

**The Basic Level**

# **SEERAH AND HISTORY**

## **CURRICULUM**

**The second semester**

**SER 152**

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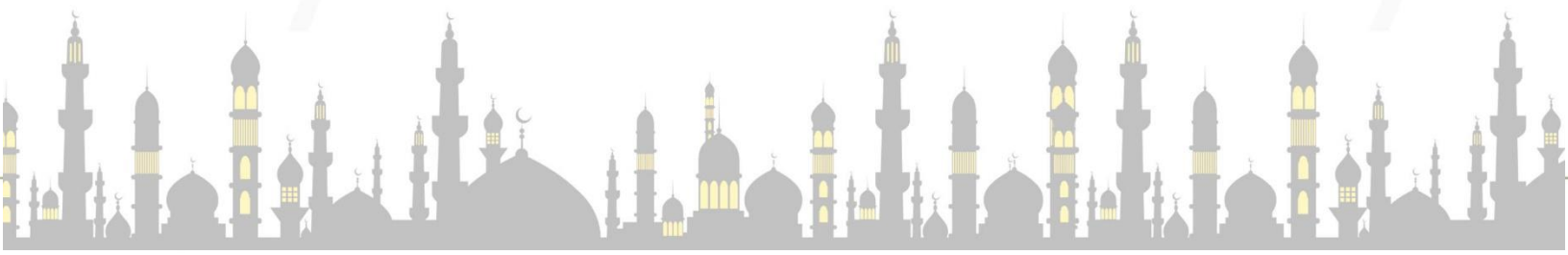
**First Edition**

**2021 C.E. – 1442 A.H.**

# SEERAH AND HISTORY

## CURRICULUM

# Prophet Stories





## First session

### Ibrahim or Abraham peace be upon Him

Even after 40 centuries, the message and the character of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) remains exemplary for millions of people. A proponent of monotheism, he declared the Oneness of Almighty God at a time when the whole world was submerged into darkness of polytheism. In this backdrop, he heralded his determination to turn his face to the Almighty God, the One Who is the Creator of the universe.

Born in Babylon (modern Iraq) some 2000 BC, Ibrahim traveled through Syria, Egypt, Hijaz and Palestine, where he died and is buried at a place which is known after his name as Al-Khaleel. He made the entire Middle East areas as his area of operation for his mission and assigned his nephew Lot to Sodom; his son Isaac to Palestine and planted his elder son Ismail at Hijaz. He is ancestor of most of the Prophets referred to in Old Testament, New Testament and the Holy Qur'an. He holds the highest position in world history with no parallel to him.

Almighty God chose him as His friend (Khaleel). The people of his time in Syria would worship stars (thurayya). He is said to have been invited to select a star for his own worship. But after examining the sun and the moon, he rejected the idea and turned his face towards Allah the Creator of the heavens and the earth:

فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَأِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ (٧٧) فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ بَازِعَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِيَّيَّيَ بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ (٧٨) إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ (٧٩) (الأنعام: ٧٦-٧٩)

*“When the night covered him over, he saw a star: he said: ‘This is my Lord.’ But when it set, he said: ‘I love not those that set.’ When he saw the moon rising in splendor, he said: ‘This is my Lord.’ But when the moon set, he said: ‘Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among those who go astray.’ When he saw the sun rising in splendor, he said: ‘This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all).’ But*



when the sun set, he said: ‘O my people! I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to Allah. ‘For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth and never shall I give partners to Allah.’” (Al-Anaam)

In Iraq, King Nimrud then was powerful and a tyrant. The people were generally idolatrous and had many temples. Ibrahim was astonished to see people assigning their aspirations to idols of stones. One day when they were out of town for a festival, he entered the temple and hammered the stone-idols, mutilating their faces except the big one on which he placed the axe. When the people returned and saw their deities smashed and mutilated, they became angry. Although they felt ashamed of worshipping the idols that could not save themselves, they however decided to kill Ibrahim.

فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُودًا إِلَّا كَبِيرًا لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ (٥٨) قَالُوا مَنْ فَعَلَ هَذَا بِالْهَيْتِنَا إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ (٥٩) قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتًى يَذُكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ (٦٠) قَالُوا فَأْتُوا بِهِ عَلَى أَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُونَ (٦١) قَالُوا أَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ هَذَا بِالْهَيْتِنَا يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ (٦٢) قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَذَا فَاسْأَلُوهُمْ إِنْ كَانُوا يَنْطِقُونَ (٦٣) فَرَجَعُوا إِلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ (٦٤) ثُمَّ نُكِسُوا عَلَى رُءُوسِهِمْ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا هَؤُلَاءِ يَنْطِقُونَ (٦٥) قَالَ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ (٦٦) أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ (٦٧) (الأنبياء: ٥٨-٦٧)

So he smashed them into pieces, except the biggest of them, so they might turn to it ‘for answers’. They protested, “Who dared do this to our gods? It must be an evildoer!” Some said, “We heard a young man, called Abraham, speaking ‘ill’ of them.” They demanded, “Bring him before the eyes of the people, so that they may witness ‘his trial’.” They asked, “Was it you who did this to our gods, O Abraham?” He replied ‘sarcastically’, “No, this one—the biggest of them—did it! So ask them, if they can talk!” So they came back to their senses, saying ‘to one another’, “You yourselves are truly the wrongdoers!” Then they ‘quickly’ regressed to their ‘original’ mind-set, ‘arguing,’ “You already know that those ‘idols’ cannot talk.” He rebuked ‘them’, “Do you then worship—instead of Allah—what can neither benefit nor harm you in any way? Shame on you and whatever you worship instead of Allah! Do you not have any sense?” (21:58-67)

قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ (٦٨) قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ (٦٩) وَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَخْسَرِينَ (٧٠) (الأنبياء: ٦٨-٧٠)

*They concluded, "Burn him up to avenge your gods, if you must act." We ordered, "O fire! Be cool and safe for Abraham!" They had sought to harm him, but We made them the worst losers. (21:68-70)*

فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اقْتُلُوهُ أَوْ حَرِّقُوهُ فَأَنْجَلَهُ اللَّهُ مِنَ النَّارِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ (العنكبوت: ٢٤)

*But the only response of Abraham's people was to say: "Kill him or burn him!" But Allah saved him from the fire. Surely in this are signs for people who believe. (29:24)*

When caught and brought before the king, Ibrahim declared the power of his Lord in the open court:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (البقرة: ٢٥٨)

*Are you 'O Prophet' not aware of the one who argued with Abraham about his Lord because Allah had granted him kingship? 'Remember' when Abraham said, "My Lord is the One Who has power to give life and cause death." He argued, "I too have the power to give life and cause death." Abraham challenged 'him', "Allah causes the sun to rise from the east. So make it rise from the west." And so the disbeliever was dumbstruck. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people. (2:258)*

Ibrahim left his father and the fatherland and migrated to Egypt with his wife Sarah, and he returned triumphant to Palestine with many gifts from the Egyptian king including a maid named Hajar. Since Sarah was barren, Ibrahim married Hajar who gave birth to a baby boy at his old age of 95. A jealous Sarah pressed her husband to take Hajar away from her. On the Divine Guidance, Ibrahim took Hajar and the newborn Ismail to a distant place (present day Makkah) in Hijaz.

Ibrahim left his beloved wife and infant son in the barren valley with no greenery, water or human inhabitation and prayed for the prosperity and security



of his offspring in this barren valley, and as he turned away from Hagar and started to walk away, she called out to him and asked: "Why are you leaving us here?", to which Abraham didn't reply the first two times she asked. She then changed her question and asked: "Did God command you to do this?" to which Abraham stopped, turned around, looked back and replied "Yes." She responded, "Then God will provide for us." Abraham then continued on his journey back to Sarah.

When the few dates and water left by Ibrahim was over within few days, she felt thirsty, and her infant son Ismail was crying to death. She ran madly between the two nearby hillocks of Safa and Marwa looking for water.

She ran seven times. The hills and hillocks echoed with her cries. This was an ordeal, a great ordeal of God. She cried again and again but called none except Him. God showered His mercy upon her, and a forceful spring of sweet water gushed out near Ismail's feet. She called it Zamzam and it is flowing at the same place for the last 4,000 years. Almighty Allah declared Safa and Marwa as His signs and ordained the pilgrims to run seven times between them like His devoted lady, Hajar:

إِنَّ الْأَصْفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْأَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ  
(البقرة: ١٥٨)

*Indeed, 'the hills of' Safa and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever performs the pilgrimage or minor pilgrimage, let them walk between 'the two hills'. And whoever does good willingly, Allah is truly Appreciative, All-Knowing. (2:158)*

Ibrahim returned a few years later to find his infant Ismail an energetic boy. He was tested again. He saw in a dream that he was offering his son Ismail as a sacrifice to his Lord. Ismail was his only son at this ripe age. Having decided however to win His pleasure, Ibrahim told the son of his dream. Being son of a great soul, Ismail immediately agreed, for this he said was ordained by God. Ibrahim took him to Mina (near Makkah) and as he laid Ismail to slaughter him, his Lord awarded him with great pleasure and ransomed Ismail with a goat sacrifice. This is the





practice which is followed by all Muslims throughout the world as Eid Al-Adha or the festival of sacrifice.



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## Second session

### Ibrahim

Haj was started by Prophet Ibrahim. It is the perfect replica of the incidents and occasions of the life of Prophet Ibrahim and his family. Here we mention the main rites of Haj and their relationship with this noble family.

1. **Construction of Holy Kaaba:** Almighty Allah bestowed great favor on Prophet Ibrahim and Ismail to build the Holy Kaaba at Makkah Mukarramah, which is the focal point of the true faith in the world. Muslims turn their faces towards it in prayer, five times a day from every corner of the earth. Even their dead are buried facing the Holy Kaaba.

2. **Performing Tawaf:** Later Almighty Allah told him to call the people to perform Haj and Tawaf.

3. **Sa'ie between Safa and Marwah:** Every pilgrim is obliged to run between the two hillocks.

4. **Zamzam:** This is the water, which gushed out as a gift to infant Ismail. Pilgrims drink it and take it with them as holy water to the four corners of the world.

5. **Rami Jamraat:** When Prophet Ibrahim was taking his son, Ismail for a sacrifice in Mina the Iblees tried to seduce the family three times and they threw dust and pebbles upon him. The pilgrims follow the same practice and throw pebbles upon Iblees seven times each in three days of Haj.

6. **Animal sacrifice:** This is in commemoration of Prophet Ibrahim's decision to sacrifice his son Ismail and God's Mercy upon him to ransom it by a sheep. The pilgrims in Mina and other Muslims celebrate the Great Win by sacrificing sheep, goat, cow and camels throughout the world. About two million animals in Mina and many millions abroad are slaughtered within three days whose meat is distributed to the poor. This is the largest free food distribution program of the world on the 'Eid Al Adha' annually.







7. **Maqam-i-Ibrahim:** This is the place of a stone, marked with the footprint of Prophet Ibrahim where he was standing while raising the walls of Holy Kaaba. Every pilgrim offers prayer at this blessed place in every Tawaf.

8. **Hijr Ismail:** This place marked with Prophet Ismail's name is now a part of the holy Kaaba and pilgrims offer prayer at this place.

The above rites of Haj are directly connected with the noble family of Prophet Ibrahim. Although Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) initiated Haj, there is however no Haj rite connected with his life. It is the commemoration of Prophet Ibrahim and his submission to the will of Almighty Allah. Islam is the religion of Prophet Ibrahim. This is mainstream of Divine guidance including all prophets of Torah and the Bible. Judaism and Christianity are the offshoots of that one thread of divinity.



## Lut

Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) left Egypt accompanied by his nephew Lut (peace be upon him), who then went to the city of Sodom (Sadum), which was on the western shore of the Dead Sea. This city was filled with evil. Its residents waylaid, robbed and killed travelers. Another common evil among them was that men had sex with men instead of with women. it was practiced openly and unashamedly.

It was at the height of these crimes and sins that Allah revealed to Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) that he should summon the people to give up their indecent behavior, but they were so deeply sunk in their immoral habits that they were deaf to Lot's preaching. Swamped in their unnatural desires, they refused to listen, even when Lot warned them of Allah's punishment. Instead, they threatened to drive him out of the city if he kept on preaching.



Allah the Almighty revealed:

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (١٦٠) إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ لُوطٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ (١٦١) إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ (١٦٢) فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا  
 (١٦٣) وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (١٦٤) أَتَأْتُونَ الذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ (١٦٥) وَتَذَرُونَ مَا خَلَقَ  
 لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَبَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ عَادُونَ (١٦٦) قَالُوا لَئِن لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ يَلُوطُ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُخْرَجِينَ (١٦٧) قَالَ إِنِّي لِعَمَلِكُمْ مِنَ  
 الْفَالِقِينَ (١٦٨) رَبِّ نَجِّنِي وَأَهْلِي مِمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ (١٦٩) فَنجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ (١٧٠) إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ (١٧١) ثُمَّ دَمَرْنَا  
 الْآخَرِينَ (١٧٢) (الشعراء: ١٦٠-١٧٢)

*The people of Lut rejected the messengers; when their brother Lut said to them, "Will you not fear Allah? I am truly a trustworthy messenger to you; So fear Allah, and obey me. I do not ask you for any reward for this message. My reward is only from the Lord of all worlds. Why do you men lust after fellow men, leaving the wives that your Lord has created for you? In fact, you are a transgressing people." They threatened, "If you do not desist, O Lut, you will surely be expelled." Lut responded, "I am truly one of those who despise your shameful practice. My Lord! Save me and my family from the consequences of what they do." So We saved him and all of his family, except an old woman, who was one of the doomed; Then We utterly destroyed the rest. (26:160-172)*



## Third session

### Lut and Ismail

The doings of Lut's people saddened his heart. Their unwholesome reputation spread throughout the land, while he struggled against them. As the years passed, he persisted in his mission. No one responded to his call and believed except for the members of his family, and even in his household, not all the members believed. Lot's wife, like Noah's wife, a disbeliever.

Overwhelmed with despair, Lut prayed to Allah to grant him victory and destroy the corrupt. Therefore, the angels left Abraham (peace be upon him) and headed for Sodom the town of Lut (peace be upon him). Lut felt distressed he received his guests. He asked them where they came from and where they were going.

They did not answer his questions. Instead, they asked if he could host them. He started talking with them and impressed upon them the subject of his people's nature. Lut was filled with turmoil; he wanted to convince his guests without offending them, not to spend the night there, yet at the same time he wanted to extend to them the expected hospitality normally accorded to guests. In vain, he tried to make them understand the perilous situation. As soon as Lut's wife saw them, she ran to her people with the news, and it spread to all the inhabitants like wildfire. The people rushed towards Lut quickly and excitedly. When Lut saw the mob approaching his house, he shut the door, but they kept on banging on it. He pleaded with them to leave the visitors alone and fear Allah's punishment. He urged them to seek sexual fulfillment with their wives, for that is what Allah had made lawful.

Lut's people waited until he had finished his short sermon, blinded by passion, they broke down the door. Lut became very angry, but he stood powerless before these violent people. He was unable to prevent the abuse of his guests, but he firmly stood his ground and continued to plead with the mob.





At that terrible moment, he wished he had the power to push them away from his guests. Seeing him in a state of helplessness, and grief the guests said, "Do not be anxious or frightened, Lut for we are angels, and these people will not harm you."

The angels warned Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) to leave his house before sunrise, taking with him all his family except his wife. Allah had decreed that the city of Sodom should perish. It was as if a mighty power had lifted the entire city and flung it down in one jolt. A storm of stones rained on the city. Everyone and everything were destroyed, including Lut's wife.

People of Sodom were destroyed, their towns and names have been erased from the face of the earth. Lut (peace be upon him) proceeded towards Abraham (peace be upon him). He visited him, and when he recounted the story of his people, he was surprised to learn that Abraham (peace be upon him) already knew. So Lut (peace be upon him) continued to invite people to Allah, as did Abraham (peace be upon him), the patient one who turned to Allah repentantly, and the two held firm to their mission.

## Ismail

The literal translation of the name **Ismail** is "heard by God". According to Muslim tradition, Ismail and his mother Hagar are buried next to the Kaaba in Mecca, under the area demarcated by the semi-circular Hijr Ismail wall. The birth of Ismail was planned by Abraham's first wife, Sarah. She and her husband Abraham sought a way to have children. Sarah was 75 years old and had yet to bear a child. She had the idea to offer her Egyptian handmaiden Hagar to her husband so that they could have a child by her. Abraham took Hagar as his wife and conceived a child with her.

Abraham was blessed so that his descendants would be as numerous as the dust of the earth. God would make of Ismail a great nation because he was of the seed of Abraham. When Ismail was born, Abraham was 86 years old.

