Historical Events in Madinah in the Life of Holy Prophtet ((S.A.W

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THE CONQUEST OF MAKKA

In 6 A.H., the treaty of Hudaybiya had been signed by the chiefs of the Quraish of Makka and the Holy Prophet (S). An important clause of this treaty stated that there would be no fighting between the two parties or their allies. In the years following the treaty, there was general peace and the Muslims went freely to Makka to perform their pilgrimage in the presence of thousands of idol worshippers who were the enemies of Islam.

In the month of Jamadil Awwal of 8 A.H., the Holy Prophet (S) sent 3,000 soldiers to the frontiers of Syria, to punish the Romans for killing unprotected Muslim missionaries in a cruel manner. The Muslims however, did not engage in full battle but retreated after a few attacks. Although very few Muslim lives were lost, the expedition was not as successful as had been expected. When the Quraish heard the news, they thought that the military might of the Muslims had weakened and they got bold and decided to disturb the peaceful situation.

The first action of the Quraish was to encourage their friends, the Bani Bakr, to launch an unexpected attack on the people of Bani Khuza'ah, who were the allies of the Muslims and under their protection. The Bani Khuza'ah, who were caught by surprise could not offer much resistance and were killed in their beds and in prayers. The ones who remained alive were made prisoners.

When the news reached the Holy Prophet (S), he promised to avenge the innocent blood of the Bani Khuza'ah. The Quraish, on hearing that the Muslims were taking this breach of the peace treaty very seriously, began to regret their hasty action. To try and calm things down, they sent Abu Sufyan to Madina with instructions to hide the details of their crimes by all means.

When Abu Sufyan arrived in Madina, he went straight to the house of his daughter, Umme Habiba, who was the wife of the Holy Prophet (S). When he wanted to sit on a mattress that was used by the Holy Prophet (S), his daughter folded it up. Abu Sufyan asked, "Did you not think that the bedding was suitable for me, or was I not suitable for it?". His daughter replied, "I do not wish that a person who is an unbeliever and Najis should sit on the bedding of the Holy Prophet (S)."

The experience at his daughter's house left Abu Sufyan very uneasy but he decide to go to

meet the Holy Prophet (S) anyway. When he met him, Abu Sufyan talked unashamedly of strengthening the bond of peace between the Muslims and the Quraish, as if their actions against the allies did not matter. However, the Holy Prophet (S) remained silent, thus showing him that he did not care for the proposal at all.

Abu Sufyan realised that he had no chance of changing the mind of the Holy Prophet (S) or stopping the revenge of the Muslims, so he returned to Makka to warn the Quraish.

The Holy Prophet (S) decided to use this opportunity to bring Makka under the control of Islam once and for all. However, he wanted to capture this last base of the idol worshippers with as little bloodshed as possible. He planned to move swiftly and secretly to Makka with a huge army. He hoped that when the Makkans would be faced with a powerful army that appeared by surprise, they would lose heart in fighting.

According to this plan, the Holy Prophet (S) mobilised the Muslim army on the 10th of Mahe-Ramadhan 8 A.H., and marched towards Makka with about 10,000 men. When they reached a place called Kadid a few miles from Madina, the Holy Prophet (S) and the Muslims broke their fasts. Then they continued onward towards Makka.

Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, who was the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S), lived in Makka and used to inform the Holy Prophet (S) about the decisions of the Quraish. Although he was a Muslim, he had good relations with the chiefs of the Quraish. While the Holy Prophet (S) was proceeding towards Makka, Abbas left towards Madina and met him at a place called Ju'fah. The presence of Abbas proved very useful in the conquest of Makka.

The Muslim army finally stopped to camp a few miles from Makka. The Makkans, who were unaware of the Muslim presence, were shocked when they suddenly saw the hills around Makka light up with hundreds of fires from the Muslim camp. Abu Sufyan and some other chiefs of the Quraish came out of Makka to investigate. He was met by Abbas, who protected him from the swords of the Muslims and guided him to the Holy Prophet's (S) tent.

When the Holy Prophet (S) saw him, he said, "Has the time not come for you to accept that there is no god but Allah ?" However, Abu Sufyan was not very willing to give up his belief in idols. Seeing him hesitate, Abbas warned him that if he waited for much longer, his life would not be safe. Abu Sufyan realised the danger he was in, and accepted Islam, although in his heart the hatred for the Holy Prophet (S) burned as strong as ever.

Although the Holy Prophet (S) was well aware that Abu Sufyan had only become a Muslim to save his life, he decided to accept the man's words because it would help to secure the city of Makka without bloodshed. In order to show Abu Sufyan that he did not have any ill feelings against him, the Holy Prophet (S) declared, "Abu Sufyan is authorised to assure the people of

Makka that whoever takes refuge within the Masjidul Haraam around the Holy Ka'ba or lays down his weapons or stays in his house or takes refuge in the house of Abu Sufyan will remain safe from the action of the army of Islam."

The Holy Prophet (S) wished to show Abu Sufyan the military strength of the Muslim army so that he would tell the rest of the Quraish how useless it would be to try and fight the Muslims. Abbas, the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S), detained Abu Sufyan in a narrow valley so they could watch the Muslim army march past.

