Holy Prophet: “No, no, don’t do it. I hope Allāh will create out of them the people who will worship one Allāh.”

At that time both ‘Utbah and Shaibah were in the grove. They had been observing the plight of Holy Prophet. Under family bond or some other consideration, they sent their Christian slave ‘Addās with some grapes arranged in a tray for the Holy Prophet.

Holy Prophet accepted the gift and asked ‘Addās, “From where you are, and what is your religion?”

‘Addās: “I am from Nineveh. I am a Christian.”

Holy Prophet: “That Nineveh where Allāh’s righteous man Yūnus Bin Matta (Jonah) lived?”

‘Addās: “Yes, but how come you know about Jonah?”

Holy Prophet: “He was my brother; he was apostle of Allāh, as I am.”

Holy Prophet introduced Islām to him, that impressed him. ‘Addās could not help to control himself. He went forward and kissed Holy Prophet’s hands. ‘Utbah and Shaibah were making note of the actions of their slave. When ‘Addās returned, they asked him, “What happened to you that you went to kiss hands of that man. Be warned, he will destroy your religion, despite your religion is better than his.”

Holy Prophet rested there for some time; then he reached Nakhlah, a town close to Mecca, he stayed there for few days, then he reached Ḥirā hill. He feared, apparent failure in Ṭā’if, may embolden Meccans against him. Holy Prophet sent word for Muṭ’im Bin ‘Adi, “I want to enter Mecca, can you help me in this matter.” Though Muṭ’im was a staunch nonbeliever, but was noble at heart, to refuse help Holy Prophet was against his nature. He took his sons and relatives (all armed) with him and stayed near Ka’bah, and sent words to Holy Prophet to enter the city. Holy Prophet entered the city, went round the Ka’bah and entered his house, escorted by Muṭ’im and his relatives. In the way, Abū Jahl saw Muṭ’im and his relative

escorting Holy Prophet, he was curious. He went forward and asked Muṭ’im, “Is Muḥammad in your protection, or have you converted to him.”

Muṭ’im replied, “I am just a protector, not follower.”

Abū Jahl: “Then there is no harm.”

Journey to heaven— glad tidings for the future

This year was really a year of grief. Holy Prophet was depressed and dejected, his beloved wife Khadijah, a source of comfort and support, was dead; his uncle Abū Ṭālib, his “second father,” a pillar of strength who defended him against the vicious attacks of his enemies, was not alive anymore; his mission to Ṭā’if had been unsuccessful, rather humiliating, he was pelted with rocks until he bled. His invitation to Quraishites toward Islām was turned down in hateful and humiliating retaliation. It was truly a Year of Sorrow for Holy Prophet. With this background in mind, one night Holy Prophet prayed and supplicated intensely in Ka’bah, seeking mercy and help from his Creator. When tired he laid down to rest in the middle of the night.

Allāh Almighty who ordained him, soothed Prophet’s fears and concerns by giving him glad tidings for future victories in his dreams and visions. But it was a special night, as Prophet lay between sleep and awakening (his eyes were closed but he was conscious), *Mi’rāj* (ascendance to heaven) vision took place, as is described in Holy Qur’ān:

[53:9] Then the Prophet drew near to Allāh; then Allāh leaned down towards him.

[53:10] So that He became, as it were, one chord to two bows, or closer still.

[53:11] Then Allāh revealed to His servant that which He revealed.

[53:12] The heart of the Prophet lied not in seeing what he saw?

[53:13] Will you, then, dispute with him about what he saw?

[53:14] And, certainly, he saw him a second time;

[53:15] Near the farthest lote tree;

[53:16] Near which is the Garden of Eternal abode.

[53:17] This was when that, which covers, covered the lote-tree.

[53:18] The eye deviated not, nor did it wander.

[53:19] Surely, he saw the greatest of the Signs of his Lord.

In the vision, Gabriel came to Holy Prophet, lifted him and carried him to the Zamzam fountain, where Gabriel cut opened Prophet's chest, took out his heart, washed it with crystal clear water from the fountain, filled the chest with belief and wisdom and closed it back. Then Gabriel took the Prophet and ascended into the sky. Where in the way Prophet met several past prophets: Adam, Jesus, John, Joseph, Aaron, Moses, and Abraham. They greeted him, exchanging words or two with him, until Holy Prophet ascended to a point in heaven where no human had ever treaded before. Prophet was in the very presence of Allāh, the Almighty! Prophet was given great tidings of the future victories, and five daily Prayers were ordained.