God informed Abraham that his wife Sarah would give birth to a son, whom he was instructed to name Isaac. God told Abraham that He would establish his legacy through





Isaac, and when Abraham inquired as to Ismail's role, God answered that Ismail has been blessed and that he "will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly; and I will make him a great nation."

Ismail is recognized as an important prophet of Islam. Ismail was the firstborn of Abraham, born to him from his wife Sarah's slave, Hagar. He is the ancestor of several northern prominent Arab tribes and the forefather of Adnan, the ancestor of Muhammad (peace be upon him). Muhammad was the descendant of Ismail who would establish a great nation, as promised by God in the Old Testament.

Ismail is mentioned over ten times in the Quran, often alongside other prophets of ancient times. He is mentioned together with Elisha and Dhul-Kifl as one of "the patiently enduring and righteous, whom God caused to enter into his mercy". It is also said of Lut, Elisha, Jonah and Ismail, that God gave each one "preference above the worlds".

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ كُلٌّ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ (الأنبياء: ٨٥)

*And 'remember' Ishmael, Idris, and Dhul-Kifl. 1 They were all steadfast. (21:85)*

وَأَذْكُرْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ وَكُلٌّ مِنَ الْأَخْيَارِ (ص: ٤٨)

*Also remember Ismail, Elisha, and Dhul-Kifl. 1 All are among the best. (38:48)*

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ (الأنعام: ٨٦)

*'We also guided' Ismail, Elisha, Jonah, and Lut, favouring each over other people 'of their time'. (6:86)*

In other chapters of the Quran, however, which revealed during the Medina period, Ismail is mentioned closely with his father Abraham. Ismail stands alongside Abraham in their attempt to set up the Kaaba in Mecca as a place of monotheistic pilgrimage and Abraham thanks God for granting him Ismail and Isaac in his old age.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ (إبراهيم: ٣٩)

*All praise is for Allah who has blessed me with Ishmael and Isaac in my old age. My Lord is indeed the Hearer of 'all' prayers. (14:39)*





Ismail is further mentioned alongside the prophets who had been given revelations (4:163). Also, Jacob's sons promised to follow the faith of their forefathers, "Abraham, Ismail and Isaac", when testifying their faith (2:133). In the narrative of the near-sacrifice of Abraham's son, the son is not named. Although the general interpretation is that it was Ismail, most modern commentators regard the son's identification as least important in a narrative given for its moral lesson; a story which is given to show the courage that one develops through faith.



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## Fourth session

### Isaac and Jacob

Isaac was born to Abraham by his first wife Sarah when she was 90 years old, she had ceased showing any signs of fertility. He is recognized as prophet and messenger of God in Islam. As in Judaism and Christianity, Muslims hold Isaac in deep veneration because they believe that both Isaac and his older half-brother Ismail continued their father's spiritual legacy through their subsequent preaching of the message of God after the death of Abraham.

Isaac is mentioned fifteen times by name in the Quran, often with his father and his son, Jacob.

وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ (١١٢) وَبَارَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ إِسْحَاقَ ۚ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ مُبِينٌ (١١٣)  
(الصافات: ١١٢-١١٣)

*We "later" gave him good news of Isaac; a prophet, and one of the righteous. We blessed him and Isaac as well. Some of their descendants did good, while others clearly wronged themselves. (37:112-113)*

In a fuller description, when angels came to Ibrahim to tell him of the future punishment to be imposed on Sodom and Gomorrah, his wife, Sarah, "laughed, and We gave her good tidings of Isaac, and after Isaac of (a grandson) Jacob"; and it is further explained that this event will take place despite Abraham and Sarah's old age. Several verses speak of Isaac as a "gift" to Abraham that God made "prophethood and the Book to be among his offspring", which has been interpreted to refer to Abraham's two prophetic sons, his prophetic grandson Jacob, and his prophetic great-grandson Joseph. In the Quran, it later narrates that Abraham also praised God for giving him Ismail and Isaac in his old age.

Elsewhere in the Quran, Isaac is mentioned in lists: Joseph follows the religion of his forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and speaks of God's favor to them.

أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ  
إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ (البقرة: ١٣٣)



*Or did you witness when death came to Jacob? He asked his children, “Who will you worship after my passing?” They replied, “We will ‘continue to’ worship your God, the God of your forefathers—Abraham, Ismail, and Isaac—the One God. And to Him we ‘all’ submit.” (2:133)*

The Quran commands Muslims to believe in the revelations that were given to "Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the Patriarchs". The story of Abraham and his ones has a practical lesson for the people of that era and forever more. Child sacrifices were rituals that existed then and with this event God put a stop to it.

Otherwise, many might have assumed that sacrificial murder was accepted by the One True God. The most compelling lesson we learn from Prophets Ismail and Isaac is that a true believer is willing to give up anything, or anyone, for the sake of pleasing God.

Prophet Abraham showed that he was willing to follow the commands of God, so too did his son. Because of their efforts, Abraham became the father of many Prophets and great nations and the message of the One God spread far and wide. In addition to this, the stories of their lives show us that a life has no meaning or value except when it is used to please and worship God.

## Jacob

Jacob is mentioned by name in the Quran sixteen times. Although many of these verses praise him rather than recount an instance from his narrative, the Quran nonetheless records several significant events from his life. Although Muslim tradition and literature greatly embellishes upon the narrative of Jacob; the earliest event involving Jacob in the Quran is that of the angels giving "glad tidings" to Abraham and Sarah of the future birth of a prophetic son by the name of Isaac as well as a prophetic grandson by the name of Jacob. The Quran states:





فَلَمَّا اعْتَرَاهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا (مريم: ٤٩)

*So after he had left them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We granted him Isaac and Jacob, and made each of them a prophet. (19:49)*

وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ قَانِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ إِسْحَاقَ يَعْقُوبَ (هود: ٧١)

*And his wife was standing by, so she laughed, then We gave her good news of 'the birth of' Isaac, and, after him, Jacob. (11:71)*

The Quran also mentions that Abraham taught the faith of pure monotheism to his sons, Ismail and Isaac, as well as Jacob. The Quran records Abraham telling Ismail, Isaac and Jacob: "Oh my sons! Allah has chosen this Faith for you; then die not except in the Faith of Islam." (2:132)

وَوَصَّيْ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبَ يَا بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ (البقرة: ١٣٢)

The Quran also mentions the gifts given to Jacob as well as the strength of his faith, which became stronger as he became older. The Quran mentions that Jacob was "guided"; given "knowledge"; "inspired"; and was given a "tongue of truthfulness to be heard". The Quran later states the following regarding Jacob:

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ نَافِلَةً كُلًّا جَعَلْنَا صَالِحِينَ (٧٢) جَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَيْمَةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ (٧٣) (الأنبياء: ٧٢-٧٣)

*And We blessed him with Isaac 'as a son' and Jacob 'as a grandson', as an additional favour—making all of them righteous. We 'also' made them leaders, guiding by Our command, and inspired them to do good deeds, establish prayer, and pay alms-tax. And they were devoted to Our worship. (21:72-73)*

وَأَذْكُرْ عِبَادَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ أُولَى الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ (٤٥) إِنَّا أَخْلَصْنَاهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذَكَرَى الدَّارِ (٤٦) وَإِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الْأَخْيَارِ (٤٧) (ص: ٤٥-٤٧)

*And remember Our servants: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the men of strength and insight. We truly chose them for the honour of proclaiming the Hereafter. And in Our sight they are truly among the chosen and the finest. (38:45-47)*

Jacob's next significant mention in the Quran is in the narrative of the surah Yusuf.



The whole of the Children of Israel (which is another name of Jacob) were called to bow down to faith in Islam (submission to God) before Jacob died. Jacob wanted to make sure that his children die only in Islam, and therefore, took one last promise from them. When he asked them who they would worship after his death, they replied that they would continue in Islam and bow down to and worship God. Although the death-bed scene is embellished upon in Jewish tradition, and mentioned in the Book of Genesis, the Quran mentions it to emphasize the notion that Abraham, Isaac, Ismail, and Jacob were all Muslims, as they bowed down in full faith to God and God alone. The Quran narrates:

وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبَ يٰبَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ (١٣٢) أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتَ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ (البقرة: ١٣٢-١٣٣)

*This was the advice of Abraham—as well as Jacob—to his children, ‘saying’, “Indeed, Allah has chosen for you this faith; so do not die except in ‘a state of full’ submission.” Or did you witness when death came to Jacob? He asked his children, “Who will you worship after my passing?” They replied, “We will ‘continue to’ worship your God, the God of your forefathers—Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac—the One God. And to Him we ‘all’ submit.” (2:132-133)*

Jacob is very special in Islam for carrying on the legacy left by his forefathers. Muslims believe God bestowed His utmost grace upon Jacob and chose him to be among the most exalted men. The Quran frequently mentions Jacob as a man of might and vision and stresses he was of the company of the good and elect. As the Quran says:

وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ ۖ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَّن نَّشَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ (٨٣) وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۗ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا ۗ وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ۗ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ (٨٤) (الأنعام: ٨٣-٨٤)

*This was the argument We gave Abraham against his people. We elevate in rank whoever We please. Surely your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing. And We blessed him with Isaac and Jacob. We guided them all as We previously guided Noah and those among his descendants: David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron. This is how We reward the good-doers. (6:83-84)*





Ali ibn Abi Talib, when asked about the prophets who were bestowed special names, narrated in Hadith that Ya'qub (Jacob) ibn Ishaq (Isaac) was known by his people as Israel.

Muslims, who do believe Jacob was a great patriarch, stress the belief that Jacob's main importance lay in his great submission to God and his firm faith in the right religion. As a patriarch, Jacob, alongside Abraham, may be the most fruitful according to tradition. From his sons were to come many other great prophets, including Jonah (Yunus), David (Dawud), Solomon (Sulayman) and Jesus (Isa).

Jacob is believed by Muslims to be buried in the Cave of the Patriarchs (known by Muslims as the Sanctuary of Abraham). The compound, located in the ancient city of Hebron, is the second holiest site for Jews (after the Temple Mount in Jerusalem), and is also venerated by Christians and Muslims, both of whom have traditions that maintain that the site is the burial place of three Biblical couples: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah. Although Jews alternatively also believe this to be the burial place for Adam and Eve, this is a view not usually adopted by Muslims.

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## Fifth session

### Joseph

This is a tale of intrigue and deception, of jealousy, pride, and passion. It is the story of Prophet Joseph; may God shower him with His praises. God revealed this story to Prophet Muhammad when an Israelite asked him to tell him what he knew about Joseph. Stories in Quran are usually told in small bit and made known over several chapters; the story of Joseph, however, is unique. It was revealed in one chapter, from the beginning to the end. It is the complete story and experience of Prophet Joseph. We learn about Joseph's joys, troubles and sorrows, and move with him through the years of his life as he arms himself with piety and patience, and in the end emerges victorious. The story of Joseph begins with a dream and ends with the dream's interpretation.

تَحْنُ نَقْصُ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ (يوسف: ٣)

*We relate to you "O Prophet" the best of stories through Our revelation of this Quran, though before this you were totally unaware "of them". (12:3)*

Joseph was a young boy, handsome, happy and very much loved by his father. He awoke one morning excited about a dream and ran straight to his father happily explaining what he had seen in his dream. Joseph related a dream that spoke of the fulfillment of a prophecy. Joseph said,

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِيُّ رَأْيِنْتَ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ (يوسف: ٤)

*"Remember" when Joseph said to his father, "O my dear father! Indeed I dreamt of eleven stars, and the sun, and the moon—I saw them prostrating to me!" (12:4)*

Joseph was one of 12 brothers whose father was Prophet Jacob and whose great grandfather was Prophet Abraham. This prophecy spoke of keeping Abraham's message to worship One True God alive. However as quickly as the joy had sprung into Jacob's face, it vanished, and he implored his son not to relate his dream to his brothers. Jacob said,



قَالَ يَبْنَئِي لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَى إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ (٥) وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُنْمِئُ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ آئَالٍ يَعْشُرُوكَ كَمَا أَتَمَّهَا عَلَىٰ أَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (٦)  
(يوسف: ٥-٦)

*He replied, “O my dear son! Do not relate your vision to your brothers, or they will devise a plot against you. Surely Satan is a sworn enemy to humankind. And so will your Lord choose you ‘O Joseph’, and teach you the interpretation of dreams, and perfect His favour upon you and the descendants of Jacob—‘just’ as He once perfected it upon your forefathers, Abraham and Isaac. Surely your Lord is All-Knowing, All-Wise.” (12:5-6)*

The ten older brothers were already jealous of their younger brother. They recognized their father’s particular affection for him. Jacob was a prophet, a man dedicated to submission to One True God, and he treated his family and his community with fairness, respect and equitable love; however, his heart was drawn to the gentle qualities evident in his son Joseph. Joseph also had a younger brother named Benjamin, who, at this stage of the story, was too young to be involved in any of the trickery and deception brewing.

The jealousy the brothers felt toward Joseph blinded their hearts, Joseph heeded his father’s warning and did not speak of his dream to his brothers; but even so, they became obsessed and overwhelmed by their jealousy. Without knowing about Joseph’s dream, they hatched a plan to kill him.

One amongst them felt the error of their ways and suggested that rather than killing Joseph, they should drop him into a well. When found by some passing traveler he would be sold into slavery, thus rendering him as good as dead to the family. They believed, in their blindness, that the absence of Joseph would remove him from their father’s thoughts. The brothers continued to hatch their evil plan. They approached Jacob with a plan to take Joseph into the desert with them, on the pretext of letting him play and enjoy himself. Fear leapt into Jacob’s heart.

The story of Joseph confirms unconditionally that God has total control over all affairs. The treachery and deception of Joseph’s brothers succeeded only in preparing Joseph for the great position he would eventually attain. When Jacob’s older sons sought





permission to take Joseph with them deep into the desert to play, fear leapt into Jacob's heart. From their first words, he suspected treachery and expressed his fear that a wolf would take Joseph.

قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنْ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ (يوسف: ١٣)

*He `Jacob` responded, "It would truly sadden me if you took him away with you, and I fear that a wolf may devour him while you are negligent of him." (12:13)*

They went directly to the well and without remorse, picked up Joseph and threw him down into the well. Terrified Joseph clung to a ledge in the well, and God made known to him that one day he would confront his brothers. He told Joseph the day would come when he would speak to his brothers about this dastardly event, but the brothers would not know they were talking to Joseph.

While Joseph sat in the well, terrified, yet secure in his submission to God, Jacob, many miles way, felt his heart constricted by fear and pain yet knew his sons were lying. The time passed slowly later that day a caravan travelling to Egypt approached the well.

When the caravan arrived, the water drawer went to the well and lowered his bucket. He was shocked and excited when he saw a child clinging to the rope. Looking at the boy, the water bearer could not hide his excitement and cried aloud. Just as the brothers had predicted, the men of the caravan took Joseph to Egypt expecting to sell him for a handsome price and Joseph was eventually purchased by Azeez, the Chief Minister of Egypt.

The Chief Minister, Azeez, sensed immediately that this was no ordinary child. He took him to his home, one of the great mansions of Egypt, and said to his wife,

وَقَالَ الَّذِي اشْتَرَاهُ مِنْ مِصْرَ لِأَمْرَأَتِهِ أَكْرِمِي مَثْوَاهُ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِن تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِ ۗ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (يوسف: ٢١)

*The man from Egypt who bought him said to his wife, "Take good care of him, perhaps he may be useful to us or we may adopt him as a son." This is how We established Joseph in the land, so that We might teach him the interpretation of dreams. Allah's Will always prevails, but most people do not know. (12:21)*





God placed Joseph into the home of the second most important person in Egypt. Chief Minister Azeez was more than just a prime minister, he was also the treasurer of Egypt. God established Joseph in the land in order to teach him wisdom and understanding.

The beautiful wife of Al Aziz closed the doors and tried to seduce the slave Joseph, but he resisted her advances and sought refuge with God. He sought help in God. Joseph told her he would not betray her husband. Joseph's refusal only increased her passion. He tried to flee, and they raced with each other to the door. The wife of Al Aziz reached for Joseph's shirt and tore it from his back. At that moment, the door opened, and her husband walked in. Immediately, without even one second's hesitation, the wife of al Aziz attempted to turn the situation around. She cried out to her husband, *"What is the penalty for someone who tried to violate your wife, except imprisonment or a painful punishment?"* (12:25)

وَأَسْتَبْقَا الْبَابَ وَفَدَّتْ فَمِيصَهُ مِنْ دُبُرٍ وَالْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَذَا الْبَابِ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ  
(يوسف: ٢٥)

This was a clear lie, yet she pronounced it easily and suggested that Joseph be put in prison. Joseph tried to defend himself and said,

*"It was she who tried to seduce me." And a witness from her own family testified: "If his shirt is torn from the front, then she has told the truth and he is a liar.* (12:26)

قَالَ هِيَ رُوَدَّتْنِي عَنْ نَفْسِي وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ كَانَ فَمِيصُهُ فُدًّا مِنْ قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ (يوسف: ٢٦)

One of their relatives suddenly appeared and offered a way to solve this dilemma. If his shirt was torn from the back, which it was, it meant that he was trying to escape and she was running after him, tearing the shirt from his back. The proof was unmistakable. The Chief Minister, although clearly upset, was more concerned with covering up this affair. He asked Joseph to be silent about the situation and told his wife to ask forgiveness from God.