The power and grandeur of the entire Muslim army left Abu Sufyan frightened, and all thoughts of resistance vanished from his mind. The Holy Prophet (S) set him free to return to Makka. Abu Sufyan told the Makkans what he had seen and gave them the message of the Holy Prophet (S). He further added that it would be impossible to attack an army so large and well equipped. The morale of the Makkans was completely weakened when they heard the words of Abu Sufyan.

The Holy Prophet (S) entered the city of Makka with great dignity riding on his camel al-Qaswa. Nobody stood to oppose him. He stopped at the side of the grave of his uncle Abu Talib and pitched his tent at that place.

Each unit of the Muslim army entered the city through different gates with no incident except for the unit of Khalid bin Walid. Some people tried to stop him and fighting broke out which was stopped by the Holy Prophet (S). Soon, the entire city of Makka surrendered to the Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) won the hearts of the Makkans by saying that he would take no revenge for their past actions, and that they were all free.

He then mounted his camel and proceeded towards the Holy Ka'ba for Tawaaf. During the first round of Tawaaf, he turned towards the three big idols named Hubal, Isaf, and Na'ilah, which had been put above the door of the Holy Ka'ba. He knocked them down with a stick he was carrying and recited the following verse from the Holy Qur'an:

Say, "Truth has come and falsehood has been banished; and falsehood is certainly doomed to banishment." Surah Bani Israa'il, 17:81

The Holy Prophet (S) then entered the Holy Ka'ba to clear it of the idols that were in there. He broke many idols himself. Some of them were placed too high for him to reach, so he asked Imam Ali (A) to stand on his shoulders and pull the idols down. Thus, the last traces of idol worship were removed from the Holy Ka'ba and Masjidul Haraam.

By now the time for Zuhr prayers had set in. The Holy Prophet (S) asked Bilal to recite the Adhaan. All the Muslims offered their prayers led by the Holy Prophet (S), who then delivered a speech in which he summarised the message of Islam. The entire population of Makka then

offered their allegiance to the Holy Prophet (S).

Allah had kept the promise he had made to his beloved Prophet (S) when He said in the Holy Qur'an: (O Muhammad,) Allah Who has commanded you to follow the guidance of the Qur'an will certainly return you victoriously to your place of birth. Surah al-Qasas, 28:85

THE BATTLE OF HUNAYN

The news of the fall of Makka created great surprise and disturbance among the surrounding tribes. Some of the tribes living around Makka decided to join up and fight the Holy Prophet (S) together.

Meanwhile, the Holy Prophet (S) left Makka after having stayed there for fifteen days. He appointed a guide to educate and instruct the people and entrusted the government and administration of the city, as well as the duty of leading prayers in the mosque, to a pious Muslim from Madina. The tribes who had gathered to fight the Muslims waited for them in the hills of Hunayn. The Holy Prophet (S), learning of their intentions, marched towards them riding at the head of a huge force of 12,000 Muslims.

The commander of the enemy army sent three spies into the Muslim army to find out their strength. The spies returned with their hearts full of fear at the power of the Muslims. On hearing their bad news, the enemy became demoralised. Their commander knew he was hopelessly outnumbered, so he decided to fight the Muslims by making a surprise attack when they crossed the mountain pass leading into Hunayn. This battle took place in 8 A.H. When the Muslim army arrived at the narrow pass, they were forced to march in small groups. Moreover, they were overconfident because of their huge numbers, and this made them careless.

As soon as the Muslims entered the pass, the enemy attacked them from above with stones and arrows. Thereafter, a special group of skilled soldiers came down the mountain side and attacked the Muslims with their swords. The sudden attack broke up the Muslim ranks and they lost their courage. Many of them began to run away from the battle, despite the command of the Holy Prophet (S) to stay and fight. The enemy made the Holy Prophet (S) their chief target, hoping to kill him and finish the war there and then. When Imam Ali (A) realised their intention, he stood next to the Holy Prophet (S) and the enemy could not overcome his skill at combat.

A famous warrior by the name of Abu Jundal came out to fight from the enemy side but unfortunately for him, he came up against Imam Ali (A) and soon lay dead. At this time Imam Ali (A) began to actively attack the enemy and struck terror into their hearts. By the time he stopped fighting, 40 enemy soldiers had been killed by him. The Muslims gained courage from this and returned to the battle.

The enemy could no longer contain the Muslims, who fell upon them from all sides. By the end of the war a further 30 enemy soldiers were killed. On leaving the battlefield of Hunayn, some unbelievers gathered at Ootas to regroup and fight again. The Holy Prophet (S) sent a large force to deal with them. Eventually the Muslims won this battle, but not before their commander had been killed. They also took a large number of prisoners and war booty. The prisoners included the daughter of the foster mother of the Holy Prophet (S), Halimah Sa'dia. The Holy Prophet (S) received her with great honour and sent her back to her tribe under his own arrangements.

In the battles of Hunayn and Ootas, a large number of Muslims were killed in the initial confusion. Overall, it was a victory for the Muslims, because the enemy fled leaving behind 6,000 captives, 24,000 camels, 40,000 sheep and 4,000 Waqih of silver. (One Waqih equals 213 grams approximately.)