In the second vision, same night Holy Prophet was taken on a spiritual journey "Isra" from Ka'bah to Aqṣā mosque in

Jerusalem, where he met prophets of the past, he led them in prayer. Holy Prophet was given news of great future victories. Then he was flown back to Ka'bah, where his sleeping/awakening condition was gone and he regained full consciousness. The vision is mentioned in Holy Qur'an in following words:

[17:2] Glory be to Him Who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Distant Mosque, the environs of which We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our Signs. Surely, He alone is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

So, Allāh Almighty comforted and pacified Holy Prophet's sorrowful heart. His audience with Allāh the Almighty expressed approval of his efforts by which he was propagating Islām and facing the antagonistic forces. While journey to Aqṣā Mosque gave great tidings of future victories, when his followers will overpower anti-Islāmic forces in Mecca and around.

However, when Meccans came to know about these miraculous journeys, they had hard time in believing, even a number of Muslims had their faith shaken, as they could not understand how both events could have taken place in one night. However, true believers were strengthened in their faith. Prophet's trusted companion, Abū Bakr didn't flinch in belief of truth of the journeys, so Holy Prophet gave him the title "aṣ-Ṣiddīq" (the truthful one).

Days of great tension

During Prophet's era, there were three great empires surrounding Arabia: Sassanid Iranian Empire in the east,

Byzantine Roman Empire in the northwest, and African Abyssinian Empire in the southwest [see box on the

next page]. Sassanids were fire worshippers, Romans were idol worshippers while African Abyssinians



Continent of Africa runs parallel to the western coast of Arabia, separated by narrow Red Sea. Ḥabshah (Abyssinia) lies in the Horn of Africa, the only country in Africa with an unbroken sovereignty, and is one of the oldest continuous nations in the world, known as “the cradle of mankind.”

During the time of the Holy Prophet, it was ruled by king Aṣḥamah (or Ṣaḥmah) whose title was Najāshī. He was a just and powerful ruler.

were mostly Christian.

With the passage of time, Quraishites intensified their prosecution. One day Holy Prophet, pointed to southwest, advised Muslims to migrate to Ḥabshah (Abyssinia) saying, “Ruler of Ḥabshah, Najāshī, is a kind and just ruler, nobody is persecuted in his kingdom for his religion” [see box]. First batch of eleven men and four women prepared to migrate to Ḥabshah. The preparations were kept secret, and were made mostly in the darkness of night.

By chance ‘Umar met a party, whose household articles were packed and loaded on camels. ‘Umar inquired from a woman, “Where are you going?”

Women: “We are going to another land, because you treat us cruelly here.”

‘Umar: “Allāh be with you.” As soon the party reached coastal port Sha‘ībah, luckily a ship was ready to leave for Ḥabshah. When Quraishites learnt of their flight, they sent a party to follow and bring them back. When pursuers reached the coast, the emigrants had long embarked.

Muslims in king Najāshī’s court

Muslims heaved a sigh of relief on reaching the calm and openness of Ḥabshah. Back home, news of Muslim’s smooth life in Ḥabshah was a constant source of concern for Quraishites, they could not digest it for long. They decided to send an envoy in Najāshī’s court to seek extradition of Muslims. Valuable presents and gifts were prepared for the king and his courtiers. ‘Amr Bin Al-‘Ās and ‘Abdullāh Bin Rabī‘ah, both arch enemies of Muslims who claimed friendship with King Najāshī, carried the

presents.

They bribed the courtiers to get early audience with the king and presented gifts to him reviving their friendship.

‘Amr Bin Al-‘Ās: “O King, may you live long! A band of foolish people have left religion of their forefather by inventing a new religion of their own, which is against your religion also. They have created restlessness in our country. Now some of them have escaped into your country to create disturbance here also. We request you to banish them from your land and send them with us so that we may punish them.”

Bribed courtiers readily approved Quraishite’s statement. However, Najāshī, a noble sagacious ruler, replied, “The people from your land have come under my protection, I cannot decide until I hear their point of view.”

Muslim immigrants were summoned in the court.

Najāshī: “What is the matter between you and the Quraishites? Tell me what new religion you have invented?”

Ja‘far Bin Abī Ṭālib spoke on behalf of Muslims. “O King! We were ignorant people. We worshiped idols, ate from dead animals. We did every thing that was bad and infamous. We never respected rights of our relatives and neighbors. We quarreled with each other, never helped poor and orphans, rather we exploited them, eating from their belongings as ours. We were in pitiable condition morally as well as worldly, until Allāh took mercy on us, sent His messenger, whom from beginning we knew as noble, trustworthy and honest man. He taught us to worship one Allāh, abstain from idol worship, speak truth,

be honest and pay respect to relatives and neighbors. He forbade us to commit adultery, doing and thinking evil, telling lie, eating from wealth of orphans, snatching belongings of others. He forbade us from unlawful killings. He taught us to worship one Allāh, pay dues to his creation. We followed him, believed in his words. But for these good changes in our character and deeds, our nation turned against us. They put us in great hardships, committed atrocities against us to prevent us from professing our religion. We are compelled to leave our country, and now we have taken shelter in your country. O King! We expect that we will not be persecuted in your reign and territory, and you will do justice with us.”