## Sixth session

### Joseph

The women of the city began to talk about the wife of Al Aziz and her infatuation with her slave Joseph. The wife of Al Aziz thought she would teach these women a lesson and show them just how beautiful and desirable Joseph was. She invited them to have lunch with her, laid a beautiful table before them and handed them knives to cut the food. The women started eating, and at that moment, Joseph walked into the room. They looked up, saw his beauty and forgot that they had knives in their hands. The women were so entranced by his shape and form that they cut clear through their own flesh. They described Joseph as a noble angel. The wife of Al Aziz, confident and haughty said to her guests,

*“This is the one for whose love you criticized me! I did try to seduce him but he ‘firmly’ refused. And if he does not do what I order him to, he will certainly be imprisoned and ‘fully’ disgraced.” (12:32)*

قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ وَلَقَدْ رُودَتْهُ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ فَأَسْتَعْصِمُ وَلَئِن لَّمْ يَفْعَلْ مَا ءَامُرُهُ لَيُسْجَنَنَّ وَلَيَكُونًا مِّنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ (يوسف: ٣٢)

Although convinced of Joseph’s innocence, Al Aziz, chief Minister of Egypt put Joseph in prison. He could see no other way of safeguarding the reputation of his name and position. Imprisoned with Joseph were two men who recognized his piety and righteousness. Both had been plagued by vivid dreams and now hoped Joseph would be able to interpret the dreams for them. One man saw a dream in which he was pressing wine, the other; saw a dream in which birds were eating bread from his head. Joseph said, “I will inform you of the meaning of these dreams before your next meal is served”.

*Joseph replied, “I can even tell you what kind of meal you will be served before you receive it. This ‘knowledge’ is from what my Lord has taught me. I have shunned the faith of a people who disbelieve in Allah and deny the Hereafter. I follow the faith of my fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is not ‘right’ for us to associate*





*anything with Allah 'in worship'. This is part of Allah's grace upon us and humanity, but most people are not grateful. (12:37-38)*

قَالَ لَا يَأْتِيكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقَانِهِ إِلَّا نَبَأَكُمَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمَا ذَلِكَ مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي رَبِّي إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ (٣٧) وَأَتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ آبَائِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ مَا كَانَ لَنَا أَنْ نَشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ذَلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ (٣٨) (يوسف: ٣٧-٣٨)

He says, one of you will become a close associate of the King, the other will be crucified and birds will eat from his head. Joseph approached the companion who destined to be close to the King and said: “please mention me to your King”. He hoped that the King would look into his case, see his oppression and free him.

The King dreamed he was standing on the banks of the Nile watching seven fat cows emerge from the river, followed by seven lean ones. The seven lean cows devoured the fat ones. Next, the dream changed, and he watched seven green ears of grain growing on the banks of the Nile. They disappeared into the mud and on the same spot grew seven dry ears of grain. The King awoke shocked and frightened, and sent for his sorcerers, priests and ministers. They failed to interpret the dream and reached the unanimous conclusion that it was just a nightmare. Joseph's companion from the prison came to hear of the dream and remembered Joseph. With the King's permission, he rushed to the prison and asked Joseph to interpret the dream.

*Joseph replied, “You will plant 'grain' for seven consecutive years, leaving in the ear whatever you will harvest, except for the little you will eat. Then after that will come seven years of great hardship which will consume whatever you have saved, except the little you will store 'for seed'. Then after that will come a year in which people will receive abundant rain and they will press 'oil and wine'.” (12:47-49)*

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعٌ سُتُوبَاتٍ خُضِرٌ وَأُخْرُ يَابَسَاتٍ يَأْتِيهَا أَلْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي رُءُوسِي إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّءْيَا تَعْبُرُونَ (٤٣) قَالُوا أَضْغَعْتَ أَحْلِمٌ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَأْوِيلِ الْأَحْلِمِ بِعَلَمِينَ (٤٤) وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنْتَبِئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ (٤٥) يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ أَفْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعِ سُتُوبَاتٍ خُضِرٌ وَأُخْرُ يَابَسَاتٍ لَعَلِّي أَرْجِعَ إِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ (٤٦) قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأْبًا فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ (٤٧) ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَنَةٌ يَأْكُلَنَّ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَحْصِنُونَ (٤٨) ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعْرِضُونَ (٤٩) (يوسف: ٤٣-٤٩)





The King was astonished at this interpretation, not only did Joseph give the meaning but also recommended a course of action. The King demanded Joseph be bought before him. However, Joseph refused to leave prison until his innocence was established. He wanted his master Al Aziz to be completely sure that he had not betrayed his trust.

Once his innocence was established, Joseph appeared before the King. After hearing, Joseph's words the King became even more impressed and entrusted him to a position of high rank. Joseph knew the trials about to face Egypt and he knew he was capable of averting the danger inherent in a time of famine. The young boy betrayed and thrown into the well was now established as the finance Minister of Egypt. His patience and perseverance, and above all his total submission to the will of God had already resulted in great reward. Joseph knew however that the greatest reward for patience and righteousness would be in the hereafter.

The time passed. During the seven good years, Joseph prepared for the time of famine to come. The drought and famine correctly prophesized by Joseph did not only affect Egypt, but also the surrounding lands including the place where Jacob and his sons were living. Joseph managed the affairs of Egypt so well there was enough grain to feed the people of Egypt and those in the surrounding areas. As life became difficult and food scarce, people began to flock to Egypt to buy the grain Joseph was selling at a fair price. Among those seeking provisions were Joseph's ten older brothers. When the brothers were ushered into Joseph's presence, they did not recognize him. Joseph looked at his brothers and his heart filled with longing for his father and his young brother Benjamin. He greeted them respectfully, asked questions about their family and homeland, and explained that the rations of grain would be distributed per head; therefore, if they had bought their younger brother, they would have received more rations. Joseph was hoping to encourage them to bring Benjamin, in fact Joseph went far as to say that without their young brother they would receive no provision at all.

When they returned to their father, Prophet Jacob, they explained to him that no more grain would be provided to them unless they travelled with their young





brother. Benjamin had become very close to his father, especially after Joseph's disappearance. Remembering his previous loss, Jacob did not want to part with his young son. Once again, the brothers promised to safeguard their youngest brother, and once again Jacob felt his heart constrict with fear. The brothers then found that the money they paid for the grain had been secretly returned to them.

Jacob gave them permission to take Benjamin only after they had sworn an oath in God's name to protect him. Although Prophet Jacob was particularly close to his sons Joseph and Benjamin, he loved all his sons dearly. Jacob was afraid that some harm might befall them on yet another trip to Egypt. To minimize the risks, he made his sons promise to enter the city by different gates. The brothers returned to Egypt, entered by different gates and went to Joseph for the promised provisions. During this meeting, Joseph took Benjamin aside and revealed that he was his long-lost brother. Joseph, however, asked Benjamin to keep their meeting a secret for the time being. After providing the brothers with their rations of grain, Joseph arranged for golden bowl to be covertly placed in Benjamin's bag, then according to Joseph's arrangements someone cried out!

The brothers were astonished because they were not thieves. They inquired about the stolen item and were astounded to hear it was a golden bowl belonging to the King. Whoever returned it, they were told, would be rewarded with camel's load of grain. The brothers of Joseph claimed to have no knowledge of this theft. They asserted that they were not thieves and did not come to Egypt to create mischief. One of Joseph's men asked, "What is your punishment for one who steals?". The brothers replied that under the law of Prophet Jacob, the one who steals is taken as a slave. Joseph did not want his brother punished under the laws of Egypt but wanted the opportunity to keep his brother with him while the others returned to their father Jacob. The bags were searched, and the golden bowl was found amongst Benjamin's possessions.

They said: "If he steals, there was a brother of his who did steal before (him)." But these things did Joseph keep locked in his heart, revealing not the secrets to them. He (simply) said (to himself): "You are the worse situated; and Allah know best the truth of





what you assert!" They told the minister Yusuf, that he has a father, aged and venerable, who will grieve for him; so, take one of us in his place; for we see that you are doing good. But Allah forbids taking other than whom we found our property: indeed, if we did so, we should be acting wrongfully. Now when they saw no hope of his yielding, they held a conference in private. The leader among them said: "Know you know that your father did take an oath from you in Allah's name, and how, before this, we did fail in our duty with Joseph? Therefore, will I not leave this land until my father permits me, or Allah commands me; and He is the best to command. Go back to our father, and say, your son committed theft! We bear witness only to what we know, and we could not well guard against the unseen! Ask at the town where we have been and the caravan in which we returned, and you will find we are indeed telling the truth. 'Jacob felt that they have contrived a story good enough for you. So, patience is most fitting for me. Maybe Allah will bring them back all to me in the end. He turned away from them and said: "How great is my grief for Joseph!" And his eyes became blind from crying and sorrow, then he fell into silent melancholy. They thought he never will cease to remember Joseph until he reaches the last extremity of illness, or until he will die! But he only complained of his distraction and anguish to Allah. Jacob asked his sons to go and enquire about Joseph and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah's Soothing Mercy: truly no one despairs of Allah's Soothing Mercy, except those who have no faith. Then, when they came back into Joseph's presence they said: distress has seized us and our family: we have now brought but scanty capital: so, pay us full measure, and treat it as charity to us: for Allah do reward the charitable. So, Joseph replied: you know how you dealt with Joseph and his brother? They recognized him as Joseph. He said, "I am Joseph, and this is my brother: Allah has indeed been gracious to us. He that is righteous and patient Allah indeed preferred him, they admitted being guilty of sin!" so Joseph told them that Allah will forgive them, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy" he gave them his shirt, ask them to go with it, and cast it over the face of their father: he will come to see clearly. Then come here together with all your family. When the caravan left Egypt, the father said: "I do indeed scent the presence of Joseph, when the bearer of the good news came, He cast the shirt over his face, and he forthwith regained clear sight. He said: "Did I not say to you, 'I know from Allah what you don't. 'They ask for forgiveness for their sins,





When they entered the presence of Joseph, he provided a home for his parents with himself, and said: "Enter Egypt all in safety if it pleases Allah. He raised his parents high on the throne, and they fell down in prostration, all before him. This was the fulfillment of his vision, Allah have made it come true! He was indeed good to me when He took me out of prison and brought them all here out of the desert.



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# SEERAH AND HISTORY

## CURRICULUM

# Seerah – The Era of Madina

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## Sira curriculum

### Lesson 1

#### Islam Spreads to Medina

The annual Hajj drew near, and from all parts of Arabia pilgrims began to arrive in Mecca. The Prophet went wherever he found a group of people, expounded to them the idea of One God. Some listened and became interested. Some wished to listen but were sent away by the Meccans. The Prophet was in the valley of Mina when he saw a group of six or seven people. He found that they belonged to the Khazraj tribe, one in alliance with the Jews. He asked them if they would listen to what he had to say. They had heard of him and were interested; so, they agreed. They accepted the Message and promised, on their return to Medina, to confer with others and report next year whether Medina would be willing to receive Muslim refugees from Mecca. They returned and conferred with their friends and relations.

There were, at the time, two Arab and three Jewish tribes at Medina. The Arab tribes were the Aus and the Khazraj and the Jewish tribes the Banu Quraiza, the Banu Nadir, and the Banu Qainuqa'. The Aus and the Khazraj were at war. The Quraiza and the Nadir were in alliance with the Aus and the Qainuqa' with the Khazraj. Tired of unending warfare, they were inclined to peace. At last, they agreed to acknowledge the Khazraj Chief, 'Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, as King of Medina. From the Jews, the Aus and the Khazraj had heard of prophecies in the Bible. They had heard Jewish tales of the lost glory of Israel and of the advent of a Prophet " This advent was near at hand, the Jews used to say. It was to mark the return to power of Israel and the destruction of their enemies. When the people of Medina heard





of the Prophet, they became impressed and began to ask if this Meccan Prophet was not the Prophet they had heard of from the Jews. Many young men readily believed.

### **First Pledge of Aqaba**

At the next Hajj twelve men from Medina came to Mecca to join the Prophet. Ten of these belonged to the Khazraj and two to the Aus tribe. They met the Prophet in the valley of Mina and, holding the Prophet hand, solemnly declared their belief in the Oneness of God.

When they returned to Medina, they started telling others of their New Faith. Zeal increased. The people of Medina would go to the few Muslims in their midst and make inquiries about Islam. But the few Muslims could not cope with the large numbers of inquiries, nor did they know enough. They decided, therefore, to address a request to the Prophet to send them someone to teach Islam. The Prophet agreed to send Mus'ab, one of the Muslims who had been in Abyssinia. Mus'ab was the first missionary of Islam to go out of Mecca.

The third Hajj arrived. Among the pilgrims from Medina was a large party of Muslims. Owing to Meccan opposition these Muslims from Medina wished to see the Prophet in private. The Prophet own thoughts were turning more and more to Medina, as a likely place for migration.

### **Second Pledge of 'Aqaba**

After midnight, the Prophet again met the Muslims from Medina in the valley of 'Aqaba. His uncle 'Abbas was with him. The Muslims from Medina numbered seventy-three, out of whom sixty-two belonged to the Khazraj tribe and eleven to the Aus. The party included two women, one being Ummi







‘Ammarara, of the Banu Najjar. They had been taught Islam by Mus‘ab, and were full of faith and determination. They all proved to be pillars of Islam. Ummi ‘Ammarara is an example. She accompanied the Prophet in several wars. This party of Medina Muslims, in short, attained to great distinction for their loyalty and faith. Moved by family ties and feeling legitimately responsible for the safety of the Prophet, ‘Abbas thus addressed the party: O Khazraj, this my relation is respected here by his people. They are not all Muslims, yet they protect him. But he has chosen now to leave us and go to you. O Khazraj, do you know what will happen? All Arabia will be against you. If you realize the risks entailed by your invitation, then take him away; if you do not, then give up your intention and let him stay here. The leader of this party Al-Bara replied assuredly: We have heard you. Our resolution is firm. Our lives are at the disposal of the Prophet of God. We are decided, and only await his decision (Halbiyya, Vol. 2, p. 18). The Prophet gave a further exposition of Islam and its teaching. Explaining this, he told the party that he would go to Medina if they would hold Islam as dear as they held their wives and children. He had not quite finished when this party of seventy-three devotees cried, 'Yes,' 'Yes,' in one voice. The party then took the oath of fealty and the meeting dispersed. The Meccans did get to know of this meeting. They went to the Medina encampment to complain against these visitors to their chiefs. ‘Abdullah bin Ubbayy bin Salul—Chief of chiefs—knew nothing of what had happened. He assured the Meccans that it must be some false rumor which they had heard. The people of Medina had accepted him as their leader and could not do anything without his knowledge and permission. The party returned to Medina and the Prophet and his followers started preparations for migration. Family after family began to disappear. Sometimes a whole lane would be emptied in the course of a night. In the





morning Meccans would see the doors locked and realize that the residents had migrated to Medina. At last not a single Muslim remained in Mecca save a few slave converts, the Prophet himself, Abu Bakr and 'Ali. The Meccans realized that their prey was about to escape. The chiefs assembled again and decided they should now kill the Prophet. By a special divine design, it seems, the date they appointed for killing the Prophet was appointed for his escape. When the Meccan party was collecting in front of the Prophet house with intent to kill, the Prophet was moving out in the secrecy of the night. The Meccans must have feared anticipation of their foul design by the Prophet. They proceeded cautiously and when the Prophet himself passed by, they took him for someone else, and withdrew to avoid being noticed. The Prophet's closest friend Abu Bakr had been informed of the Prophet's plan the day before. He duly joined and then both left Mecca, and took shelter in a cave called Thaur, about three or four miles from Mecca over a hill. When the Meccans learnt of the Prophet's escape, they collected and sent a force in pursuit. Led by a tracker, they reached Thaur. Standing at the mouth of the cave in which the Prophet and Abu Bakr sat hiding, the tracker said that Muhammad was either in the cave or had ascended to heaven. Abu Bakr heard this and his heart sank. "The enemy has nearly got us," he whispered. "Fear not, God is with us," replied the Prophet. "I fear not for myself," went on Abu Bakr, "but for you. For, if I die, I am but an ordinary mortal; but if you die, it will mean death to faith and spirit" (Zurqani). "Even so, fear not," assured the Prophet, "We are not two in this cave. There is a third—God" (Bukhari). The pursuers were deceived. They ridiculed the tracker's judgment. If they had but bent a little, they could have sighted the two. For two days the Prophet and Abu Bakr waited in the cave. On the third night, according to the plan, two fleet camels were brought to the cave,