Allah has referred to this battle in the Holy Qur'an in the following words: Allah has helped you on many occasions including the day of Hunayn; when you were happy with the number of your men who proved to be of no help to you and the whole vast earth seemed to have no place to hide you (from your enemies), and you turned back in retreat. Surah at-Tawbah, 9:25 The Holy Prophet (S) ordered that the entire war booty be transferred to a place called Ja'rana until he returned from Ta'if.

THE BATTLE OF TA'IF

Ta'if is one of the fertile country towns of Arabia. It is situated to the south-east of Makka. On account of its fine weather, gardens and palm groves, the town of Ta'if was the centre of a group of people who led very comfortable lives. This town was inhabited by the Bani Saqeef who were one of the most powerful and popular tribes of the Arabs. The Bani Saqeef were amongst the people who fought against Islam in the battle of Hunayn. After suffering a defeat in this battle, they took refuge in a strong fort in their own town.

In order to complete the victory after the battle, the Holy Prophet (S) sent some men to pursue the Bani Hawaazan in Ootas while he marched with the rest of the army to Ta'if.

The fort of Ta'if was situated at a great height and had very strong walls, and its watch towers fully controlled the outside area. The army of Islam proceeded to surround the fort, but it had not yet been completely encircled when the enemies attacked with a shower of arrows and killed some Muslims. Salman Farsi suggested to the Holy Prophet (S) that the fort of the enemy might be stoned by means of large catapults. The Muslim soldiers erected a catapult and stoned the interior and towers of the fort for about 20 days. However, the enemies continued to shoot arrows and thereby inflicted injuries to the soldiers of Islam.

In order to make the enemy surrender, it was necessary to attack it from all sides. A military vehicle was made of wood and was covered with thick leather. Strong soldiers took their places inside it and pushed it towards the fort and began making holes in the wall under its cover. However, the enemies threw melted iron on top of the vehicle and burnt the roof covering. The Muslim soldiers became exposed to enemy arrows and so this tactic had to be abandoned.

The Bani Saqeef were rich and possessed a large number of slaves. In order to get information about the state of affairs inside the fort and to assess the strength of the enemy, the Holy Prophet (S) announced that those slaves who came out of the fort and took refuge with the army of Islam, would become free. This message proved effective to some extent and about 20 slaves escaped from the fort very skilfully and joined the Muslims. From them, it was learnt that those within the fort were not prepared to surrender at any cost, and even if the siege continued for one year they would not be faced with any shortage of food and provisions.

The Holy Prophet (S) decided that the conquest of the fort would require further activity and patience, and he did not wish to prolong the war for several reasons. These were:

The siege of the fort had already resulted in the deaths of 13 Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) did not want more Muslims to be killed. The Muslim army was becoming restless at the lack of results and wanted to receive their share of booty from the battles of Hunayn and Ootas. The month of Shawwal was coming to an end and the month of Zilqad was approaching. This is one of the four months during which war is forbidden. The Haj season was near and the Holy Prophet (S) wanted to take advantage of it as it was the best occasion to spread Islam further.

Keeping all these matters in mind, the Holy Prophet (S) gave up the siege of Ta'if and proceeded along with his soldiers to distribute the war booty in Ja'rana.

In the distribution of the booty, the Holy Prophet (S) gave larger shares to the newly converted Muslims. From his own share, he gave big gifts to the chiefs of Quraish. Such people are known as Mu'allafatul Qulub (those whose hearts are encouraged towards Islam.) This gesture of the Holy Prophet (S) made the new converts come closer to Islam, but upset the older Muslims, especially the Ansar.

The Holy Prophet (S) came to learn of their disappointment and addressed them as follows, "O group of Ansar! Why have you been grieved because I have given some small property to the Quraish so that they may become steadfast in Islam, when I have given over Islam to you? Are you not satisfied that while others take away camels and sheep, you shall take away the Prophet with you? By Allah! If all other people go one way and the Ansar go the other way, I will choose the way of the Ansar." Then he called for Allah's blessing for the Ansar and their

children. The words of the Holy Prophet (S) made the Ansar weep with shame and they said, "O Prophet of Allah! We are content with our share."

While he was still in Ja'rana, the Holy Prophet (S) was approached by the Bani Hawaazan who surrendered to the Muslims and requested the release of their relatives. The Holy Prophet (S) released all the prisoners who had fallen in his share and the share of the other members of Bani Hashim. When they heard of his action, all the Muslims did the same. In this way about 6,000 prisoners were released.

On the 18th of Zilqad 8 A.H., the Holy Prophet (S) performed Umrah and then left for Madina after appointing a deputy in Makka. On his way to back to Madina, he paid a visit to the grave of his mother in Abwa. The Holy Prophet (S) arrived back in Madina on the 1st of Zilhaj, having been away for three months.

THE BATTLE OF TABUK

The expanding power of the Muslims across Arabia worried the neighbouring non-Muslim rulers. One such ruler was the Kaiser of Rome, King of Byzantine. When he saw that the government of Makka had fallen and the chiefs of the Quraish had become Muslims, he felt that his own empire was under threat. Therefore, in 9 A.H., he decided to launch a surprise attack on the Muslims.