King Najāshī was impressed by this discourse.

King Najāshī: “Well, read to me the message which is revealed to you.”

Ja‘far recited melodiously following verses from Chapter Al-Maryam:

[19:1] In the name of Allāh, the Gracious, the Merciful.

[19:2] Kāf Hā Yā ‘Ain Šād.

[19:3] This is an account of the mercy of thy Lord shown to His servant Zachariah,

[19:4] When he called upon his Lord in a low voice.

[19:5] He said, ‘My Lord, my bones have indeed become feeble and my head is all aflame with hoariness but never, my Lord, have I been unblessed in my prayer to Thee;

[19:6] ‘And I fear my relations after me, and my wife is barren. So grant me from Thyself a successor,

[19:7] ‘To be my heir and the heir of

the blessings of the House of Jacob. And make him, my Lord, well-pleasing to Thee.’

[19:8] Allāh said, ‘O Zachariah, We give thee glad tidings of a son whose name shall be Yahya. We have not called any one before him by that name.’

[19:9] He said, ‘My Lord, how shall I have a son when my wife is barren, and I have reached the extreme limit of old age?’

[19:10] The angel bearing the revelation said, ‘So shall it be.’ But thy Lord says, ‘It is easy for ME, and indeed I created thee before, when thou wast nothing.’

As Ja‘far recited, tears flooded Najāshī’s eyes, he remained bowed in reverence. When Ja‘far had finished, he regained composure and declared chokingly, “By Allāh, these verses and verses from our lord Jesus, appear to stem from a common source of light.”

King returned the presents and told Quraishite envoy, “Go away. I shall not send these people with you.”

Cunning Quraishite envoys were not to be disappointed so easily. In the evening they collided with court priests. Next morning ‘Amr again got access in the court and tried to touch Najāshī’s faith, “Sire, do you know what they believe about your prophet Jesus?”

King Najāshī again sent for Muslims. Naturally Muslims were worried; perhaps ‘Amr may succeed this time, since Muslims do not believe Jesus to be the son of Allāh. However, Muslims were not prepared to desist saying right thing even when in great danger.

King Najāshī to Muslims: “What is your belief about Lord Jesus?”

Ja'far: "O King! We believe Jesus a man, not son of Allāh, but his prophet, born by Allāh's words revealed to Maryam."

King Najāshī bent down and picked a piece of straw. Showing it to the courtiers declared: "By Allāh, what you have said about Lord Jesus, I do not consider him greater than this piece of straw from it." Court priests protested against king's remarks. King ignored their protest. Quraishite envoy left empty handed.

While emigrants were living in peace in Ḥabshah, the notorious Quraishite mind was constantly hatching and concocting false rumors to put Muslims in trouble. They floated a false rumor that the Holy Prophet had patched differences with Quraishites in Mecca, and so it was not necessary for the immigrants now to stay in Ḥabshah, far away from their motherland. Few of the immigrants fell into the trap. However, on their way back, they came to know that the news was a Quraishite trick. Few turned back, while others continued. They secretly entered Mecca in the darkness of the night seeking protection from their relatives. Number of Muslims in Ḥabshah continued to rise, because they continued to slip one by one. At one time their number rose above hundred, including eighteen women. Some returned to Mecca before Prophet's migration to Yathrib. While most of the migrants stayed on till the time when Holy Prophet was returning to Medina after the fall of Khaibar.

Abū Bakr prepares to migrate

Infuriated by failure to recover migrants from Ḥabshah, Quraishite

tightened their horrendous grip on defenseless Muslims. Abū Bakr, a noble hearted man, tired of Quraishite's day-to-day intrigues, decided to migrate somewhere he could worship his Allāh freely. With that intention in mind, he left Mecca and traveled southward. In the way he met Ibn Al-Daghinah, chieftain of tribe Qārah.

Ibn Al-Daghinah: "Abū Bakr! Where are you headed to?"

Abū Bakr: "My nation has banished me from my homeland. I have decided to go away somewhere in the vast world of Allāh, where I can worship my Sustainer freely."

Ibn Al-Daghinah: "A man like you should not leave Mecca by himself, nor people should banish him... Come on, I take you in my protection. Turn back, and worship your Sustainer in Mecca, as freely as you like." Abū Bakr returned to Mecca, where Ibn Al-Daghinah chastised Quraishites by saying, "You are banishing a person of noble qualities from your city?"

Abū Bakr built a small mosque in the courtyard of his house, where he would pray and recite Holy Qur'ān loudly. Since he was very soft hearted, tears would flow from his eyes during recitation. Women and children in the neighborhood, upon hearing his recitation, and seeing flow of tears from his eyes, were quite impressed. They would talk about it frequently in their homes. Quraishites told Ibn Al-Daghinah to prevent Abū Bakr from reciting in loud voice as it affected their women and children. Abū Bakr refused to discontinue his norm, and told Ibn Al-Daghinah that he pull himself out of his

protection. Quraishites unleashed all types of hardships on Abū Bakr, but he stood firmly as a solid rock.