## Suraqa Pursues the Prophet

The Meccans, after the failure of their pursuit, put a prize on the heads of the two fugitives. Whoever captured and restored to the Meccans the Prophet or Abu Bakr dead or alive was to have a reward of a hundred camels. The announcement was made among the tribes around Mecca. Tempted by the reward, Suraqa bin Malik, a Bedouin chief, started in pursuit of the party and ultimately sighted them on the road to Medina. He saw two mounted camels and, feeling sure they were bearing the Prophet and Abu Bakr, spurred on his horse. The horse reared and fell before it had gone very far and Suraqa fell with it. Suraqa's own account of what happened is interesting: "As I neared them, my horse reared again, and I fell off. My horse's hoofs sank deep into the sand. Mounting again and resuming the pursuit seemed difficult. I then understood that the party was under divine protection. I called out to them and entreated them to stop. When near enough I told them of my evil intention and of my change of heart. I told them I was giving up the pursuit and returning. The Prophet let me go but made me promise not to reveal their whereabouts to anybody. I became convinced that the Prophet was a true one, destined to succeed. I requested the Prophet to write me a guarantee of peace to serve me when he became supreme. The Prophet asked 'Amir bin Fuhaira to write me a guarantee, and he did. As I got ready to return with it, the Prophet received a revelation about the future and said, "Suraqa, how will you feel with the gold bangles of the Chosroes on thy wrists?" Amazed at the prophecy I asked, "Which Chosroes? Chosroes bin Hormizd, the Emperor of Iran?" The Prophet said, "Yes"". Sixteen or seventeen years later the prophecy was literally fulfilled. Suraqa accepted Islam and went to Medina. The Prophet died, and after him,





first Abu Bakr, and then ‘Umar became the Khalifahs of Islam. The growing influence of Islam made the Iranians jealous and led them to attack the Muslims but, instead of subjugating the Muslims, they were themselves subjugated by them. The capital of Iran fell to the Muslims who captured its treasures, including the gold bangles which the Chosroes wore at State functions. After his conversion, Suraqa used to describe his pursuit of the Prophet and his party and to tell of what passed between him and the Prophet. When the spoils of the war with Iran were placed before ‘Umar, he saw the gold bangles and remembered what the Prophet had told Suraqa. It was a grand prophecy made at a time of utter helplessness. ‘Umar decided to stage a visible fulfilment of the prophecy. He, therefore, sent for Suraqa and ordered him to put on the gold bangles. Suraqa protested that the wearing of gold by men had been forbidden by Islam. ‘Umar said that this was true, but that the occasion was an exception. The Prophet had foreseen Chosroes' gold bangles on his wrists; therefore, he had to wear them now, even on pain of punishment. Suraqa was objecting out of deference to the Prophet's teaching; otherwise, he was as eager as anyone else to provide visible proof of the fulfilment of the great prophecy. He put on the bangles and Muslims saw the prophecy fulfilled. The fugitive Prophet had become a king. He himself was no longer in this world. But those who succeeded him could witness the fulfilment of his words and visions.

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## Lesson 2

### The Prophet Arrives at Medina

After the Prophet had dismissed Suraqa he continued his journey to Medina unmolested. When he reached Medina, the Prophet found the people waiting impatiently. A more auspicious day could not have dawned for them. News that the Prophet had left Mecca had reached them, so they were expecting his arrival. Parties of them went miles out of Medina to look for him. They went in the morning and returned disappointed in the evening. When at last the Prophet did reach Medina, he decided to stop for a while in Quba, a nearby village. A Jew had seen the two camels and had decided that they were carrying the Prophet and his Companions. He climbed an eminence and shouted, "Sons of Qaila, he for whom you waited has come." Everyone in Medina who heard this cry rushed to Quba, while the people of Quba, overjoyed at the arrival of the Prophet in their midst sang songs in his honor. The utter simplicity of the Prophet is illustrated by an incident which took place at this time at Quba. Most people in Medina had not seen the Prophet before when they saw his party sitting under a tree, many of them took Abu Bakr for the Prophet. Abu Bakr, though younger, had a greyer beard and was better dressed than the Prophet. So, they turned to him and sat in front of him, after showing him the obeisance due to the Prophet. When Abu Bakr saw that he was being mistaken for the Prophet, he rose, took his mantle and hung it against the sun and said, "Prophet of God, you are in the sun. I make this shade for you" (Bukhari). With tact and courtesy, he made plain to visitors from Medina their error. The Prophet stopped at Quba for ten days, after which the people of Medina took him to their city. When he



entered the town, he found that all the people, men, women and children, had turned out to receive him.

It was a Monday when the Prophet entered Medina. It was a Monday when he left the cave Thaur and, strange as it may seem, it was a Monday on which he took Mecca about ten years later.

### **Abu Ayyub Ansari as Prophet's Host**

While the Prophet was in Medina, everybody longed to have the honour of being his host. As his camel passed through a lane, families would line up to receive him. With one voice they would say, "Here we are with our homes, our property and our lives to receive you and to offer our protection to you. Come and live with us."

Many would show greater zeal, go forward and held the reins of the camel and insist on the Prophet's dismounting in front of their doors and entering their houses. Politely the Prophet would refuse saying, "Leave my camel alone. She is under the command of God; she will stop where God wants her to stop." Ultimately it stopped on a site which belonged to orphans of the Banu Najjar tribe. The Prophet dismounted and said, "It seems that this is where God wants us to stop." He made enquiries. A trustee of the orphans came forward and offered the site for the use of the Prophet. The Prophet replied that he would not accept the offer unless he was allowed to pay. A price was settled, and the Prophet decided to build a mosque and some houses on it. This settled, the Prophet asked who lived nearest to the site. Abu Ayyub Ansari came forward and said that his house was the nearest and that his services were at the Prophet's disposal. The Prophet asked him to prepare a room in his house for him. Abu Ayyub's house was double-storeyed. He offered to let the Prophet have the upper storey. But the





Prophet preferred to have the lower storey for the convenience of his visitors. The devotion which the people of Medina had for the Prophet showed itself again. Abu Ayyub agreed to let the Prophet have the lower storey but refused to go to sleep on a floor under which lived the Prophet. He and his wife thought it discourteous to do so. A pitcher of water was accidentally broken, and water flowed on the floor. Abu Ayyub, fearing lest some water should drip through to the room occupied by the Prophet, took his quilt and with it dried up the water before any could drip through. In the morning he called on the Prophet and narrated the events of the night before, upon hearing which the Prophet agreed to occupy the upper storey. Abu Ayyub prepared meals and sent them up. The Prophet ate whatever he wanted and Abu Ayyub whatever remained. After a few days, others demanded a share in entertaining the Prophet. Until the Prophet settled in his own house and made his own arrangements he was entertained by the people of Medina in turn. A widow had an only son named Anas, aged about eight or nine. She brought the boy to the Prophet and offered him for the Prophet's personal service. This Anas became immortalized in the annals of Islam. He became a very learned man, and also rich. He attained to over one hundred years of age and in the days of the Khalifahs was held in great esteem by everybody. Anas is reported to have said that although he went into the service of the Prophet as a boy and remained with him until the Prophet died, never did the Prophet speak unkindly to him, nor did he ever admonish him, nor did he ever set him a duty harder than he could perform. During his stay in Medina, the Prophet had only Anas with him. The testimony of Anas, therefore, reveals the Prophet's character as it developed in the days of his growing power and prosperity at Medina. Later, the Prophet sent his freedman Zaid to Mecca to fetch his family and relations. The Meccans had been stupefied





by the sudden and well-planned departure of the Prophet and his followers. For some time, therefore, they did nothing to vex him. When the Prophet's family and the family of Abu Bakr left Mecca, they raised no difficulty. The two families reached Medina unmolested. In the meantime, the Prophet laid the foundations of a mosque on the site he had bought for the purpose. After this, he built houses for himself and for his Companions. About seven months were spent on their completion.

Medina became a Muslim town. In it was established the worship of the One God. There was not a second town in the world then which could make this claim. It was no small joy to the Prophet and his friends that within a few days of their migration a whole town had agreed to give up the worship of idols and to establish instead the worship of the One God. In Medina itself a party of Arabs had only outwardly joined Islam. Inwardly, they were the sworn enemies of the Prophet. Then there were the Jews, who continuously intrigued against him. The Prophet was aware of these dangers. At this time, the Prophet took another important step. He collected the Muslims and suggested that every two Muslims should become linked together as two brothers. The idea was well received. Medinite took Meccan as his brother. Under this new brotherhood, the Muslims of Medina offered to share their property and their belongings with the Muslims of Mecca. One Medinite Muslim offered to divorce one of his two wives and to have her married to his Meccan brother. The Meccan Muslims did not know how to manage land. But they could share the produce of the land if not the land itself. The Meccan Muslims declined with thanks this incredibly generous offer and preferred to stick to their own vocation of trade. Many Meccan Muslims became rich again. Many a time when a Medinite Muslim died, his sons divided the







inheritance with their Meccan brothers. For many years, the practice continued, until the Qur'an abolished it by its teaching about the division of inheritance (Bukhari and Muslim).



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### Lesson 3

#### **Pact Between Various Tribes of Medina**

Besides uniting Meccan and Medinite Muslims in a brotherhood, the Holy Prophet instituted a covenant between all the inhabitants of Medina. By this covenant, Arabs and the Jews were united into a common citizenship with Muslims. The Prophet explained to both Arabs and Jews that before the Muslims emerged as a group in Medina, there were only two groups in their town, but with Muslims now, there were three groups. It was but proper that they should enter into an agreement which should be binding upon them all, and which should assure to all of them a measure of peace. Eventually an agreement was arrived at. The agreement said:

Between the Prophet of God and the Faithful on the one hand, and all those on the other, who voluntarily agree to enter. If any of the Meccan Muslims is killed, the Meccan Muslims will themselves be responsible. The responsibility for securing the release of their prisoners will also be theirs. The Muslim tribes of Medina similarly will be responsible for their own lives and their prisoners. Whoever rebels or promotes enmity and disorder will be considered a common enemy. It will be the duty of all the others to fight against him, even though he happens to be a son or a close relation. If a disbeliever is killed in battle by a believer, his Muslim relations will seek no revenge. Nor will they assist disbelievers against believers. The Jews who join this covenant will be helped by Muslims. The Jews will not be put to any hardship. Their enemies will not be helped against them. No disbeliever will give quarter to anybody from Mecca. He will not act as a trustee for any Meccan property. In a war between Muslims and disbelievers he will take no part. If a believer is maltreated without cause, Muslims will have the right to



fight against those who maltreat. If a common enemy attack Medina, the Jews will side with the Muslims and share the expenses of the battle. The Jewish tribes in covenant with the other tribes of Medina will have rights similar to those of Muslims. The Jews will keep to their own faith, and Muslims to their own. The rights enjoyed by the Jews will also be enjoyed by their followers. The citizens of Medina will not have the right to declare war without the sanction of the Prophet. But this will not prejudice the right of any individual to avenge an individual wrong. The Jews will bear the expenses of their own organization, and Muslims their own. But in case of war, they will act with unity. The city of Medina will be regarded as sacred and inviolate by those who sign the covenant. Strangers who come under the protection of its citizens will be treated as citizens. But the people of Medina will not be allowed to admit a woman to its citizenship without the permission of her relations. All disputes will be referred for decision to God and the Prophet. Parties to this covenant will not have the right to enter into any agreement with the Meccans or their allies. This, because parties to this covenant agree in resisting their common enemies. The parties will remain united in peace as in war. No party will enter into a separate peace. But no party will be obliged to take part in war. A party, however, which commits any excess, will be liable to a penalty. Certainly, God is the protector of the righteous and the Faithful and Muhammad is His Prophet (Hisham). This is the covenant in brief. It has been prepared from scraps to be found in historical records. It emphasizes beyond any doubt that in settling disputes and disagreements between the parties at Medina, the guiding principles were to be honesty, truth and justice. Those committing excesses were to be held responsible for those excesses. The covenant makes it clear that the Prophet of Islam was determined to treat with civility and kindness the other citizens of Medina,





and to regard them and deal with them as brethren. If disputes and conflicts arose later, the responsibility rested with the Jews. As we have already said, two or three months passed away before Meccans could renew their planned hostility against Islam. An occasion was provided by Sa'd bin Mu'az, chief of the Aus tribe of Medina, who arrived at Mecca for the circuit of the Ka'ba. Abu Jahl saw him do this and said, "After giving protection to this apostate Muhammad, do you expect you can come to Mecca and circuit the Ka'ba in peace? Do you think you can protect and save him? I swear by God, that had it not been for Abu Sufyan, you could not have returned safe to your family." Sa'd bin Mu'az replied, "Take it from me, if you Meccans stop us from visiting and circuiting the Ka'ba, you will have no peace on your road to Syria."

### **The Battle of Badr**

The Muslims who had gone to Medina, had left all their belongings behind in Mecca and these had been taken by their enemies. Thus, when the Muslims heard that Abu Sufyan, one of the leaders of Quraysh, was on his way back to Mecca from Syria with a large caravan of goods, they decided that the time had come for them to retrieve some of their losses. The Prophet gave the Muslims permission for this attack and everyone began to get ready for the raid, for it had been revealed:

*"Permission to fight is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged; and Allah is surely able to give them victory" (22:39)*

The retrieval of their goods, however, was not their only reason for wanting to attack the caravan. The Muslims did not think they should





simply remain safely in Medina; they wanted to spread the message of Islam. They thus felt that if Quraysh wanted freedom to trade in safety, then the Muslims must also have freedom to believe in Allah, to follow His Messenger and spread His Word. It was, therefore, thought that the best, and only way to get Quraysh to understand this was to attack what was most important to them—a caravan.

Abu Sufyan, in the meantime, heard about the Muslims' plan and quickly sent a message to Quraysh in Mecca, telling them that the caravan was in danger and asking for help. As a result, nearly all Quraysh came out to help him defend the caravan. There were a thousand men and two hundred horses. The women also went along to cheer the men on with their singing. Unaware of this, the Prophet set out with his followers. It was the month of Ramadan and the Muslims were fasting. There were only three hundred and five of them, most of them Ansar, men from Medina. With them they had three horses and seventy camels, on which they rode in turns. They arrived in the area of Badr, some distance from Medina where they made camp and waited for news of the caravan. Then they heard that Quraysh had set out from Mecca with a strong army. The situation had suddenly changed. They were no longer going to make a raid on a caravan—they were going to have to fight Quraysh. The Prophet gathered his men around him to find out what they wanted to do. First Abu Bakr, and then Umar, spoke for the Muslims who had come from Mecca. They said they would obey the Prophet. But the Prophet wanted to hear the opinion of the Ansar, because he did not want to force them into doing something they did not want to do. Sa'd Ibn Mu'az, one of the leaders of the Ansar, got up and said, we believe in you and we swear before all men that what you have brought is the truth. We





have given you our word and agreement to hear and obey. So, go where you wish, we are with you even if you should lead us into the sea! The Prophet was greatly encouraged by these words and so it was agreed to fight. Abu Sufyan learned where the Muslims were camped. He changed the course of the caravan and quickly took it out of their reach. He then sent word to Quraysh telling them that the caravan was safe and that they should return to Mecca. But the leaders of Quraysh were proud and stubborn men. They refused to return as they had made up their minds to show everyone how powerful they were by destroying the Muslims. Now there was a valley, at Badr, with wells on the side nearest Medina, and it was here that the Muslims took up position facing the valley with the wells behind them. Quraysh meanwhile placed themselves on the other side of the valley. The Muslims then dug a reservoir, filled it with water from one of the wells, and made a barrier around it. Then they stopped up the wells. In this way the Muslims had enough drinking water for themselves, while the Meccans would have to cross the valley and fight the Muslims in order to get water. The night before the battle, while the Muslims slept peacefully, a heavy rain fell.

*“When He made the slumber fall upon you as a reassurance from Him and sent down water from the sky upon you, in order that He might purify you, and remove from you the fear of Satan, and strengthen your hearts and make firm (your) fret thereby”. (8:11)*

On the morning of Friday, the 17th of Ramadan, 2h., the two armies advanced and drew closer to one another. The rain been heavier on the side of Quraysh, making the ground soft and difficult. On the side of the Muslims, however, the rain had backed the sand down hard, making it easy for them





to march. The Prophet preferred the men to fight in ranks. As they prepared to march, he noticed someone had stepped out in front of the others.