Syria was one of the colonies of the Roman Empire and its capital was Constantinople. The people were Christians and took orders directly from the Kaiser. On the road leading from Hijr to Damascus there was a strong fort called Tabuk. The Kaiser sent out an army of 4,000 mounted soldiers equipped with the latest armour and weapons to fight the Muslims. The Roman army decided to camp at the fort and await further orders.

When the trade caravans returned to Arabia from Syria, they informed the Holy Prophet (S) that the Romans were gathering an army at the borders of Syria. The Holy Prophet (S) realised that the threat to the Muslim state would have to be stopped, so he sent messages to Makka and around Madina asking the Muslims to come to fight in the path of Allah . He also asked the rich people to provide for the expense of war by paying their Zakaat. At the call of the Holy Prophet (S), 30,000 Muslims gathered near Madina, ready to participate in battle.

10,000 of these men were mounted soldiers, while the rest were infantry men. At that time it was extremely hot in Madina. A hypocrite leader called Abdullah bin Ubayy started weakening the spirit of some Muslims by warning them of the great strength of the enemy and the difficulty of marching the long distance to Tabuk in the terrible heat. With his words this hypocrite managed to change the minds of some members of his own tribe, the Khazraj.

The following verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed at this time.

They did not wish to strive in Allah's way with their wealth and their selves; and they said (to the others), "Do not go in the heat". Say (O Muhammad), "The fire of Hell is fiercer in heat"; if only they could understand. Surah at-Tawbah, 9:81 The day of departure of the Muslim army arrived, and the Holy Prophet (S) addressed the soldiers to strengthen their morale. Then the army marched out of Madina towards Tabuk.

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (A), had always been in the front of every Islamic battle. However, in the Battle of Tabuk, he stayed back in Madina on the orders of the Holy Prophet (S) himself. The Holy Prophet (S) knew that Tabuk was the farthest place that he had travelled for battle, and that there was a strong chance that anti-Islamic groups might create disturbance in Madina in his absence.

Although he had appointed Muhammad bin Maslamah to act as his representative, he also left Imam Ali (A) in Madina to discourage any mischief makers. The people who had decided to cause trouble in the absence of the Holy Prophet (S), were dismayed at the presence of Imam Ali (A), who was constantly alert. To get Imam Ali (A) out of Madina, they started a rumour that the Holy Prophet (S) was not happy with him and that was why he had left him behind.

In order to clarify the position Imam Ali (A) followed the Holy Prophet (S) and met him at a place called Jaraf. When the Holy Prophet (S) heard what the hypocrites were saying in Madina, he uttered a very famous statement that is clear proof of the right of Caliphate of Imam Ali (A). He said, "O my brother! Return to Madina, because no one is more suited to preserve the dignity and position of Madina than myself and you. Don't you feel happy when I say that your relationship with me is similar to the one between Haroon (A) and Musa (A), except that no Prophet will come after me? Just as Prophet Haroon (A) was the immediate successor of Prophet Musa (A), you are my successor and Caliph after me."

The journey of the Muslim army was filled with difficulties and the weather was extremely hot. At one point they ran out of water but there was a heavy shower of rain that brought relief to the advancing army. Finally, the Muslims reached Tabuk but the Romans had already retreated when they received news of the size and strength of the Muslim forces. The Holy Prophet (S) stayed in Tabuk for 20 days and when the enemy did not come back, he decided to return to Madina.

The journey to Tabuk was not wasted because the Holy Prophet (S) managed to get most of the surrounding chiefs to accept Islam while the others agreed to pay tax to the Muslim state in return for protection. Furthermore, the Romans changed their mind about ever disturbing Muslim territories after having seen the might of the Muslim army.

On the way back, the Holy Prophet (S) passed the valley of Uqba through a narrow hilly road with steep slopes on either side. Huzayfa bin Yamani and Ammar Yasir were helping the Holy Prophet (S) to ensure his safe passage, when suddenly there was some lightning. In the flash of light the Holy Prophet (S) and Huzayfa saw a group of people who were waiting to push the Holy Prophet (S) down the slope. When they were seen, the people ran away. Although their faces were masked, the Holy Prophet (S) told Huzayfa each and every one's identity and asked him never to reveal this knowledge.

The Holy Prophet (S) did not want revenge on these people in case he was accused of killing the people who had helped him to secure power. Since then, Huzayfa was always known as "."Keeper of the Holy Prophet's (S) secret

THE EVENT OF MUBAHILA

In the early days of Islam, Najran was a large centre of people who had changed from idol worship to Christianity. The Holy Prophet (S) had sent letters to the heads of different countries inviting them to Islam. One such letter was addressed to the Christians of Najran. It read as follows: "In the Name of the God of Ibrahim, Ishaaq and Ya'qub.

This letter is from Muhammad, the Prophet and Messenger of Allah to the Asqaf (Bishop) of Najran.

Praise be to the God of Ibrahim, Ishaaq and Ya'qub. I invite you to worship Allah instead of (His) servants. I invite you to come out of the rule of the servants of Allah and into the rule of Allah Himself. If you do not accept my invitation, then you should (at least) pay Jizya (tax) to the Islamic State (so that your lives and properties may be protected), otherwise you are warned of a danger."