Abū Bakr later sought permission from the Holy Prophet to migrate from Mecca. Holy Prophet told him to wait; he may be the second when Allāh permits to migrate. Abū Baker was jubilant on this prophecy.

Flood-gates opened

Holy Prophet vigilantly propagated the message of Islām, day and night. At first he concentrated his attention on his relative Quraishites under divine bidding:

[26:215] And warn thy nearest kinsmen,

[26:216] And lower thy wing of mercy to the believers who follow thee.

Quraishite response was disgusting. He gradually increased his sphere and included tribes in the surroundings of Mecca. He would particularly take advantage of Ḥajj (pilgrimage) congregations. He was often accompanied either of Abū Bakr, ‘Alī or Zaid Bin Ḥārith, on Tabligh trips. Holy Prophet’s uncles Abū Lahab and Abū Jahl would usually follow the prophet, deterring people from hearing him; despite such severe opposition new converts continuously trickled into the fold of Islām.

However, the conversion rate was too slow, but that never disheartened Holy Prophet. He would complain and ask for help only from his Allāh, in morning, in the depth of day, in evening and in the depth of night. Allāh would talk, console and comfort him day and night, promising great victories in the future.

Prophet would daringly predict failures, defeats, and deaths of opponents, and great future victories. Quraishites would laugh and jeer, make fun of Holy Prophet and converts because of these unlikely predictions. However, Allāh in Heaven soon realized these predictions; days of victories of Islām were drawing near.

All of a sudden, the wall of hatred that surrounded Muslims in Mecca soon started giving way. The river of kindness, compassion, and godliness started flowing towards Yathrib, a town about 250 miles north of Mecca, the Promised Land, shown to Prophet in his dream. The city of the Prophet started readying itself to welcome Islām, from where rays of light were destined to sparkle across the world!

Islām spreads in the north

If one chooses to remain in darkness in bright daylight, he may do so by shutting his eyes, but he cannot command sun rays to stop coming and lighting the world around. This exactly was the case with Quraishites. Rays of Islām flooded Mecca and its surroundings, but the so-called elders chose to remain in darkness. Allāh’s promise to spread Islām far and wide was still awaited by Muslims to be realized. However, Holy Prophet and Muslims were praying and supplicating to hasten the victory of Islām that Allāh promised:

[110:3] And thou seest men entering the religion of Allāh in troops.

Certainly, Allāh, the All Hearer and All Knowing, drew victory of Islām nearer.

Historic background of Yathrib

Before we march further with Islām,

let us look in the north of Mecca. The first main landmark, that comes in our way, is the city of Yathrib (24.28° N, 39.36° E), situated in west of Ḥijāz region, in western Saudi Arabia (see map).

Originally, the oasis of Yathrib was inhabited by three Jewish tribes, Banū Qainuqa', Banū Quraizah and Banū Naḍīr. Later two Arab tribes from Yemen Banū Aus and Banū Khazraj immigrated. The immigrants served Jews for some time, later revolted and became independent, eventually snatching control of the city. Later, due to covert designs of Jews, Banū Aus and Banū Khazraj turned hostile to each other, and fought a long war that extended over 120 years. Banū Naḍīr and Banū Quraizah sided with Aus, while Banū Qainuqa' with Khazraj. Their bloodiest war was Battle of Bu'āth, which was inconclusive. Abdullāh Ibn Ubayy Salūl, a Khazraj chief, refused to take part in the battle, it earned him reputation of equity and peacefulness, and consequently he started eyeing kingship of Yathrib.

The Jews were superior to idol worshippers in knowledge and wealth. The Arabs were impressed by their knowledge, so much so that an issueless Arab would usually pledge to give his first born to Jews. Aus and Khazraj got some knowledge of Jewish revealed books because of their terms with them. They knew that Jews were waiting for a prophet. Often they would boast, "It is the time of the promised prophet. As soon he comes, we will join him to destroy idol worshippers, and drive them out of Mecca. The prophet would establish a large kingdom, and we will

become stronger by believing in him."

In the 11th year of prophethood, as usual, Holy Prophet was going around the camping places of pilgrims. At 'Aqabah hill, some distance from Mecca, he met a group of six men belonging to Banū Khazraj from Yathrib. As Holy Prophet passed them, he asked them, "Can you please give me some time to talk to you?"

Men from Yathrib: "Yes, yes. What do you want to say?"

Holy Prophet sat among them and conveyed the message of Islām to them. He recited verses from Holy Qur'an, and invited them to join him.