The Prophet prodded him in the side with an arrow, saying, 'Stand in line!' The man, Sawad, exclaimed, 'You have hurt me, O Messenger of Allah! Allah has sent you to be just and good.' Prophet lifted his shirt and said, 'Then do the same to me. The man approached and kissed him on the spot instead, saying, 'O Messenger of Allah, you see what is before us and I may not survive the battle. If this is my last time with you, I want the last thing I do in life to be this. 'Shortly after he went into battle, Sawad died a martyr.

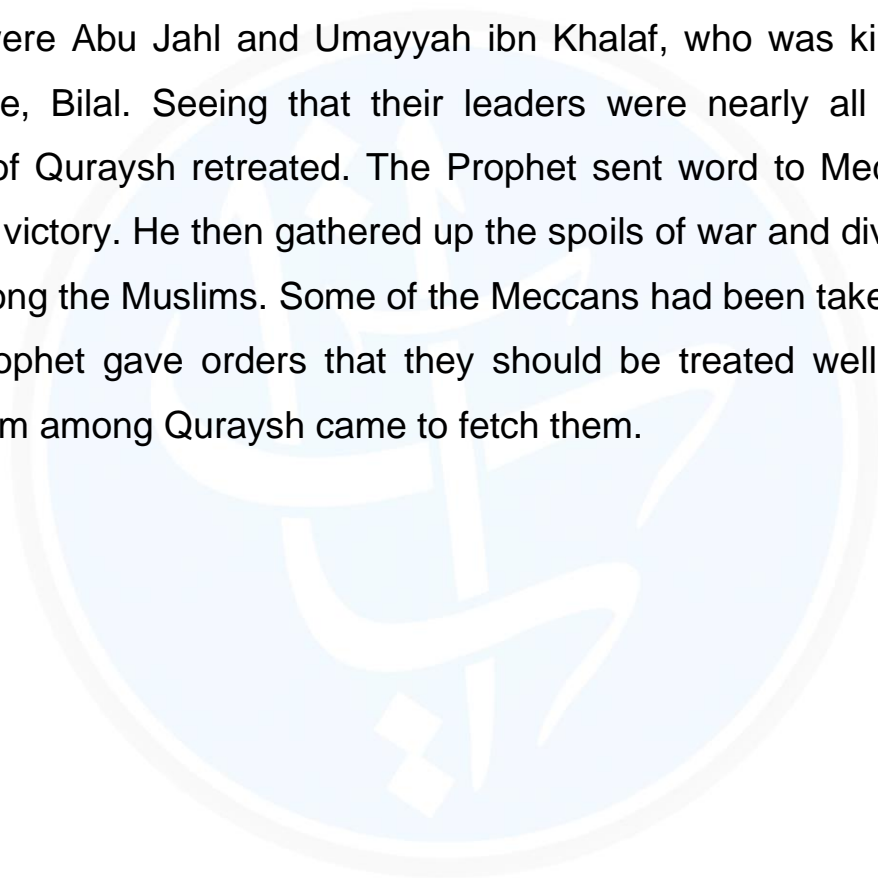
Having examined the ranks, the Prophet then went to a shelter made of palm branches from which he could command the battle. Abu Bakr stayed with him, while Sa'd ibn Mu'az, with several of the Ansar, stood outside guarding the hut. When the Prophet saw the enormous Quraysh army descending the hill into the valley, with all their banners and drums, he began to pray for the help which Allah had promised him.

At first the battle began in single combat when one of Quraysh swore that he would drink from the Muslims' reservoir and then destroy it or die in the attempt. Hamzah, the Prophet's uncle, came forward to face him and killed him. Three of the most important men of Quraysh then stepped forward and gave out a challenge for single combat. The Prophet sent out 'Ali, Hamzah, and 'Ubaydah ibn al-Harith, to face them. It was not long before Hamzah and Ali had killed their opponents. As for 'Ubaydah, he had wounded his enemy but was wounded himself, and so his two companions killed the wounded Meccan and carried 'Ubaydah back to the safety of the Muslim ranks. After this, the two armies attacked each other and fighting broke out all around. The sky was filled with arrows. The Muslim army held





its ground against the great army of Quraysh and even though the Muslims were much fewer in number, they gained a great victory, destroying the Meccan army and killing most of its leaders. Among the leading Meccans who died were Abu Jahl and Umayyah ibn Khalaf, who was killed by his former slave, Bilal. Seeing that their leaders were nearly all dead, the remainder of Quraysh retreated. The Prophet sent word to Medina to tell them of the victory. He then gathered up the spoils of war and divided them equally among the Muslims. Some of the Meccans had been taken prisoner and the Prophet gave orders that they should be treated well until their relatives from among Quraysh came to fetch them.



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## Lesson 4

### Uhud-Defeat comes from Disobedience

When the survivors of the defeated Quraysh at Badr to Mecca gathered to speak with Abu Sufyan. They said, 'Muhammad has best men, so help us to fight him so that we may avenge those we have lost.' In order to do this, it was agreed that everyone who had had a share in the caravan should put his profits towards the cost of a new army, which would be three times as big as the one at Badr. Among those who joined the new army was an Abyssinian slave called Wahshi; who was known for his accuracy with the spear. His master, Jubayr ibn al-Mut'im, said to him: 'Go with the army and if you kill Hamza, the uncle of Muhammad, in revenge for my uncle's death, I will set you free when Hind, Abu Sufyan's wife, heard about this she sent a Wahshi to say that she would clothe him in gold and silk if he would carry out his master's wish, for she, too, wanted Hamza dead because he had both her father and brother.

While the Meccans made their plans, the Prophet's uncle, Abbas, one the few Muslims still living in Mecca, sent a letter of warning to the Prophet in Medina. He told him that Quraysh were setting out with a huge arm for Uhud, a place just outside Medina. On receiving this timely warning, the Prophet gathered his companions around him to discuss what they should do. He thought it would be better to wait for the enemy inside city rather than go out to meet them, because it would be easier to defend Medina from inside the city walls. But the young Muslims wanted to go out and face Quraysh. One of the rulers of Medina. Abd Allah ibn Ubayy, however, agreed with the Prophet and advised him to remain in the city.



When the Prophet saw that the majority were in favor of going out to meet Quraysh, he decided to do so, and after the Friday prayer he put on his armor. The Muslims then set out with one thousand men in the direction of Mount Uhud which overlooks Medina. The enemy was camped on the plain below the mountain where they were laying waste the crops of the Muslims. 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy was angry that the Prophet had not followed his advice and after going part of the way, turned back for Medina, taking one third of the entire army with him. This left the Prophet with only seven hundred men to meet the enormous Meccan army, which numbered three thousand. The remainder of the Muslims went on until they reached the mountain of Uhud. There the Prophet ordered them to stand in ranks in front of the mountain, so that they would be protected from behind. He then positioned fifty archers on top of the mountain, giving them the following order: 'Keep the Meccan cavalry away from us with your arrows and don't let them come against us from the rear, whether the battle goes in our favor or against us. Whatever happens keep to your places so that we cannot be attacked from your direction, even if you see us being slain or booty being taken.' When the Muslims were in position, the Prophet held up his sword and said, 'Who will use this sword with its right?' This was a great honor and many men rose to claim it, but the Prophet decided to give it to Abu Dujanah, a fearless warrior.

Then the battle commenced. The Muslims were well organized and had the advantage, because although Quraysh had more than four times as many men, they were tired from their journey and thus not ready to fight. As a result, the Muslims were able to make a surprise attack, led by Abu Dujanah, who was wearing a brilliant red turban. As the fighting increased





the Quraysh women, led by Hind, began to beat their drums to urge their men on. They called out poems to encourage their men to be brave.

As usual, Hamza, the Prophet's uncle, fought with great courage, but while leading the Muslims in a fierce attack, which nearly defeated the Meccans, he was suddenly and cruelly struck down by the slave Wahshi. Later, Wahshi told how it happened: 'I was watching Hamza while he was killing men with his sword. I aimed my spear until I was sure it would mark and hurled it at him. He came on towards me but collapsed and fell. I left him there until he died, then I came and took back my spear. Then I went back to the camp because I did not want to kill anyone but him. My only aim in killing him was to gain my freedom.' The Quraysh warriors were soon scattered and forced to retreat. It looked as though they had been defeated! Seeing this, forty of the fifty Muslims archers on top of the mountain ran down from their position to collect booty, for the Quraysh army had left many of their belongings behind. The archers rushed to take what they could, forgetting the Prophet's orders. Khalid Ibn al-Walid, Commander of the Quraysh cavalry, saw what was happening and quickly turned his men around and ordered them to attack the Muslims from behind. The Muslims were taken completely by surprise. The Quraysh then began attacking from both sides at once. Many Muslims were killed and instead of winning they began to lose the battle. To add to the confusion, it was rumored that the Prophet had been killed. When the Muslims heard this, they were at a loss to know what to do. Then a man named Anas called out, 'Brothers! If Muhammad has been killed what will your lives be worth without him? Don't think about living or dying. Fight for Allah. Get up and die the way Muhammad died!' and on hearing these words the Muslims took courage.





There had been several cavalry attacks on the position held by the Prophet and his companions and the Prophet's cheek had been badly gashed. As the Meccans closed in again, he called out, 'Who will sell his life for us?' At this, five Ansar got up and fought until they were killed, one by one. Their places were soon taken, however, by a number of Muslims who drove off the attackers. Amongst the defending Muslims was Abu Dujanah who put his arms around the Prophet and made himself into a human shield. Throughout the remainder of the battle, he held on to the Prophet, but as the fighting drew to a close, he suddenly let go.

Abu Dujanah was dead, killed by the many arrows in his back that had been aimed at the Prophet. With the defeat of the Muslims, Quraysh were at last avenged. As they left the field of battle Abu Sufyan called out to his men, 'You have done well; victory in war goes by turns today in exchange for Badr!' When he heard this, the Prophet told Umar to answer him, saying, 'Allah is Most High and Most Glorious. We are not equal. Our dead are in Paradise and your dead are in Hell!' The Muslim soldiers then followed the departing Quraysh part of the way to make sure they were not going to attack Medina.

After the enemy had left, the Prophet made his way around the Battlefield to see the extent of the Muslim losses. Many of the most faithful Muslims had been killed. Among the dead, the Prophet found the body of his closest friend and uncle, Hamza, who had been killed by the slave Wahshi. At the sight of this, the Prophet said: "There will never be a moment as sad for me as this." Hamza's sister, Safiyya, came to pray and ask forgiveness for her brother, saying: "We belong to Allah and to Allah we are returning." They were buried where they had fallen as martyrs.

Of them Allah says:





*“Do not think that those, who were killed for Allah's sake are dead. Nay, they are alive. With their Lord they have provision. Jubilant (are they) because of that which Allah hath bestowed upon them of His bounty, rejoicing for the sake of those that have not yet joined them because they have nothing to fear or grieve over”. (3:169-170)*

The Muslims realized that their defeat had been caused by their disobedience to the Prophet. The Qur'an tells us that the Muslims had been tested by Allah at Uhud and had failed but that Allah forgave them their weakness.

People living nowadays should learn from the lessons learned by the early Muslims at Uhud. Disobedience to the Prophet and love for the things of this world caused their defeat. The same can happen to us as well. Even if we have no battle like Uhud to fight, we can still die for Allah's sake by fighting what is bad in ourselves. When the Prophet came back from a battle he said to his men, 'We have returned from the lesser war to the greater war.' He meant by this that the struggle that goes on within every human being to become a better person is the more difficult battle.

### **The Battle of The Trench**

When the Prophet first arrived in Medina, the Jews who were living there had welcomed him. The Prophet had returned their greeting, as he wished to be on good terms with them. An agreement was also reached between the Muslims and the Jews, which gave the Jews the freedom to practice their religion, and which also set out their rights and their duties.





Among these duties was that in the case of war with Quraysh, the Jews would fight on the side of the Muslims.

Despite this agreement, however, some of the Jewish tribes, who resented the Prophet's presence in Medina, soon began to cause trouble amongst the Muslims. They tried to set the Muslim Emigrants from Mecca and the Ansar against each other. The troublemakers were given many warnings, but they continued to be a nuisance. In the end, the Muslims had no choice but to drive them from Medina. A new agreement was offered those Jews who remained, but the trouble did not end there. One of the Jewish tribes, the Bani Nadir, plotted to murder the Prophet but their plan was discovered and they, too, were exiled from the city. Knowing that they could not defeat the Muslims themselves, some of the leaders of the exiled Jews secretly went to Mecca to enlist the help of Quraysh. Knowing what the Meccans would like to hear, they pretended to believe in the same things. They said that they thought that the old Arab tradition was better than the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and that they believed that the Quraysh religion of worshipping many idols was better than the Prophet's with only one God. Then the Jews told them that if all the Arab tribes attacked Medina, the Jews inside the city would help to defeat the Prophet and Islam once and for all.

The leaders of Quraysh were pleased to hear all this and seizing on what seemed to them a very good opportunity, agreed to the plan and began to gather together a formidable army. In the meantime, in Medina, only one Jewish tribe, the Bani Quraydhah, refused to betray the Muslims.

Eventually the Muslims learned of the preparations being made for war in Mecca and of the plotting of the Jews within Medina itself. The betrayal of the Muslims by the Jews did not surprise the Prophet.





The Muslims wondered how they could defend Medina. They heard that Abu Sufyan was coming to attack them with an enormous army which included many other Arab tribes, as well as Quraysh. What were they to do with only a single week to prepare? The Prophet and his men knew that it would be impossible for them to fight off all these tribes! The only thing they could do was to stay inside the city and try to defend it as best they could. Now among the people of Medina was a Persian named Salman, who had to live in the city some time before the Prophet's arrival there. As a convert to Christianity, he had traveled to Medina after a Christian sage had told him that a Prophet would be born in Arabia. On arriving in, he was, however, sold into slavery by the merchants with whom he had traveled. Later he became a Muslim, gained his freedom and became a member of the Prophet's household.

When the people gathered to discuss a plan of action against the approaching enemy, Salman was present, and it was he who suggested that they should dig a trench around the city. The Prophet thought this a good idea, so the Muslims set to work, although it was in the middle of winter. They worked day and night, digging the trench as quickly as possible. The Prophet himself carried rocks and when the men were tired, he gave them the will to carry on. Someone later recalled how beautiful he looked, dressed in a red cloak with dust upon his breast and his dark hair nearly reaching his shoulders. There was little food at this time and the men were often hungry as they worked. On one occasion, however, a little girl gave some dates to the Prophet, which he spread out on a cloth. The men were then called to eat, and the dates kept increasing in number until everyone had been fed.





Even after everyone had eaten their fill, the dates continued to increase so that there was more than the cloth could hold. Similarly, there is the story of the lamb that has come down to us from one who was there: 'We worked with the Apostle at the trench. I had a half-grown lamb and I thought it would be a good thing to cook it for Allah's Messenger. I told my wife to grind barley and make some bread for us. I killed the lamb and we roasted it for the Prophet. When night fell and he was about to leave the trench, I told him we had prepared bread and meat and invited him to our home. I wanted him to come on his own, but when I said this, he sent someone to call all the men to come along. Everyone arrived and the food was served. He blessed it and invoked the Name of Allah over it. Then he ate and so did all of the others. As soon as one lot were satisfied, another group came until all the diggers had eaten enough, but still there was food to spare.

Abu Sufyan arrived with more than ten thousand men. The Muslims numbered only three thousand. Quraysh and their allies surrounded Medina but between the two armies was the long, wide trench.

The Prophet and his men stayed behind this trench for nearly a month defending the city against their more powerful enemy. Many times, warriors tried to cross the trench and enter the city, but each time they were pushed back by the Muslims. The Muslims were afraid that if any did manage to cross over, the Jews inside Medina would join forces with them, and the Muslims would be beaten. The Jewish tribe of Bani Qurayzah, who had stood by the agreement with the Muslims, were pressed by a Jewish emissary from the enemy to break their promise. Eventually they agreed to do so and when the news of this reached the Prophet and his companions, they were greatly







troubled. Sa'd ibn Mu'az, the leader of the tribe of Aws, was sent by the Prophet with two other men to find out if this were true. When they arrived in the part of Medina where the Jews lived, they found even worse than they had previously thought. Sa'd ibn Mu'az, whose tribe was closely allied with the Bani Qurayza, tried to persuade their leader not to break the treaty with the Muslims, but he refused to listen. This meant that the Muslims could not relax their guard for one moment, for they were now threatened not only by the enemy beyond the trench, but by the Bani Qurayza, within the walls of the city.