By using the names of the ancient Prophets (A), the Holy Prophet (S) wanted to let the Christians of Najran know that the belief in One God he was teaching was the same as that preached by the previous Prophets Ibrahim, Ishaaq and Ya'qub (A), in whom they also believed. It is also mentioned that the Holy Prophet (S) included the following verse of the Holy Qur'an in the letter:

Say, (O Muhammad), "O people of the Book (Bible), come to an agreement between us and you; that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall claim no partner to Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords besides Allah." And if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims (those who have surrendered to Allah)." Surah Aali Imran, 3:6]

When this message was delivered to Abu Haris, who was the Asqaf and leader of the Church, he read it carefully and then appointed a committee of some religious and wise people to decide on the matter. One of them, who was an experienced and intelligent person, advised

that a group representing the people of Najran should go to Madina to study the claim of Prophethood by the Holy Prophet (S).

60 people, considered to be the most wise and knowledgeable from the people of Najran, were elected. They were led by three of their religious men. The group arrived in Madina and entered the mosque wearing silken clothes, golden rings and crosses around their necks. On seeing them dressed in this fashion, the Holy Prophet (S) was disturbed and he ignored them. They realised that something was wrong but were unsure as to what to do.

On the advice of Imam Ali (A) the delegation of Najran changed their style of dress to simple clothes and removed their ornaments. They then returned to the Holy Prophet (S) who received them with a warm welcome. Before they entered into a discussion, they requested for permission to say their prayers and this was granted. They were put in one part of the mosque where the could pray with ease and comfort. Then the following conversation took place:

The Holy Prophet (S): I invite you towards the belief of Tawhid and the worship of One God and submission to His will. (Then he recited verse 64 of Surah Aali Imran.)

Christians Fathers: If Islam means faith in the One God of the Universe, we already believe in Him and follow His Commands. The Holy Prophet (S): Islam has a few signs and some of your actions show that you have not accepted true Islam. How do you claim worship of One God when you worship the cross and do not abstain from eating pork and believe that God has a son?

A Christian Father: Certainly he [Isa (A)] was the son of God because his mother Mary [Maryam (A)] had given birth to him without marrying anyone in this world. Therefore obviously his father is the God of this Universe. We also believe in Jesus [Isa (A)] as God because he used to bring the dead back to life, cure the sick and create birds from clay and make them fly. All this points to the fact that he is God.

The Holy Prophet (S): No, he was the servant and creature of God, and placed in the womb of his mother Maryam (A). All his power and strength was granted to him by God.

At this time, angel Jibraeel (A) brought the following verse of the Holy Qur'an from Allah : Surely the example of Isa to Allah is like that of Adam; He created him from dust, and then said to him, "Be!" and he was. Surah Aali Imran, 3:59

This meant that if Isa (A) could be called the son of God because of the fact he was born without a father, then Adam (A) deserved this title more, because he was born without a father or mother. The Christian Fathers could not reply to this argument but they continued to argue out of obstinacy. Then the following verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed:

And whoever argues with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say,

"Come, let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves, then let us humbly pray (to our Lord) and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars.

Surah Aali Imran, 3:61

The Holy Prophet (S) produced this verse before the Christians and declared the challenge of "Mubahila", which means to curse one another. The Christians consulted each other and announced their acceptance of the challenge. Then they returned to their camp. When the Christians of Najran returned to their tents after accepting the challenge of Mubahila, their leader advised them in these words: "Tomorrow if Muhammad comes out of his house with the members of his family, then you should never agree to Mubahila. But if he brings his companions, then you need not fear at all and you should certainly go for to Mubahila."

He knew that the Mubahila was a question of life and death for both the sides, including their family members. If the Holy Prophet (S) had the slightest doubt in the truth of the message of Islam, he would not have given the challenge of Mubahila to the Christians. If he had the slightest fear of the curse affecting him and the close members of his family, he would not have considered coming out with them to face the Christians. It was agreed between the two parties that the contest would take place the next day in the open desert outside the city of Madina. On the 24th of Zilhaj 9 A.H., the Holy Prophet (S) came out for Mubahila. He held Imam Husain (A) in his arms and he held Imam Hasan (A) by his hand. Bibi Fatimah (A) came behind him, while behind her came Imam Ali (A). The Holy Prophet (S) said to them, "when I pray you should say Ameen."

In obedience to the verse of Mubahila sent by Allah , the Holy Prophet (S) had brought Imam Hasan (A) and Imam Husain (A) as his "sons", Bibi Fatima (A) as his "women" and Imam Ali (A) as his "self".

The Christian Fathers, on seeing the beautiful and shining faces in front of them became spellbound. Their hearts trembled and they began to shake on seeing the power radiating from Ahlul Bayt (A). Their leader asked someone, "who are these persons, who have come with Muhammad?" The man told him the names and their relationship with the Holy Prophet (S). He could hold his patience no longer and he cried out, "by God, I am seeing such faces that if they were to pray to God to move the mountain, God Almighty would move the mountain for them. Oh you people of Najran, if you contest with Muhammad in this prayer of invoking curses on the liars, then I warn you that all of you will be destroyed and not a single soul will remain on this earth. I feel that it would be better to surrender to them and obey them." When the Holy Prophet (S) heard these words he remarked, "by God, had the Christians of Najran contested with us, they would have been transformed into monkeys and swines. Fire would have rained

over them."