They consulted each other, "He is likely to be the same prophet, whom Jews are waiting. It is a good chance for us; we must hurry up to accept him, lest Jews take advantage." They learnt more from Prophet about Islām and were readily converted to Islām. Holy Prophet gave them text of the Holy Qur'an so far revealed. Before leaving for home they informed Holy Prophet, "Our intertribal quarrels have weakened us. Enmities have separated us from each other. We will spread message of Islām in Yathrib as soon we get there. Perhaps Islām may act as binding force to join us together."

When back home, they preached Islām. Because of their efforts, soon Islām was the talk of the town.

First pledge at 'Aqabah

Next year twelve people from Yathrib met Holy Prophet at 'Aqabah, five were of the last year's converts. As soon they saw Prophet, they came anxiously to meet him with love and reverence. The visitors described political situation in

Yathrib in detail, and renewed their pledge at the hand of the Prophet and swore allegiance to Islām and Holy Prophet. After pilgrimage, while bidding them farewell, Holy Prophet advised them, “If you would stand firmly on your oath of allegiance, you will be rewarded with paradise. However, if you falter, your fate will be in the hand of Allāh. He will do whatever He pleases with you.” They requested the Prophet to provide them a teacher, who would teach them Qur’ān and preach Islām to the infidels. Muṣ’ab Bin ‘Umair was sent with them as their teacher.

Muslims in Yathrib enjoyed freedom to move about and do business. Later, Holy Prophet conveyed his message to Muṣ’ab to lead collective Jum’ah Prayer. People witnessed prophecy of people joining Islām in troops upon troops when whole of Aus and Khazraj tribes were converted to Islām, in a day, subsequently followed by other tribes. It strengthened Muslims in their faith, as this had been predicted by Allāh The Majestic in Chapter Al-Naṣr:

[110:1] In the name of Allāh, the Gracious, the Merciful.

[110:2] When the help of Allāh comes and the Victory,

[110:3] And thou seest men entering the religion of Allāh in troops,

[110:4] Glorify thy Lord with His praise and seek His forgiveness. Surely He is Oft-returning with mercy.

However, in Mecca, this year was very hard on Muslims, Quraishites knowing that Islām was spreading by leaps and bounds in Yathrib, had grown more and more frustrated, wrathful and severe in their treatment. It hanged heavy on their

conscious that despite their utmost effort message of Islām was spreading so fast.

Second pledge at ‘Aqabah

Next year (13th year of prophethood), several hundred people from Aus and Khazraj tribes visited Mecca for pilgrimage. Several were already Muslims, while majority were newcomers. They met the Holy Prophet in the darkness of night in ‘Aqabah valley. Holy Prophet joined them accompanied by his uncle ‘Abbās. Those gathered were 70 in number.

‘Abbās addressed them, “O the people of Khazraj! Muḥammad is respected and honored member of his family. His family has protected him since, through thick and thin, have stood with him in every danger. Now Muḥammad wants to leave his homeland and go with you. If you want to take him with you, you would have to be careful to protect him from every danger, and face his every enemy. If you are ready to bear this responsibility, then promise in clear terms, otherwise refuse outright. It is always better to talk in clear terms.”

Al-Barā Bin Ma’rūr, an elderly respected man: “‘Abbās! We have heard you. We need to hear something from the Holy Prophet himself to explain what responsibility he wants to put on our shoulders.”

Holy Prophet recited few verses from Holy Qur’ān, and explained briefly the message of Islām. While explaining man’s duties to Allāh and to his fellow human beings, he said, “For myself I only ask you to promise to protect me as you would protect your relatives and dear ones when it would be needed.”

Al-Barā bent forward in reverence and took Holy Prophet's hand and said, "O Apostle of Allāh! We swear in the name of Allāh who has sent you with truth, we will protect you as we protect our lives. Nothing will deter us, from our resolve, as we have been raised under the shades of swords."

Abul-Hāshim (another Yathribian): "O, Prophet of Allāh! We have long standing friendly terms with Jews which will be severed when we will side with you. We fear, when Allāh will give you power, naturally you would like to return to your homeland leaving us behind at the mercy of our enemies."

Holy Prophet smiled: "No, no. It will never happen. Your blood will be my blood, your friends will be my friends, and your enemies will be my enemies."

‘Abbās Bin ‘Ubādah Anṣārī looked back at his men and asked, "Do you understand what this undertaking means? We must now be prepared for any eventuality and for every sacrifice."

All present answered, "Yes, yes. We understand. But O Prophet of Allāh! What we will get in return?"

Holy Prophet: "You will get Allāh's pleasure, which is the greatest reward of His rewards."

They reiterated, "Ok, we agree. O Apostle of Allāh! Give us your hand."

Holy Prophet extended his hand. All held it. So, the second ‘Aqabah pledge was made. Holy Prophet appointed twelve proctors from among present for the supervision of their tribal affairs, and they were answerable to the Prophet.