Things became more difficult for the Muslims day by day. It was extremely cold, and food began to run out. To make matters worse, the Bani Qurayzah began openly and actively to join forces with the other Jews and cut off all supplies to the Muslims, including food. The enemies of Islam then planned how to capture Medina.

The situation looked desperate, and the Prophet prayed to Allah to help the Muslims defeat their enemies. That very night a sandstorm blew up which buried the tents of Quraysh. The storm continued for three days and three nights making it impossible for the enemy to light a fire to cook a meal or warm themselves by.

On one of these dark nights the Prophet asked one of his men, Huzayfah Ibn al-Yaman, to go on a dangerous mission. The Prophet told him to make his way across the trench to the enemy camp where he should find out what they were doing. With much difficulty Huzayfah crossed the trench and made his way to a circle of Quraysh warriors talking in the darkness. He sat near them, but as there was no fire, no one noticed him. He then heard Abu Sufyan's voice: 'Let us go home!' he said. 'We have had enough. The





horses and camels are dying, the tents keep blowing away, most of the equipment has been lost, and we cannot cook our food. There is no reason to stay!

Shortly after hearing this Huzayfah made his way quickly and quietly back across the trench and the next morning the Muslims rejoiced to find that what he had overheard had come true-Quraysh and their allies had gone away! The siege of Medina had ended in a great victory for Islam. But this was not to be the end of the difficulties, for the Archangel Gabriel came to the Prophet and told him that he should punish the BaniQurayzah for betraying him and the Muslims.

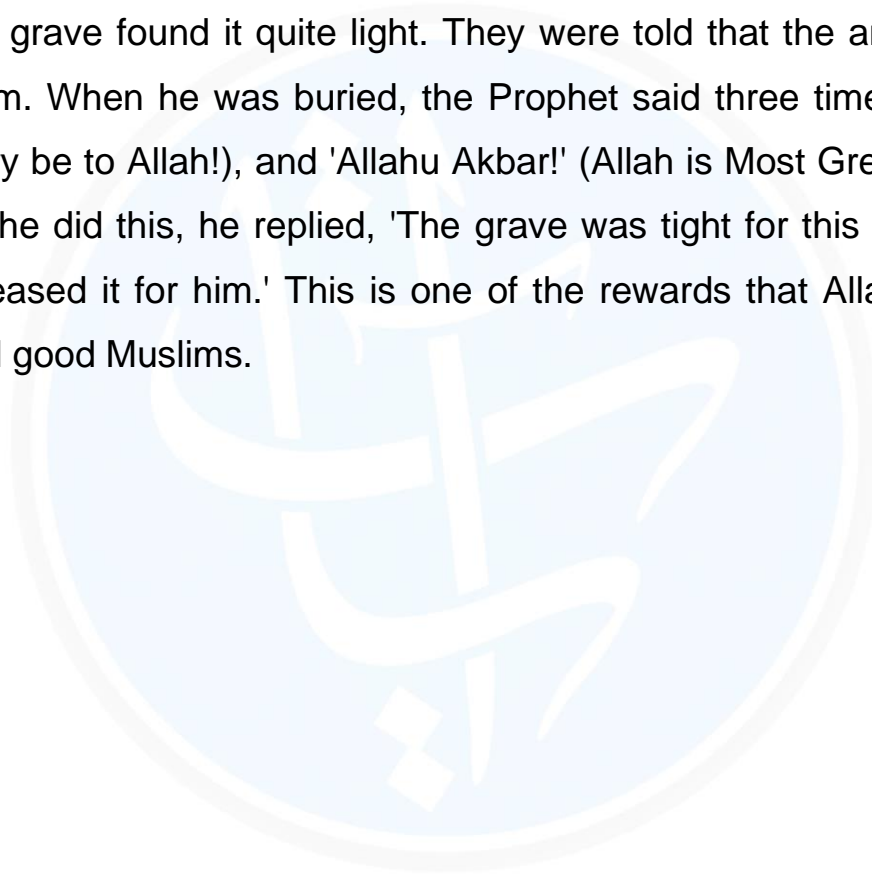
On hearing this, the Prophet ordered the Muslims to march against the Bani Qurayzah as they hid in their fortress. The Muslims besieged them for twenty-five days until they finally gave in. On surrendering, they asked the Prophet to let someone judge their case, and he agreed. He also allowed them to choose who would give the ruling. The man chosen to judge the Bani Qurayzah was Sa'd ibn Mu'az, leader of the Aws, a tribe which had always protected the Qurayzah in the past. Sa'd ibn Mu'adh who had himself been wounded in the battle, decided that the Jews should be tried by their own Holy Law, according to which anyone who broke a treaty would be put to death. As a result, all the men of the Bani Qurayzah were executed, and the women and children made captive. If the Jews had succeeded in their pact, Islam would have been destroyed. Instead from that day on, Medina became a city where only Muslims lived.

Very soon after peace had been restored to Medina, Sa'd ibn Mu'az died of his wounds. It was said that the Archangel Gabriel came in the middle of that night and said to the Prophet: 'O Muhammad, who is this dead man?





When he arrived, the doors of heaven opened, and the Throne of Allah shook.' The Prophet got up as soon as he heard this but found that Sa'd was already dead. Although he had been a heavy man, the men who carried his body to the grave found it quite light. They were told that the angels were helping them. When he was buried, the Prophet said three times 'Subhan Allah!' (Glory be to Allah!), and 'Allahu Akbar!' (Allah is Most Great!). When asked why he did this, he replied, 'The grave was tight for this good man, until Allah eased it for him.' This is one of the rewards that Allah gives to martyrs and good Muslims.



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## Lesson 5

### The Treaty of Hdaybiyah

Quraysh had tried to destroy Islam but had failed. The number of Muslims grew, and their armies increased from three hundred at the battle of Badr, seven hundred at the battle of "Uhud, to three thousand at the battle of the Trench. After the annual fast of Ramadan, the Prophet had a dream, which indicated that the Muslims should go to Mecca for the pilgrimage. One thousand and four hundred Muslims got ready to go with him on the Lesser Pilgrimage called 'the `Umra'. They dressed in white and went unarmed to show Quraysh that they had come to make the pilgrimage and not to fight. When Quraysh heard that the Prophet was on his way, they sent troops with Khalid Ibn al-Walid to stop the Muslims from entering the city. To avoid meeting this small army the Prophet changed his route and led the men through rugged mountain passes. When they reached easier ground, he told them, At Hdaybiyah, south of Mecca, the Prophet's camel knelt down and refused to go any further. The Muslims thought she was either stubborn or tired, but the Prophet said: 'The same power that once stopped the elephant from entering Mecca is now stopping us!' He then ordered them to make camp, which they did, although they all hoped they would travel on to the sacred Ka'bah the following day. On setting up camp, the believers were dismayed to find that the springs were almost dry. When he heard this the Messenger of Allah instructed a man called Najiyah to take the bowl of water in which he had performed his ablutions, pour it into the hollows where the small amount of spring water lay, and stir it with his arrows. Najiyah did as he was told, and the fresh water gushed up so suddenly that he was hardly able to get out of the way in time.



Messengers were sent to Quraysh to tell them that the Muslims had come only for the pilgrimage, to worship Allah at the Holy Ka'bah, and that they wanted to enter the city peacefully. But Quraysh took no notice.

Finally, the Prophet's son-in-law, 'Uthman Ibn Affan, a wise and respected man, was chosen to go, and the Muslims settled down to wait and see what news he would bring back. After they had waited a long time, the Muslims became very worried. At last, they decided that he must have been killed. A state similar to that of Revelation then came upon the Prophet. He gathered the Muslims around him under an acacia tree and asked them to swear their allegiance to him, which they did. This pact, which is mentioned in the Qur'an, became known as the Treaty of Radwan (which means Paradise). Shortly after, 'Uthman Ibn Affan returned and the Muslims were relieved to see that no harm had come to him. Some Meccan warriors tried to attack the Muslim camp but were captured and brought before the Prophet, who forgave them when they promise to stop attacking the Muslims. Soon after this, official messengers came from Quraysh and talks began for a peaceful settlement.

A man called Suhayl ibn 'Amr was sent by the Meccans to work out a treaty. When the Prophet asked 'Ali to write 'In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful', on the top of the page, Suhayl objected, saying 'Write only: bismik Allahumma (in Thy name, O Allah). I don't know him as al-Rahman (the Most Gracious), al-Rahim (the most Merciful).' The Prophet agreed and dictated: 'This is a treaty between Muhammad the Messenger of Allah and Suhayl ibn 'Amr. "Stop!' cried Suhayl, 'I don't believe that you are Rasulallah (the Messenger of Allah). If I thought you were Allah's Messenger, I wouldn't be fighting against you, would I?' Calmly, the Prophet agreed that





he should be referred to in the treaty as Muhammad', son of 'Abd Allah. The Muslims were very upset at this, and 'Umar furiously cried out, 'Are you not Allah's Messenger, and are we not Muslims? How can we accept such treatment when we are right and they are wrong? This will make people laugh at our religion!' But the Prophet knew what was best and the Treaty of Hudaibiyah was signed.

In this treaty the two sides agreed to stop fighting for a period of ten years. It was also agreed that the Muslims should go back to Medina immediately but that they could return the following year for the pilgrimage. This pilgrimage would last three days. In addition, the treaty allowed Muslims wishing to leave Islam and return to Mecca to do so. It also permitted Meccans to leave and become Muslims provided they had the permission of their guardians. The Muslims agreed to send any Meccan who did not have their guardian's permission back to Mecca. Suhayl's son had come with his father with the idea of joining the Prophet but when the treaty was signed, he was, of course, forced to return to Mecca.

The majority of the Muslims were very disappointed when they heard the terms of the agreement and thought that it should not have been accepted. They did not realize that this was in fact a great victory for the Prophet, which Allah would later confirm in a Revelation. The agreement made sure that the following year they would enter Mecca peacefully, and in time would result in Muslims becoming stronger and more respected throughout Arabia. At the time the treaty was signed the Muslims could not have foreseen that the number of people who would travel to Medina to become Muslims in following year would be greater than in all the years before. Before the Muslims departed, they followed the Prophet's example





of making sacrifice and either shaving or cutting their hair. Even though they were unable to visit the sacred mosque, their pilgrimage was accepted by Allah because it had been their true intention.

On the return journey to Medina, the 'Victory' surah of the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet. It begins:

*In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. "Surely, We have given thee (O Muhammad) a clear victory, That Allah may forgive thee of thy sin That which is past and that which is to come, And may complete His blessings upon thee, And may guide thee on the right path, And that Allah may help thee with mighty help". (48:1-3)*

Now most of those who left Mecca to join the Prophet without the consent of their guardians and were turned back by him as agreed, did not in fact return to Mecca, but lived instead in groups along the seashore. Then they were joined by others who had left Mecca, but these groups began to endanger Quraysh caravans which were passing by and disrupted their trade because of this, Quraysh told the Prophet that if he wanted to take these new Muslims, they would not ask for them to be returned. The young men, therefore, joined the Prophet and the people in Mecca and Medina grew more at ease with one another. The young men from the seashore were shortly followed by those Muslims who were still living in Abyssinia, and soon the numbers of believers in Medina had doubled.

About this time, Khalid Ibn al-Walid, the great warrior who had defeated the Muslims at Uhud, set out from Mecca for Medina. Along the way he met 'Amr Ibn al-'As, the clever speaker who had pursued the Muslims when they fled to Abyssinia. 'Amr, who had attempted to find asylum in Abyssinia, had just returned from that country, the Negus having urged him to enter Islam.





He asked Khalid, 'Where are you going?' Khalid replied, 'The way has become clear. The man is certainly a Prophet, and by Allah, I am going to become a Muslim. How much longer should I delay?' 'Amr Ibn al-As answered, 'I am travelling for the same reason. So they both traveled on to Medina to join the Prophet. The two men were, however, worried about meeting the Prophet because of having fought against the Muslims in the past. Therefore, 'Amr came before Allah's Messenger he said, 'O Prophet, will my past faults be forgiven and no mention made of what has gone before?' The Prophet replied, 'Amr, Islam wipes away everything that happened before, as does the hijrah.' A year after the signing of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Prophet was able to lead two thousand pilgrims on the 'Umra. Quraysh vacated Mecca and watched the rites from the hills above the city. The agreed period of three days was observed, after which the Muslims returned to Medina.

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## Lesson 6

### The Invitation

The peace which the Treaty of Hudaibiyah guaranteed for ten years meant people could travel from all over Arabia to visit the Prophet. A great many came to declare their Islam. Also, during this period the Prophet decided that the time had come for his message to be taken to other countries, so he sent trusted companions with letters, telling of his message, to the leaders of the most powerful nations of the day. It is recorded that he said, Allah has sent me as a mercy to all men, so take the message from me that Allah has mercy on you. It is also recorded that some time before, when the Prophet (pbuh) was digging before the Battle of the Trench, three flashes of lightning had blared forth from a rock he had been striving to remove. These flashes had shown him the fortresses of the civilizations to the South, East, and West which were soon to come into Islam.

Now at the time the Prophet (pbuh) sent out his message. Abu Sufyan and some other members of Quraysh were trading in Syria, a province of the Eastern Roman Empire (later to be called Byzantium). Also, at about this time the Emperor Heraclius, ruler of this Empire, had a dream, and sadly told visitors to his court in Syria: I saw our Empire fall and victory go to a people who do not follow our religion. At first, he thought this must refer to the Jews and he even had it in mind to kill all the Jews living under his rule fit then an envoy from the governor of Basra arrived with a message for the Emperor: "O Emperor Heraclius. There are some Arabs in the city who are speaking of wonderful happenings in their country", and he then told of what he had heard about the Prophet (pbuh). On hearing this, Heraclius commanded his



soldiers: Go and find me someone who can tell me more about this. The soldiers, however, did not find those who had been talking about the Prophet (pbuh), but instead found Abu Sufyan and some of his companions and brought them before the Emperor.

Heraclius asked, "Is there anyone among you who is a close relative of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)?" Abu Sufyan replied, "I am." So the Emperor addressed all the questions to him, thinking he would know the Prophet (pbuh) best. He said, "Tell me what the Prophet's position is in your tribe" Abu Sufyan said, "he is a member of our most respected family. Did anyone before him say the kinds of things he says?" the Emperor went on. "No." was the reply. "Was he ever accused of lying or cheating?" "Never." Then the Emperor asked: "And what about his ideas and opinions, and his powers of reasoning?" "No one has ever had cause to doubt him or find fault with his reasoning", replied Abu Sufyan. "Who follows him, the proud or the humble?" "The humble." "Do his followers increase or decrease?" "They increase", said Abu Sufyan, "none of his followers leave him." The Emperor then turned to other matters and asked: "If he makes a treaty, does he keep it?" "Yes", Abu Sufyan replied. "Did you ever fight against him?" inquired the Emperor. To which Abu Sufyan answered: "Yes. Sometimes we won, sometimes he won, but he never broke his word in any agreement." The emperor then asked: "What does he say people must do?" "To worship one God", said Abu Sufyan. "He forbids people to worship as their fathers worshipped, and says they must pray to Allah alone, give elms, keep their word, and fulfil their duties and responsibilities." Abu Sufyan had spoken the truth even though he was an enemy of the prophet (pbuh), and did not become a Muslim until the very end of his life. But he was afraid to lie before





the members of his caravan who were also there with him. The meeting ended with these words from the Emperor: “I see from this that he is indeed a prophet. You said that his followers do not leave him which proves they have true faith, for faith does not enter the heart and then go away. I knew he was coming and if what you say is true, he will surely conquer me. If I were with him now, I would wash his feet. You may leave now.”

It was not long after this that the messenger, Dihyah, arrived at the Syrian court bearing the Prophet Mohammed’s letter which said, “If you accept Islam you will be safe, and Allah will give you a double reward. If you do not, you will have to live with results of your decision.” Heraclius said to Dihyah, “I know your master is a true prophet of Allah. Our books tell of his coming. If I were not afraid that the Romans would kill me, I would join Islam.”

Meanwhile, another of the Prophet’s messengers arrived at the palace of Chosroes, the Shah (or king) of Persia, where he was told by the royal guard: “When you see the Shah, you must bow and not lift your head until he speaks to you.” To this the Prophet’s messenger replied, “I will never do that. I bow only to Allah.” “Then the Shah will not accept the letter you bring”, they said. When the time came for the messenger to see him, the Shah was indeed very surprised to see the man holding his head high and refusing to kneel respectfully before him like everyone else. Nonetheless, the Shah still read out the letter:

*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful*

“From Muhammad, Messenger of Allah to Chosroes, Shah of Persia. Peace be upon those who follow the truth, who believe in Allah and His Prophet and who testify that there is no divinity but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger. I ask you in the Name of Allah, because I am His Messenger, to





warn your people that if they do not accept His Message, they must live with the consequences. Become Muslim and you will be safe. If you refuse to tell them, you will be to blame for the ignorance of your subjects”.