When the Christian Fathers backed away from Mubahila, the Holy Prophet (S) gave them two choices; either to accept Islam or agree to come to terms. The Christians would not agree to accept Islam and therefore a treaty was signed on the following terms:

1. Every year, the Christians of Najran would give to the Islamic Government two thousand pieces of clothing, the cost of which would be forty dirhams each.
2. They would also provide 30 horses, 30 camels, 30 battle armours and 30 spears, temporarily to the Muslim army, if the Holy Prophet (S) needed these in any war.

The treaty was dictated by the Holy Prophet (S), written by Imam Ali (A) and had the signatures of four companions of the Holy Prophet (S) as witnesses.

In addition to the above, the treaty also had the following words:

"..... The people of Najran will remain under the protection of Allah and His Prophet Muhammad (S). Their lives, their religion, their lands and property, will all remain safe and it will be the responsibility of Allah and His Prophet (S) to protect them. This treaty holds good for all people of Najran, whether they are present here or not, whether they are members of the tribe or dependent upon them, whether they are slaves or servants. No change will be made in their rights or privileges....."

One of the important conditions agreed in this treaty was that the people of Najran would not deal in usury (interest taking) of any sort, otherwise the Holy Prophet (S) would not remain bound by the treaty with them.

After the Christian returned home, a few respectable persons from Najran came to Madina and willingly accepted Islam and became true Muslims. The event of Mubahila is an extremely important part of history because it shows how close the Ahlul Bayt were to the Holy Prophet (S) and Allah . Imam Ali (A) used to be called the "Soul of the Prophet" after the event, because .the Holy Prophet (S) took him to the field of Mubahila as his soul

A PLOT TO KILL THE HOLY PROPHET (S)

In 9 A.H., during the Haj season, the Holy Prophet (S) asked Imam Ali (A) to read out an official declaration to the people. This event took place at Mina, and the message stated that Allah and the Holy Prophet (S) were disgusted with the practice of idol worship and would not tolerate it any more. The idol worshippers were told that they had four months in which to decide to embrace Islam or to get ready for total war. This message had a very deep and quick effect. Those tribes who had remained stubborn and continued with their evil habits and foolish superstitions and beliefs now began to change their thoughts. Many tribes sent their representatives to have discussions with the Holy Prophet (S) at his headquarters in Madina.

Even before the four months deadline had passed, the entire Arabia came under the banner of Islam and not a single idol temple, idol or idol worshipper remained in it. People of Yemen, Bahrain and Yamamah also embraced Islam.

Despite the fact that nobody dared to openly challenge the authority of the Holy Prophet (S), there were many hypocrites who waited for a chance to do him and Islam harm.

The chiefs of the Bani Aamir tribe were widely known for their obstinacy and mischief. Two of their chiefs named Aamir and Arbad decided to go to Madina at the head of a delegation. Under the excuse of becoming Muslims, they wanted to somehow try to kill the Holy Prophet (S). Their plan was that while one of them engaged the Holy Prophet (S) in conversation, the other would attack him and kill him.

The other members of the delegation, who were not aware of these evil plans, expressed their belief in Islam and the Holy Prophet (S). However, Aamir did not mention anything about Islam but kept on asking the Holy Prophet (S) for a private discussion. The Holy Prophet (S) replied that it would not be possible to meet him alone until he became a Muslim. When Aamir looked over to Arbad for support, he found him curiously calm, as if he had forgotten the whole plan. The truth was that when Arbad had tried to draw his sword he was filled with terror and awe at the presence and personality of the Holy Prophet (S). He was frozen in his place and quite useless to Aamir.

At last despairing of any help from Arbad, Aamir stood up and declared his enmity for the Holy Prophet (S) and threatened to fill Madina with an army. The Holy Prophet (S) could have destroyed the men if he wished, but instead he only prayed to Allah to protect him and the Muslims from their mischief. These prayers were soon answered because Aamir contracted a horrible disease on his journey home, while Arbad was struck by lightning on his way and burnt to death.

Thus, Allah protected the Holy Prophet (S) from his enemies and gave him a chance to taste the fruits of his efforts after all his difficult years of preaching the religion of Islam. In just twenty years, the religion that had the entire Arabia against it, was now the official religion. It .(was indeed a time of great satisfaction for the Holy Prophet (S

THE FAREWELL HAJ

Since the time when Prophet Ibrahim (A) had built the Holy Ka'ba, it had been a place of worship. Over the years, this worship had deteriorated into strange and undesirable practices. People used to dance naked around the Holy Ka'ba, and they had installed idols inside it. Even after the conquest of Makka by the Muslims, when these idols were broken, the people did not know how to perform the Haj ceremonies properly.

For this reason, Allah commanded the Holy Prophet (S) to participate personally in the Haj in 10 A.H., so that the people would remain in no doubt as to how it should be performed. He could also use the opportunity to practically demonstrate the obligatory actions (Wajibaat) and discard the old and undesirable practices. He could also instruct the people about the boundaries of Mina and Arafaat and teach them about the times of departure from these places.

With these purposes in mind, the Holy Prophet (S) made arrangements to undertake the journey. In the eleventh Islamic month of Zilqad he announced that he was going to perform the Haj that year. This news caused great interest amongst the Muslims and thousands gathered outside Madina awaiting the departure of the Holy Prophet (S).