Somehow Quraishites grew suspicious that something had been going on secretly between Yathribians and the

Holy Prophet. Next morning, Quraishite chieftains met Yathribians and asked what had been going on between them. Since most of the visitors were idol worshipers, and were not included in the pledge, their leader Ubayy Bin Abī Salul denied outright to have any secret meeting with Muslims. However, Quraishites remained skeptical. Later, they did their best to capture returning Yathribians, but they were unsuccessful.

Immigration to Yathrib

Some time ago, Holy Prophet was shown a land with orchards and fountains, in a dream, which was thought to be somewhere in Najd, destined for migration. However, with the spreading of Islām in Yathrib, it proved to be the place shown in dream.

After second pledge of ‘Aqabah, the Holy Prophet advised Muslims to migrate to Yathrib. In few days most of the Muslims one by one left for Yathrib, except few slaves, who stayed behind.

Meanwhile Abū Bakr had sought Prophet's permission for migration, but Holy Prophet did not allow him, saying, "Perhaps Allāh will give you a companion to accompany you." Similarly, Ṣuḥaib was also eager to accompany the Prophet. His intentions somehow leaked out to Quraishites. They put strict surveillance on his movements. Later, somehow he escaped to Medina.

The Yathribians welcoming the migrants were now called "Ansar" (helpers). They welcomed Meccan immigrants, "Muhājirīn," in their homes, taking care of their boarding and lodging. They set example for Muslims to come as how to treat

guests and take care of all of their needs.

Evil designs of Quraish

By this time, Quraishite mind was almost completely baffled, since each of their ill move was reverted on them. Due to perpetual failures, they were almost out of their minds. Had their spiritual eyes been opened, each of their failures was sufficient to open their hearts for Islām.

Now the concentration of Muslims in Yathrib was like a bombshell which exploded in each individual Quraishite heart. They knew Holy Prophet was going to win. Their satanic minds started weaving a permanent solution to the problem. They knew almost all Muslims had left for Yathrib, and Holy Prophet was almost alone in Mecca. They knew that the Prophet was not as vulnerable before as he was then. They wanted to grab the opportunity to put an end to the problem once and for all.

This evil design in mind, about one hundred of them gathered in their national assembly hall Dārun-Nadvah for consultations. Several suggestions were put forward, which were discarded one by one, for one reason or another, until they had most wicked agreement. They were to prepare an assaulting squad of young men, one from each tribe, entrusted with the duty to collectively attack the Holy Prophet. They thought, in this way the responsibility of the killing will not rest at one tribe. Later, if needed, they will collectively confront Banū ‘Abdi Manāf, who would not dare to fight with all of them to avenge the killing. Whatever ransom would be decided, they easily would pay

collectively. Apparently the plan was ingenious and well thought of, the time was ripe and manpower available. It was unanimously agreed upon.

While Allāh the Almighty and the Protector, informed Holy Prophet of their evil designs, and to counter it, He advised Prophet, as described in following verse of Chapter Al-Anfāl:

[8:31] And remember when the disbelievers devised plans against thee that they might put thee in confinement or slay thee or expel thee. And they planned and Allāh also planned, and Allāh is the Best of planners.

As the miscreants dispersed, to carry out their heinous plan secretly, Allāh the Almighty allowed the Prophet to migrate, forbidding him to spend that night in Mecca.

Holy Prophet met Abū Bakr in the noon, and told him that he had been allowed to migrate. Abū Bakr could not help controlling flow of tears of joy. They planned what to do, and decided to spend that night in a cave in Thaur hill, about three miles south of Mecca. Time of escape to the hill was agreed upon. Abū Bakr was to meet Prophet at a place out of the town, after dusk. Abū Bakr had already readied two camels for the journey to the hill.

By dusk, enemies started gathering one by one, at a secret point close to Prophet’s house. While in the house Holy Prophet told ‘Alī to stay behind for safe return of the deposits and consignments entrusted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) to their owners. He told him to sleep in his bed and not to fear as he would not be harmed. As Alī lay in the bed, Holy

Prophet covered him with a red sheet.

Night had already fallen; soon it was going to be dark all around. The enemies could be seen standing at a distance from the door of Prophet's house. They were in easy mood. Holy Prophet, shrouded in a sheet of cloth, passed out in front of their eyes, and disappeared in the streets. The enemies were gossiping unaware of what was happening around them. Holy Prophet hurried across the streets. Soon he was out of the town. Abū Bakr met him, and they rode south towards the Thaur hill. The climb to the cave was difficult; however, they made to it before dawn. Abū Bakr went in the cave, swept it, smoothed the way into it, and requested Prophet to enter.