The Shah was furious when he read this and tore the letter into little pieces. When the messenger returned to Arabia and told the Prophet (pbuh) what Chosroes had done, the Prophet (pbuh) said, “May Allah also tear his kingdom into little pieces.” And several years later it happened just as the Prophet (pbuh) had said it would. As with Syria and Persia, a messenger was also sent to the Negus (or King) of Abyssinia, with the following letter:

Peace. Praise be to Allah, the King, the All-Holy, the Peacemaker, the Keeper of Faith, the Watcher. *“He is Allah, there is no divinity but He, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, the All-peaceable, the Keeper of Faith, the Guardian, the Majestic, the Compeller, the All-sublime. Glorified be Allah from all that they associate with Him”.* (59:23)

And I testify that Jesus, son of Mary, is the spirit of Allah and His Word which He cast to Mary the Virgin, the good, the pure, so that she conceived Jesus. Allah created him from His Spirit and His Breath as He created Adam by His Hand and His Breath. I call you to Allah, the Unique, without partner, to His obedience, and to follow me and to believe in that which came to me, for I am the Messenger of Allah. Peace be upon all those who follow true guidance.

The King of Abyssinia was a very wise man and was thought by the world to be a good Christian. He had, of course, already heard of the Prophet (pbuh) and his religion from the Muslims who had sought refuge in his country years before. He was deeply moved by the letter and when he came down from his





throne it was not just to show his respect but also to declare that he was already a Muslim.

A fourth messenger had, in the meantime, traveled by boat to Alexandria to meet the Muqawqis, the ruler of Egypt, who was a Coptic Christian. In his letter, the Prophet (pbuh) invited the Muqawqis to accept Islam, because Christian who believed in the message of Jesus should also believe in him, for he had come with the same message from Allah. It read:

*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful,*

“From Muhammad, son of 'Abd Allah to the great Copt. Peace be upon whoever follows the Truth. I beseech you to accept Islam. Become a Muslim. Allah will reward you twice. If you refuse, you will carry the blame for not allowing your people to share in this blessing”. The Muqawqis showed respect for what the letter said. He treated the messenger well, and sent many presents with him for the Prophet (pbuh), but he did not become a Muslim. Although only Abyssinia responded to the Prophet's call to Islam, all was not lost, for a few years later Persia, Syria and Egypt all became Muslim countries.

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## Lesson 7

### Entry into Mecca

Despite the improved relations between Mecca and Medinah after the signing of the Treaty of Hdaybiyah, the ten-year peace was to be broken by Quraysh who, with their allies, the Bani Bakr, attacked the Khuza'ah tribe. Khuza'ah were allies of the Muslims and when the Prophet (pbuh) heard of the attack he immediately ordered his men to prepare for war. When they were ready, he told them that their destination was Mecca and, as he did not want any fighting within the walls of the city, he told them they must move quickly and take the enemy by surprise. In this way, the Meccans would not have time to prepare for war and, being surrounded would have to surrender. The Muslims would then be able to take the city without injury or loss of life to anyone.

When the Muslim army, which numbered ten thousand, set out for Mecca, it was the month of Ramadan in the eighth year of the Hijrah. Many of the men kept the fast, even though they were not obliged to because they were travelling. Everyone was jubilant because they were going to Mecca, especially as some of them had not seen their homes in the city for eight long years. In the meantime, the Prophet's uncle, al-'Abbas, had decided that the time had come for him and his wife to leave Mecca and join the Prophet (pbuh) in Medinah. They did not, however, have to go far as after a distance of only twenty-five kilometers they came across the Muslim camp. When the Prophet (pbuh) saw them he said, 'Uncle, your emigration is the last emigration. My prophecy is the last prophecy.' Al-'Abbas then joined the army, and his wife went on to the safety of Medinah.



Night fell and the Muslims made fires to light their camp. The Meccans, looking out of the city, were amazed to see the many fires, and Abu Sufyan went all over Mecca trying to find out whose camp it was. Suddenly, he saw al-'Abbas riding towards him from the direction of the fires. He was returning as a messenger of peace from the Prophet (pbuh) and said to Abu Sufyan, "The Muslims have come with a large army. They do not wish to fight, only to enter the city. It would be better to surrender and not fight. Come under my protection and meet the Prophet (pbuh)". Abu Sufyan agreed, and got up behind al-'Abbas, who was riding the Prophet's white mule. It was still night as they entered the Muslim camp. Each time they passed a fire, someone would call out, 'Who goes there?' None of them recognized the stranger as the leader of their enemy but all knew al-'Abbas and so let them through. As they passed by 'Umar, however, he immediately recognized Abu Sufyan and yelled out, 'Abu Sufyan! The enemy of Allah!' He ran after them intending to kill his enemy, but al-'Abbas made the mule go faster. They reached the Prophet's tent just before 'Umar who rushed in after them quite out of breath. The Prophet (pbuh) told his uncle to take Abu Sufyan to his tent for the night.

In the morning Abu Sufyan was taken to the Prophet (pbuh) who said, "Abu Sufyan! Have you not yet realized that there is no divinity but Allah?" To this Abu Sufyan replied, "If there had been another, he surely would have helped me by now." "Shame on you, Abu Sufyan", responded the Prophet (pbuh), "it is time you realize that I am truly Allah's Messenger." After a moment or two, Abu Sufyan, who remembered how 'Umar had not been allowed to kill him, replied: "I can see you are a generous and forgiving man, but I still cannot be sure of that." At this, al-'Abbas, who had been standing nearby turned to him and said: "Believe as I do now." Abu Sufyan stood





quietly for a moment, then in a calm clear voice swore in front of everyone said, “there is no divinity but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.”

The Prophet (pbuh) then told Abu Sufyan to go back to Mecca and tell the people that the Muslims would enter the city the next morning, before he left, however, al-'Abbas suggested to the Prophet (pbuh) that as Abu Sufyan was a proud man, it would be good to give him an honorable position. The Prophet (pbuh) took this advice, saying to Abu Sufyan, “Tell the people that when we enter, anyone seeking refuge in your house will be safe.” This was a great honor for Abu Sufyan. In addition, the Prophet (pbuh) told him to assure the Meccans that those who remained in their own homes or at the Ka’bah would also be protected. Abu Sufyan returned quickly to the city. He made straight for the hill Hagar had climbed in her search for water and from which the Prophet (pbuh) later spoke and called upon Quraysh to come to him. Abu Sufyan then spoke to the people, “O people of Mecca, the fires we saw all around us were the campfires of Muhammad and his men. He has come with a strong army and there are too many for us to fight. It is best, therefore, to surrender. Anyone who stays in my house, or in his own home, or at the Ka’bah will be safe.”

Early next day, the Muslims entered Mecca from all sides. They had been ordered to cause no harm unless anyone tried to stop them entering. When the Prophet (pbuh) arrived, he got off his camel, bowed down on the ground and thanked Allah for this victory. When the unbelievers saw this, they knew that the Prophet (pbuh) had come in peace. People began leaving their homes and running towards the Ka’bah. When they arrived there, they found the Prophet (pbuh) performing the ritual encircling of the Ka’bah, the







tawaf on his camel, surrounded by the Muslims. When he had finished, he said, “There no divinity except Allah and He has no partner. Men and women of Quraysh be not proud for all are equal; we are all the sons of Adam, and Adam was made of dust.” Then he recited this verse to them:

*“O mankind! Indeed, We have created you male and female and have made you nations and tribes so you may know each another. Surely the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware”.* (49:13)

After this he said to them: “O Quraysh, what do you think I am going to do to you?” The people thought carefully before answering because they knew that according to the laws of war, they could all be taken prisoner. They also knew, however, that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was generous, so they replied, “You will treat us as a kind nephew and a generous brother would.”

To this he replied with the words used by the Prophet Joseph when his brothers came to Egypt: “God forgives you and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful.” Later, the Prophet (pbuh) went to the hill of Safa and there the crowd followed him and surged forward, taking his hand one by one, to declare themselves Muslim. He then turned to the Ka’bah and, pointing his staff at the three hundred and sixty-five idols which were placed there, recited from the Qur’an:

*“... Truth has come and falsehood has vanished away. Indeed, falsehood is ever bound to vanish”.* (17:81)

At this, each idol fell over onto its face. Together with his followers the Prophet (pbuh) then proceeded to purify the Ka’bah, after which he ordered





Bilal to climb on top of it and perform the call to prayer. Since then, the call to prayer has been heard five times a day in Mecca.

The Ka'bah, the House of Allah, has served the purpose for which it was built by Abraham thousands of years ago, as a sanctuary for the worship of Allah, our Creator, and Mecca continues to be the spiritual center of Islam. On the day Mecca was conquered, the Prophet (pbuh) addressed the people saying: "Allah made Mecca holy the day He created heaven and earth and it is the Holy of Holies until the Resurrection Day. It is not lawful for anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day to shed blood therein, nor to cut down trees therein. It was not lawful for anyone before me, and it will not be lawful for anyone after me. Indeed, it is not lawful for me except at this time, only Allah's anger against his people makes it permissible. Mecca has now regained its former holiness. Let those here now go forth and tell others."

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## Lesson 8

### Battle of Hunain

The Prophet entry into Mecca was sudden. Tribes in the vicinity of Mecca, especially those in the south, remained unaware of the event until sometime later. On hearing of it, they began to assemble their forces and to prepare for a fight with the Muslims. There were two Arab tribes, the Hawazin and the Thaqif, unusually proud of their valiant traditions. They took counsel together and after some deliberation elected Malik ibn 'Auf as their leader. They then invited the tribes round about to join them. Among the tribes invited was the Banu Sa'd. The Prophet wet-nurse, Halima, belonged to this tribe and the Prophet as a child had lived among them. Men of this tribe collected in force and set out towards Mecca taking with them their families and their effects. Asked why they had done so, they replied it was in order that the soldiers might be reminded that, if they turned back and fled, their wives and children would be taken prisoners and their effects looted—so strong was their determination to fight and destroy the Muslims. This force descended in the valley of Rautas, most suitable base for a battle, with its natural shelters, abundance of food and water, and facilities for cavalry movements. When the Prophet got to know of this, he sent 'Abdullah bin Abi Hadwad to report on the situation. 'Abdullah reported that there were military concentrations in the place and there was determination to kill and be killed. The tribe was renowned for its skill in archery, and the base they had selected afforded a very great advantage to them.

When the Muslim army set out towards the Hawazin, the Meccans expressed a wish to join the Muslim side. They were not all Muslims, but they had agreed to live under a Muslim regime. Accordingly, two thousand



Meccans joined the Muslims. The Prophet urged Muslims to always remember that Allah was Great and to pray to Him to save them from the superstitions of earlier peoples. Before the Muslim army reached Hunain, the Hawazin and their allies had already prepared a number of ambushes from which to attack the Muslims, like the foxholes and camouflaged artillery positions of modern warfare. They had built walls around them. Behind the walls were soldiers lying in wait for the Muslims. A narrow gorge was left for Muslims to pass through. Much the larger part of the army was posted to these ambushes, while a small number was made to line up in front of their camels. Muslims thought enemy numbers to be no more than they could see. So, they went forward and attacked.

When they had advanced far and the hiding enemy was satisfied that they could be attacked very easily, the soldiers lined up in front of the camels and attacked the center of the Muslim army while the hiding archers rained their arrows on the flanks. The Meccans, who had joined for a chance to display their valor, could not stand this double attack by the enemy. They ran back to Mecca. Muslims were accustomed to difficult situations, but when two thousand soldiers mounted on horses and camels pierced their way through the Muslim army, the animals of the Muslims also took fright. There was panic in the army. Pressure came from three sides, resulting in a general rout. In this, only the Prophet, with twelve companions, stood unmoved. Not that all the companions had fled from the field. About a hundred of them still remained, but they were at some distance from the Prophet. Only twelve remained to surround the Prophet. One companion reports that he and his friends did all they could to steer their animals towards the battlefield. But the animals had been put to fright by the stampede of the





Meccan animals. The Prophet himself stood with a handful of men, exposed on three sides to volleys of arrows.

The Prophet spurred his mount, and said, "I am a Prophet. I am no pretender. I am a son of 'Abdul Muttalib" (*Bukhari*). These words spoken at a time of extreme danger to his person are full of significance. They stressed the fact that the Prophet was really a Prophet, a true Messenger of God. By stressing this, he meant that he was not afraid of death or of the failure of his cause. But if, in spite of being overwhelmed by archers he remained safe, Muslims should not attribute any divine qualities to him. For he was but a human being, a son of 'Abdul Muttalib. How careful was the Prophet ever to impress upon his followers the difference between faith and superstition. After uttering these memorable words, the Prophet called for 'Abbas. 'Abbas had a powerful voice. The Prophet said to him, Abbas raise your voice and remind the Muslims of the oath they took under the tree at Hudaibiya, and of what they were taught at the time of the revelation of the Surah Baqara. Tell them, the Prophet of God calls them. Abbas raised his powerful voice. The message of the Prophet fell like thunder, not on deaf ears but on ears agog. It had an electric effect. The very Companions who had found themselves powerless to urge their mounts towards the battlefield, began to feel they were no longer in this world but in the next, facing God on the Judgment Day. The voice of Abbas did not sound like his own voice but the voice of the angel beckoning them to render an account of their deeds. There was nothing then to stop them from turning to the battlefield again.

Many of them dismounted and with only sword and shield rushed to the battlefield, leaving their animals to go where they liked. Others dismounted, cut off the heads of their animals and rushed back on foot to the





Prophet. It is said that the Ansar on that day ran towards the Prophet with the speed with which a mother-camel or a mother-cow runs to her young on hearing its cries. Before long the Prophet was surrounded by a large number of Companions, mostly Ansar. The enemy again suffered a defeat.

The presence of Abu Sufyan on the side of the Prophet on this day was a mighty divine Sign, a Sign of the power of God on the one hand and of the purifying example of the Prophet on the other. Only a few days before, Abu Sufyan was a bloodthirsty enemy of the Prophet, commander of a bloodthirsty army determined to destroy the Muslims. But here, on this day the same Abu Sufyan stood by the side of the Prophet, a friend, follower and Companion. When the enemy camels stampeded, Abu Sufyan, a wise and seasoned general, saw that his own horse was likely to run wild. Quickly he dismounted and, holding the stirrup of the Prophet's mule, started going on foot, sword in hand, he walked by the side of the Prophet determined not to let anyone come near the Prophet's person without first attacking and killing him. The Prophet watched this change in Abu Sufyan with delight and astonishment. He reflected on this fresh evidence of the power of God. Only ten or fifteen days before, this man was raising an army to put an end to the movement of Islam. But a change had come. An erstwhile enemy commander now stood by the Prophet's side, as an ordinary foot-soldier, holding the stirrup of his master's mule, and determined to die for his sake.

After the battle of Hunain, the Prophet returned the war material he had received on loan. While returning it he compensated the lenders many times over. Those who had made the loan were touched by the care and consideration which the Prophet had shown in returning the material and in compensating the lenders. They felt the Prophet was no ordinary man, but





one whose moral example stood high above others. No wonder, Safwan joined Islam at once.

### **The Expedition of Tabuk**

These rumors became so persistent, that the Prophet thought it worthwhile to lead in person a Muslim army against Roman. These were difficult times; Arabia was in the grip of a famine. The harvest in the previous year had been poor and both grain and fruit were in short supply. The time for the new harvest had not yet come. It was the end of September or the beginning of October when the Prophet set out on this mission. The hypocrites knew that the rumors were their own inventions. They knew also that their design was to provoke Muslims into an attack on the Syrians if the Syrians did not attack Muslims. In either case, a conflict with the great Roman Empire was to result in the destruction of Muslims. The lesson of Mauta was before them. At Mauta Muslims had to face such a huge army that it was with great difficulty that they were able to effect a retreat. The hypocrites were hoping to stage a second Mauta in which the Prophet himself might lose his life. While the hypocrites were busy spreading rumors about the Syrian attack on Muslims, they also made every effort to strike fear in the minds of Muslims. The Syrians could raise very large armies which Muslims could not hope to stand against. They urged Muslims not to take part in the conflict with Syria. Their plan was, on the one hand, to provoke Muslims into attacking Syria and, on the other, to discourage them from going in large numbers. They wanted Muslims to go to war against Syria and meet with certain defeat. But as soon as the Prophet announced his intention of leading this new expedition, enthusiasm ran high among Muslims. They went forward with offers of sacrifice for the sake of their faith. Muslims were





ill-equipped for a war on such a scale. Their treasury was empty. Only the more prosperous Muslims had means to pay for the war. Individual Muslims vied with one another in the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of their faith. It is said that when the expedition was under way and the Prophet appealed for funds, 'Uthman gave away the greater part of his wealth. His contribution is said to have amounted to about one thousand gold dinars. Other Muslims also made contributions according to their capacity. The poor Muslims were also provided with riding animals, swords and lances. Enthusiasm prevailed. There was at Medina at the time a party of Muslims who had migrated from Yemen. They were very poor. Some of them went to the Prophet and offered their services for this expedition. They said, "O Prophet of God, take us with you. We want nothing beyond the means of going." The Qur'an makes a reference to these Muslims and their offers in the following words:

*Nor 'is there any blame on' those who came to you 'O Prophet' for mounts, then when you said, "I can find no mounts for you," they left with eyes overflowing with tears out of grief that they had nothing to contribute (9:92).*

That is to say, they are not to blame who did not take part in the war because they were without means and who applied to the Prophet to provide them with the means of transport to the battlefield. The Prophet was unable to provide the transport, so they left disappointed feeling they were poor, and were unable to contribute to the war between Muslims and Syrians.