The Holy Prophet (S) proceeded toward Makka on the 28th of Zilqad 10 A.H. He took with him 60 animals for sacrifice. At the mosque of Shajarah, he put on his Ehram, which consisted of two plain sheets of cloth. While putting on the Ehram he recited the well known prayer that begins with "Labbayk", which is a reply to the call of Prophet Ibrahim (A). He continued this until he reached Makka, where he discontinued the recital. In Makka, the Holy Prophet (S) proceeded straight to the Holy Mosque, Masjidul Haraam, entering it through the gate of Bani Shaybah. Here he began to glorify Allah and sought blessings for Prophet Ibrahim (A).

During Tawaaf, he first stood opposite the Black Stone, and then went round the Holy Ka'ba seven times. Thereafter he stood behind Maqame Ibrahim (A) and offered two raka'ats of prayers of Tawaaf. After that he began the Sa'i, which is the walking between the hills of Safa and Marwah seven times. He began his Sa'i at the hill of Safa and finished at Marwah.

The Holy Prophet (S) then turned to the pilgrims and said, "Those who have not brought animals to sacrifice should come out of the state of Ehram and perform Taqseer, the shortening of hair or nails. They should treat whatever they have already performed to be Umrah and then wear the Ehram for Haj. However, I and some others who have brought animals for sacrifice shall remain in the condition of Ehram till we have slaughtered the animals in Mina."

During this time Imam Ali (A) joined the Holy Prophet (S) in Makka from Yemen. He entered Makka with his soldiers and brought with him the pieces of cloth which were paid by the people of Najran as tribute. He had also brought some animals for sacrifice and thus remained in Ehram.

After the Umrah was over the Holy Prophet (S) awaited the time of Haj. He did not stay at anyone's house in Makka but pitched his tent outside the city. On the 8th of Zilhaj the Holy Prophet (S) proceeded to Arafaat via Mina and stayed at Mina till sunrise on the 9th of Zilhaj.

Then he mounted his camel and came to Arafaat. While he was still mounted on his camel, he stopped at a place called Numrah and delivered his famous and historical speech to the thousands of people who had gathered.

The Holy Prophet (S) addressed the people and went through a summary of his teachings to them. He repeated all the major and minor elements of Islamic principles so that there could be no doubt left in their minds. When he finished he offered his noon and afternoon prayers with 100,000 men. The Holy Prophet (S) stayed in Arafaat on the 9th of Zilhaj till the sunset and before the darkness spread, he left for Muzdalifah and spent a part of the night there. He then spent the time between dawn and sunrise in Mash'ar.

On the 10th of Zilhaj he proceeded to Mina and performed the ceremonies of Rami-i Jamaraat (stoning the pillars), sacrifice and Taqseer. Thereafter he proceeded to Makka to perform the final Tawaaf and instructed the people about the closing ceremonies of the Haj. This Haj is known as Hijjatul Wida (the Farewell Haj) because it was the last Haj that the Holy Prophet (S) performed in his life. During this Haj he practically explained every feature of the ceremony, so that there could be no confusion later.

The Holy Prophet (S) was preparing the ground for his departure as he knew that very little time was left for him on earth and soon Allah would call him away to Himself.

THE EVENT OF GHADEER

When the ceremonies of the Haj were over, the Holy Prophet (S) departed from Makka for Madina on the 14th of Zilhaj. When he reached Rabigh, a place 3 miles from Ju'fah, the angel Jibraeel (A) revealed the following verse to him: O Messenger! Convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, it would be as though you have not conveyed His message (at all). Allah will protect you from the people. Surah al- Ma'idah, 5:67

In obedience to this very important command, the Holy Prophet (S) stopped immediately. He gave instructions for an area to be cleared and a pulpit to be made from the saddles of camels. He asked Bilal, who had a loud voice, to call back the people who had gone further and to attract the attention of those who were behind.

The people all gathered at the place which was known as Ghadeer Khum (The pond of Khum). It was noon time and very hot. The Holy Prophet (S) led the congregational prayers and then stood on the pulpit so that all the people could see him. He then gave a sermon, part of which is reproduced below. "All praise is due to Allah Who is the Creator and Lord of all the Universe. It is the duty of everyone to offer Him thanks in comfort as well as in difficult times. I bear witness that I am His servant and creature while He is my Master and Lord. I convey to the people all that He reveals to me for their guidance.

I have been commanded by Allah to tell you that I will soon be taken away from your midst. O People! I am leaving behind two valuable legacies, the Book of Allah and my progeny, the Ahlul Bayt (A). Never shall they separate from one another until they reach me in Heaven at the fountain of Kawthar. As long as you will stay with both my legacies, you will never be led astray after me. Do not lag too far behind them and do not walk ahead of them, for in either event you will go astray. O People! Allah is my Mawla (Master) and I am the Mawla of the believers."

The Holy Prophet (S) then asked the listeners, "O People! Am I not a greater authority (Mawla) over you then your own souls?" All the people replied with one voice, "Yes! O Prophet of Allah ."