Back home, the enemies that had surrounded Prophet's house, would peep into the house, time after time, seeing that Prophet's bed was occupied, settled satisfied. It was Prophet's habit to leave house for Prayer much before dawn. The enemies gotten vary of the siege, waited till dawn, then rushed in with spears in hands, ready to pierce the body of the sleeper. As soon they removed the red cover, their disappointment was worth seeing when they found Alī sleeping in the bed instead. They could not digest their despair; they gave beating to Alī asking him for the whereabouts of the Prophet. Getting no lead from him, they went straight to Abū Bakr's house. Finding him also absent, they made a brief show there.

In despair, Quraishites announced a reward of 100 camels, a premier prize, for anyone who would bring Prophet dead or alive. It was quite a sizeable reward. Several of the stalwarts took up

the challenge. In their frenzy, Quraishite elders themselves followed the trail; they climbed to the mouth of the cave, where their guide stopped, declaring, "Lead ends here, either Muḥammad is in this cave or he is lifted into the sky." It was decided that someone go inside. However, somebody remarked, "Cave is not inhabited and it is very dangerous to go in its darkness. We have never seen anybody entering or leaving it for years." Moreover, they noticed spiderweb across the mouth of the cave, and a bird sitting on its egg on one side of the entrance to the cave. They argued, had the fugitives been inside the cave, cobweb and bird's eggs would have been broken. Quraishites could not help but return empty handed.

Enemy's feet were clearly seen, and conversation heard, from inside the cave. Abū Bakr alarmingly whispered, "O Prophet of Allāh! They are so close, if they bend their heads slightly, they can easily see us."

Prophet whispered back, "Don't fear, Allāh is with us!" After a pause, Prophet added, "Why you fear for the two, when third of them is Allāh."

En route to Yathrib

Prophet and Abū Bakr stayed in the cave for three days. 'Abdullāh, Abū Bakr's son would collect information, while going around the city all day long, returning at dusk with food and water. He would communicate the information to the Holy Prophet, while Abū Bakr's servant 'Āmir Bin Fuhairah, would graze sheep all day long, and return with milk and food in the evening.

By the third day, most of the

Quraishite enthusiasm had died down. Abū Bakr had already arranged for two camels and a guide to lead them during their journey to Yathrib. At dusk, the Holy Prophet and Abū Bakr, climbed down the hill and mounted the camels. Turning toward Mecca, Holy Prophet sadly said, “O the city of Mecca! You are dear to me than all places on earth, but your inhabitants do not allow me to live here.” It was 12th September, 622 A.D., when the Holy Prophet embarked on the journey, starting the Hijrah Islāmic calendar.

Instead of traveling straight towards Medinah to the North, our travelers (Holy Prophet Muḥammad, peace be on him, and Abū Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him) went westward to the sea, and then turned northward along sea coast towards Yathrib. They traveled continuously for the whole night till noon next day. As the day got hot, Abū Bakr looked for a place to give rest to the Prophet. Abū Bakr swept the ground under the shade of a rock. Holy Prophet lay down and slept for some time, resuming the journey in the afternoon. Abū Bakr would look back time to time fearing pursuit. At last he saw a horse rider following them. Abū Bakr anxiously told the Holy Prophet, “O Prophet of Allāh! Someone is coming in our pursuit.” Holy Prophet replied calmly, “Don’t be afraid, Allāh is with us.”

The pursuer was Surāqah Bin Mālik, who later related his story as follows.

“We received the news that Quraishites had announced a reward for the capture of the Holy Prophet, brought by a messenger. Later the messengers came to me and whispered to me, “I saw some

figures far away moving northward along the seashore, I guess they were Muḥammad and his party.” I immediately understood his guess was right. However, to try to my luck solo, I told him, “The party you are talking about had just passed us. I know who they are.”

“Afterwards I went into my house and told my servant to prepare my horse, telling him that I was going on a long journey. I took spear and other necessities with me and galloped off in pursuit of the party along the sea coast. As I closed in, I recognized that they were Muḥammad and Abū Bakr. All of a sudden my horse stumbled down after hitting a stone. I hurriedly stood up and took omen with my arrows. The omen was against my intentions. However, I resumed my pursuit because of enmity to Islām and temptation to win the reward. When I closed in again, I could hear Muḥammad’s recitation. I noticed Muḥammad never looked back, except Abū Bakr who would repeatedly look back at me fearing I may harm Muḥammad. My horse again stumbled. This time horse’s legs sunk deep in the sand. I and the horse could not pull them out, however, at last the horse pulled itself out with great difficulty. I again took omen, again the result was against me, and I decided to call off my mission. I called Abū Bakr in peace, they stopped, and I joined them. From what so far had passed with me, I concluded that luck was with Muḥammad, and he will be victorious at the end. I offered some money to them, which they refused to take. Abū Bakr forbade me to tell anybody about meeting them. I had a

strong conviction that some day the Holy Prophet will overpower his opponents. I requested him, "Please, give me some undertaking of peace, in writing, which I may present at the time when you would assume seat of power." Holy Prophet told 'Āmir Bin Fuhairah to write a note for me. Ammar promptly did so on a piece of skin."