Abu Musara was the leader of this group. When asked what they had asked for, he said, "We did not ask for camels or horses. We only said we did not have shoes and could not cover the long journey bare-footed. If we only had shoes, we would have gone on foot and taken part in the war alongside of our Muslim brethren." As this army was going to Syria and







Muslims had not yet forgotten what they had suffered at Mauta, every Muslim was full of anxiety with regard to the personal safety of the Prophet. The women of Medina played their part. They were busy inducing their husbands and sons to join the war. One Companion who had gone out of Medina returned when the Prophet had already set out with the army. This Companion entered his house and was expecting his wife to greet him with the affection and emotion of a woman who meets her husband after a long time. He found his wife sitting in the courtyard and went forward to embrace and kiss her. But the wife raised her hands and pushed him back. The astonished husband looked at his wife and said, "Is this the treatment for one who comes home after a long time?" "Are you not ashamed?" said the wife. "The Prophet of God should go on dangerous expeditions, and you should be making love to your wife? Your first duty is to go to the battlefield. We shall see about the rest." It is said the Companion went out of the house at once, tightened the girths of his mount and galloped after the Prophet. At a distance of about three days' journey, he overtook the Muslim army. The disbelievers and the hypocrites had probably thought that the Prophet acting upon rumors, invented and spread by them, would spring upon the Syrian armies without a thought. They forgot that the Prophet was concerned to set an example to generations of followers for all time to come.

When the Prophet neared Syria, he stopped and sent his men in different directions to report on the state of affairs. The men returned and reported there were no Syrian concentrations anywhere. The Prophet decided to return but stayed for a few days during which he signed agreements with some of the tribes on the border. There was no war and no fighting. The journey took the Prophet about two months and a half. When





the hypocrites at Medina found that their scheme for inciting war between Muslims and Syrians had failed and that the Prophet was returning safe and sound, they began to fear that their intrigue had been exposed. They were afraid of the punishment which was now their due. But they did not halt their sinister plans. They equipped a party and posted it on the two sides of a narrow pass some distance from Medina. The pass was so narrow that only a single file could go through it. When the Prophet and the Muslim army approached the spot, he had a warning by revelation that the enemy was in ambush on both sides of the narrow pass. The Prophet ordered his Companions to reconnoiter. When they reached the spot, they saw men in hiding with the obvious intent to attack. These men, however, fled as soon as they saw this reconnoitering party. The Prophet decided not to pursue them.

When the Prophet reached Medina, the hypocrites who had kept out of this battle began to make lame excuses. But the Prophet accepted them. At the same time, he felt that the time had come when their hypocrisy should be exposed. He had a command from God that the mosque at Quba, which the hypocrites had built in order to be able to hold their meetings in secret, should be demolished. The hypocrites were compelled to say their prayers with other Muslims. No other penalty was proposed. Returning from Tabuk, the Prophet found that the people of Ta'if also had submitted. After this the other tribes of Arabia applied for admission to Islam. In a short time, the whole of Arabia was under the flag of Islam.





## Lesson 9

### The Last Pilgrimage

In the tenth year of the Hijra the Prophet went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. On the day of the Pilgrimage, he received the revelation containing the famed verse of the Qur'an which says:

*This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion (5:4).*

This verse said in effect that the Message which the Holy Prophet had brought from God and which by word and deed he had been expounding all these years, had been completed. Every part of this Message was a blessing. The Message now completed embodied the highest blessings which man could receive from God. The Message is epitomized in the name 'al-Islam', which means submission. Submission was to be the religion of Muslims, the religion of mankind. The Holy Prophet recited this verse in the valley of Muzdalifa, where the pilgrims had assembled. Returning from Muzdalifa, the Prophet stopped at Mina. It was the eleventh day of the month of Dhu'l-Hijja. The Prophet stood before a large gathering of Muslims and delivered an address, famed in history as the fare-well address of the Prophet. In the course of this address, he said:

*“O men, lend me an attentive ear. For I know not whether I will stand before you again in this valley and address you as I address you now. Your lives and your possessions have been made immune by God to attacks by one another until the Day of Judgment. God has appointed for everyone a share in the inheritance. No 'will' shall now be admitted which is prejudicial to the*



*interests of a rightful heir. A child born in any house will be regarded as the child of the father in that house. Whoever contests the parentage of this child will be liable to punishment under the Law of Islam. Anyone who attributes his birth to someone else's father, or falsely claims someone to be his master, God, His angels and the whole of mankind will curse him. O men, you have some rights against your wives, but your wives also have some rights against you. Your right against them is that they should live chaste lives, and not adopt ways which may bring disgrace to the husband in the sight of his people. If your wives do not live up to this, then you have the right to punish them. You can punish them after due inquiry has been made by a competent authority, and your right to punish has been established. Even so, punishment in such a case must not be very severe. But if your wives do no such thing, and their behavior is not such as would bring disgrace to their husbands, then your duty is to provide for them food and garments and shelter, according to your own standard of living. Remember you must always treat your wives well. God has charged you with the duty of looking after them. Woman is weak and cannot protect her own rights. When you married, God appointed you the trustees of those rights. You brought your wives to your homes under the Law of God. You must not, therefore, insult the trust which God has placed in your hands. O men, you still have in your possession some prisoners of war. I advise you, therefore, to feed them and to clothe them in the same way and style as you feed and clothe yourselves. If they do anything wrong which you are unable to forgive, then pass them on to someone else. They are part of God's creation. To give them pain or trouble can never be right. O men, what I say to you, you must hear and remember.*



*All Muslims are as brethren to one another. All of you are equal. All men, whatever nation or tribe they may belong to, and whatever station in life they may hold, are equal.”*

While he was saying this the Prophet (pbuh) raised his hands and joined the fingers of the one hand with the fingers of the other and then said:  
*Even as the fingers of the two hands are equal, so are human beings equal to one another. No one has any right, any superiority to claim over another. You are as brothers.*

Proceeding the Prophet (pbuh) said:

*Do you know what month this is? What territory we are in? What day of the year it is today?*

The Muslims said in reply, they knew it was the sacred month, the sacred land and the day of the Hajj.

Then the Prophet (pbuh) said:

*Even as this month is sacred, this land inviolate, and this day holy, so has God made the lives, property and honor of every man sacred. To take any man's life or his property, or attack his honor, is as unjust and wrong as to violate the sacredness of this day, this month, and this territory. What I command you today are not meant only for today. It is meant for all time. You are expected to remember it and to act upon it until you leave this world and go to the next to meet your Maker. In conclusion, he said: What I have said to you, you should communicate to the ends of the earth. Maybe those who have not heard me may benefit by it more than those who have heard. (Sihah, Sitta, Tabari, Hisham and Khamis).*



The Prophet's address is an epitome of the entire teaching and spirit of Islam. It shows how deep was the Prophet's concern for the welfare of man and the peace of the world; also, how deep was his regard for the rights of women and other weak creatures. The Prophet knew his end was near. He had had hints from God about his death. Among the cares and anxieties to which he gave expression were his care and anxiety about the treatment women received at the hands of men. He took care that he should not pass away from this world to the next without assuring to women the status which was theirs by right. Since the birth of man, woman had been regarded as the slave and handmaid of man. This was the Prophet's one care. His other care was for prisoners of war. They were wrongly looked on and treated as slaves and were subjected to cruelties and excesses of all kinds. The Prophet felt he should not leave this world without assuring to prisoners of war the rights which were theirs in the sight of God. Inequality between man and man also oppressed the Prophet. Occasionally differences were stressed to a degree which could not be endured. Some men were raised to the skies and others were degraded to the depths. The conditions which made for this inequality were conditions which made for antagonism and war between nation and nation and country and country. The Prophet thought of these difficulties, also. Unless the spirit of inequality was killed and conditions which induced one people to usurp the rights of another and to attack their lives and their possessions—unless these conditions which become rampant at times of moral decay were removed, the peace and progress of the world could not be assured. He taught that human life and human possessions had the same sacredness which belonged to sacred days, sacred months and sacred places. No man ever showed such concern and such care for the welfare of women, the rights of the weak, and for peace between nations as did the





Prophet of Islam. No man ever did as much as the Prophet to promote equality among mankind. No man pined as much as he for the good of man. No wonder, Islam has always upheld the right of women to hold and to inherit property. European nations did not conceive of this right until about one thousand three hundred years after the advent of Islam. Every person who enters Islam becomes the equal of everyone else, no matter how low the society from which he comes. Freedom and equality are characteristic contributions of Islam to the culture of the world. The conceptions which other religions hold of freedom and equality are far behind those which Islam has preached and practiced. In a Muslim mosque, a king, a religious leader and a common man have the same status; there is no difference between them. In the places of worship of other religions and other nations these differences exist to this day, although those religions and nations claim to have done more than Islam for freedom and equality. On the way back, the Prophet again informed his Companions of his approaching death. He said, "O men I am but one like you. I may receive the Call any day and I may have to go. My Kind and Vigilant Master has informed me that a Prophet lives up to half the years of the Prophet before him. I think I shall soon receive the Call and I shall depart. O my Companions, I shall have to answer God, and you will have to answer also. What will you then say?" This was not meant as a general law. It referred only to the Holy Prophet. A tradition puts down the age of Jesus at one hundred and twenty or so. As he had already attained to sixty-two or sixty-three, he thought his death must be near. Upon this the Companions said, "We will say that you delivered well the Message of Islam and devoted all your life to the service of the Faith. You had the most perfect passion for the good of man" We will say, "Allah, give him the best of rewards." Then the Prophet asked, "Do you bear witness that God is One,





that Muhammad is His Servant and Prophet, that Heaven and Hell are true, that death is certain, that there is life after death, that the Judgment Day must come, and that all the dead will one day be raised from their graves, restored to life and assembled?" "Yes," said the Companions. "We bear witness to all these truths." Turning to God, the Prophet said, "Be Thou also a witness to this, that I have explained Islam to them." After this Pilgrimage, the Prophet was very busy teaching and training his followers, trying to raise their moral standard and to reform and refine their conduct. His own death became his frequent theme, and he prepared the Muslims for it. One day, rising for an address to the Faithful, he said, "Today I have had the revelation:

*When Allah's 'ultimate' help comes and the victory 'over Mecca is achieved', and you 'O Prophet' see the people embracing Allah's Way in crowds, then glorify the praises of your Lord and seek His forgiveness, for certainly He is ever Accepting of Repentance. (110: 1-3)*

That is to say, the time was coming when, with the help of God, multitudes were to join the Faith of Islam. It was then to be the duty of the Prophet—and of his followers—to praise God and pray to Him to remove all obstacles in the way of the establishment of the Faith. The Prophet made use of a parable on this occasion: God said to a man, "If it please you, you may return to Me, or you may work a little longer at reforming the world." The man said that he preferred to return to his Lord.

Abu Bakr was among the audience. He had been listening to this last address of the Prophet, with fervor and anxiety the fervor of a great believer and the anxiety of a friend and follower who could see in this address the portents of the Prophet's death. On hearing the parable Abu Bakr could contain himself no longer. He broke down. The other Companions, who had







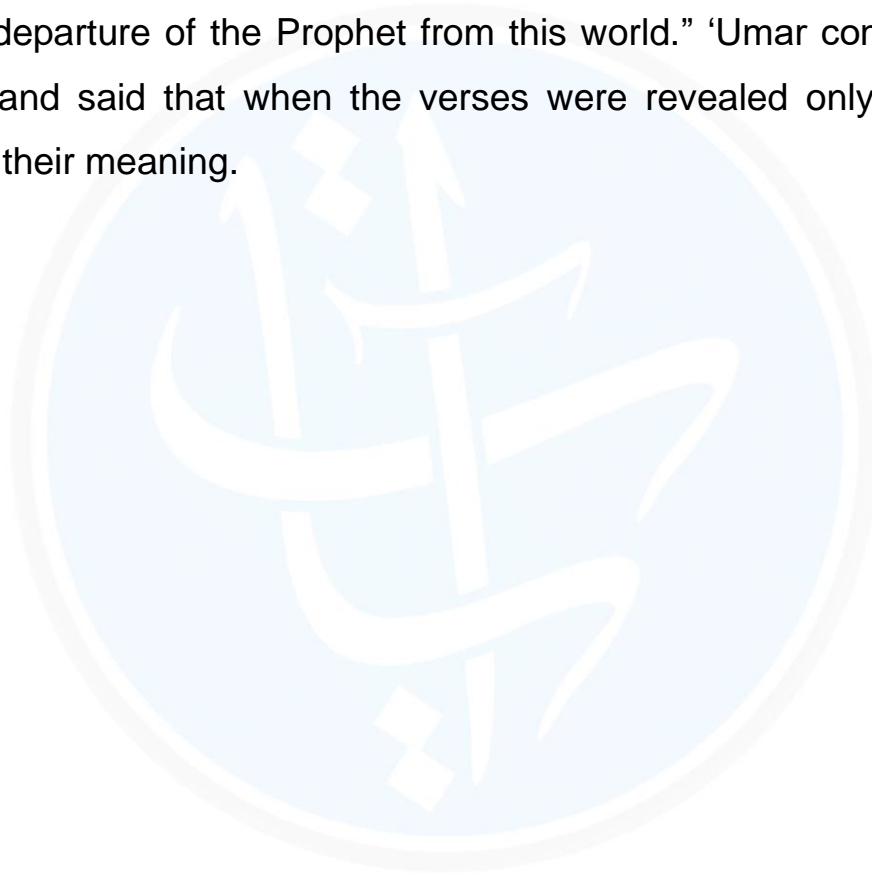
taken a surface view of what they had been listening to, were amazed when Abu Bakr burst into tears. What could be the matter with Abu Bakr? They asked. The Prophet was relating the coming victories of Islam, yet he was weeping. 'Umar, particularly, felt annoyed at Abu Bakr. The Prophet was giving glad news, yet this old man was crying. But only the Prophet understood what was happening. Only Abu Bakr, he thought had understood him. Only he had perceived that the verses which promised victories also portended the Prophet's approaching death.

The Prophet went on to say, "Abu Bakr is very dear to me. If it were permissible to love anyone more than others, I would so have loved Abu Bakr. But that degree of love is only for God. O my people, all the doors which open to the mosque should be closed from today except the door of Abu Bakr." There was no doubt that this last instruction implied a prophecy that after the Prophet Abu Bakr would be the First Khalifah. To lead the Faithful in prayers he would have to come to the mosque five times a day and for this, he would have to keep open the door of his house into the mosque. Years afterwards, when 'Umar was Khalifah, he asked some of those present the meaning of the verse, "When the help of God and victory come." Evidently, he remembered the circumstances in which the Prophet taught Muslims this and the verses which follow. He must have remembered also that then only Abu Bakr understood the meaning of these verses. 'Umar was trying to test Muslims for their knowledge of these verses. They had failed to understand them at the time of their revelation: did they know the meaning now? Ibn 'Abbas, who must have been ten or eleven years of age at the time of their revelation and who was now seventeen or eighteen, volunteered to answer. He said, "Leader of the Faithful, these verses





contained a prophecy about the death of the Holy Prophet. When a Prophet's work is done, he wishes no longer to live in the world. The verses spoke of the imminent victory of Islam. This victory had a sad side and that was the impending departure of the Prophet from this world." 'Umar complimented Ibn Abbas and said that when the verses were revealed only Abu Bakr understood their meaning.



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## THIS BOOK

This book presents the stories of six prophets: Ibrahim, Lut, Ismail, Ishaq, Ya'qub, and Yusuf (PBUT), reviews the major events in their stories, and discusses the lessons learned from them. This book also includes a review of the Madinan era in the mission of prophet Muhammad (PBUH), highlights the stances and sacrifices made by him and Muslims around him, draws lessons from the different events in this era, and studies important positions in Islamic da'wah. All of that is written in an easy and contemporary style.

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