As Surāqah turned back to leave, Holy Prophet addressed him:

Surāqah! How would you feel when you will wear the bracelets of Kisra?" Surāqah in amazement, "Kisra, the son of Hurmuz, the emperor of Iran?"

Holy Prophet: "Yes!" Surāqah's eyes were wide open in amazement at the answer.

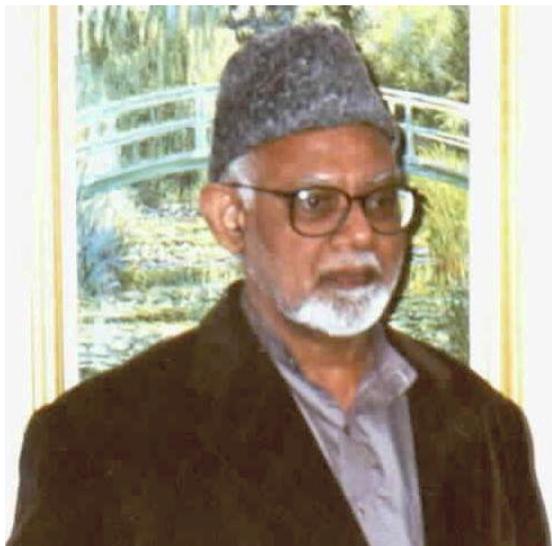
After Surāqah had left, the Holy Prophet resumed his journey. On the way they met several caravans carrying goods from Syria. Most of these people were acquainted with Abū Bakr as they often crossed each other on this route. One of

the passers-by presented gift of white gowns to both of them. When someone asked Abū Bakr who his companion was. He replied, "He guides me to the right path." Mostly they would understand that Abū Bakr had hired a guide; however Abū Bakr's meaning were deeper than what they thought.

The end of migration journey

News of Holy Prophet's departure from Mecca had reached Yathrib. People were anxiously waiting for his safe arrival. They would go out daily in anticipation of welcoming him. People would climb roofs and trees, all eyes fixed at the way coming from Mecca. They would stay long outside, returning when sun burnt hot at heads. At last, on 20th September 622, the Holy Prophet neared Yathrib, after eight long days of journey. It was almost midday. People had left their observing perches.

However, a Jew was working at a



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height, his eyes caught two figures in shining white cloths. He cried out, "O the Arabs! There comes whom you were waiting for." As soon Muslims heard the voice, everyone rushed out of the city, armed to welcome Holy Prophet.



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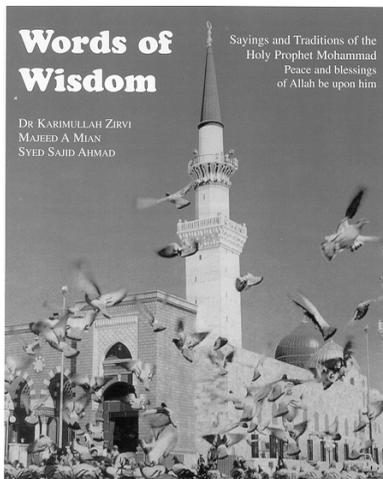
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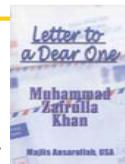
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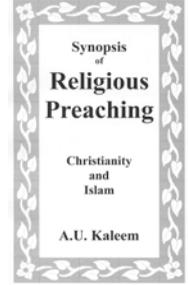
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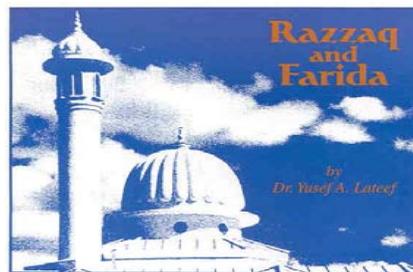


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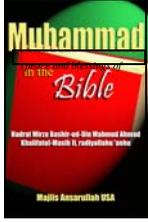
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ہو خاک میں ملے اسے ملتا ہے آشنا
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اک رات مفاسد کی وہ تیرہ و تار آئی
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Ash-hadu allā ilāha illallāhu waḥdahū lā sharīka lahū wa ash-hadu anna muḥammadan 'abduhū wa rasūluh

(I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, He is One, without partner, and Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger.)

I solemnly promise that I shall endeavor, till the end of my life, for the consolidation and propagation of Islām and Ahmadiyyat, and for upholding the institution of Khilāfat. I shall also be prepared to offer the greatest sacrifice for this cause. Moreover, I shall urge all my children to remain true to Khilāfat-i-Ahmadiyya. Inshā'allāh.

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An Auxiliary of The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islām, U.S.A.
1500 Good Hope Rd, Siver Spring MD 20905
Printed at the Fazl-i-Umar Press.
Postmaster: Send address changes to
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