Then the Holy Prophet (S) bent down and lifted up Imam Ali (A) with his hands, showing him to the crowds on all sides of the pulpit and proclaimed, "Man Kuntu Mawlahu, fa Hadha Aliyyun Mawlah. (Of whomsoever I am the Master (Mawla), this Ali is also his Master)".

So saying, the Holy Prophet (S) raised his hands towards the heavens and prayed, "O Allah, love those who will love Ali, despise those who will not support him, and reject those who will reject him."

Announcing this thrice, he got down from the raised platform. At this time the angel Jibraeel (A) descended with the following verse: This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favours to you, and have chosen for you the religion Islam. Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:3 The Holy Prophet (S) thanked Allah for His favour and then asked Imam Ali (A) to sit in a tent so that the people could shake hands with him and congratulate him.

Amongst the first people to congratulate Imam Ali (A) on his appointment were Abu Bakr and Umar. Strangely, they were also the first to deny his rights after the Holy Prophet (S) died.

After the formalities regarding the successorship of Imam Ali (A) were completed, the people began to leave for their homes. At Ju'fah, those who had come from Syria and Egypt split from the main caravan, as did the people from Yemen and Hazramaut. However, 10,000 Muslims accompanied the Holy Prophet (S) to Madina, where they arrived just before the start of 10 A.H.

The detailed events of this day are recorded in most books of history of Muslims, by both Shia and non-Shia historians. Although there can be no doubt that Imam Ali (A) was chosen to be the next leader of all the Muslims on this important day, many Muslims ignored this command after the death of the Holy Prophet (S). While Imam Ali (A) was busy arranging his funeral, they chose their own leaders who had no right or qualifications to lead them.

The day of Ghadeer is one of the most important landmarks in our history and the Shia throughout the world joyfully celebrate the day of Idd.

THE LAST HOURS OF THE HOLY PROPHET (S)

The Holy Prophet (S) returned from the Farewell Haj at the end of the month of Zilhaj of 10 A.H. After passing the one month of Muharram, he fell ill at the beginning of Safar 11 A.H. At that time, news was received that the Romans to the north west of Arabia were preparing to attack the Muslim capital of Madina. The Holy Prophet (S) reacted to this dangerous situation by ordering the mobilisation of a huge Muslim army under the command of Usama bin Zayd. He specifically ordered all the Muhajir who had migrated with him to Madina to participate in the battle, except for Imam Ali (A). To arouse the morale of the Muslims the Holy Prophet (S) tied the banner for Usama with his own hands and then instructed him, "Fight in the name of Allah and in His path.

Fight the enemy early in the morning, and cover the distance to that place so quickly that you reach them before they are aware of your march." Usama fixed his camp at Jurf, 3 miles outside Madina, so that the Muslim soldiers could gather there ready for the expedition. Usama was a young man of 20 years and the son of Zayd, who was a freed slave. The people of Madina protested that they did not want to follow such a young commander. When the Holy Prophet (S) heard of the reluctance of the Muslims, he warned them that whoever kept back from Usama's army in spite of his clear orders, would earn the Curse of Allah. Even then, the companions of the Holy Prophet (S) did not proceed, using his illness as an excuse to remain in Madina. As time passed, the condition of the Holy Prophet (S) grew worse and ultimately the expedition of Usama never materialised.

The expedition to Syria under Usama shows that the Holy Prophet (S) had two things in mind. Firstly, he wanted to teach the people that age was not important in the distribution of responsibility and power, and the criteria for leadership were personality and ability.

This valuable lesson was ignored in the following months by Abu Bakr and Umar, who denied the rights of Imam Ali (A) on the grounds that he was too young to lead the people. The second interesting point is the insistence of the Holy Prophet (S) that Imam Ali (A) remain behind while other prominent Muslims should accompany Usama. This was to keep the biggest hypocrites out of Madina so that Imam Ali (A) could take over his appointment as Caliph without interference.

However, the hypocrites were aware of the plan of the Holy Prophet (S) and used his weak condition as an excuse to disobey him. They wanted to make certain that they were in Madina at the time of his death so that the could plot to steal the Caliphate from Imam Ali (A). History shows that Abu Bakr, Umar and others managed to do exactly as they planned. May Allah curse them forever for their treachery.

The Holy Prophet (S) fell seriously ill while he was living in the house of his wife Maimoona. It

was decided that he would stay at the house of his wife Ayesha where everyone could come to meet him. The Holy Prophet (S) was well aware of the plan by the people to deny the right of Imam Ali (A). When his fever took a turn for the worse, he knew that he did not have much time left. He requested the companions around him to bring some paper and a pen so that he could dictate a will for the guidance of the people.

Umar, who at once realised that his plans would not succeed if the Holy Prophet (S) left a written document, protested by saying that the Holy Prophet (S) was out of his mind due to the fever and did not know what he was saying. He stated that the Holy Qur'an was enough for them and that there was no need for a will. Other companions disagreed and there was a loud commotion as they argued. As the voices grew louder, the Holy Prophet (S) felt disturbed and indicated that all of them should leave. It is important for us to realise that this one action of the accursed Umar caused an eternal division between the Muslims and he is responsible for the thousands of deaths that have resulted from conflicts between the Shia and the Sunnis over the centuries.

As the life of the Holy Prophet (S) slipped away, his dear family were around him all the time. Bibi Fatima (A) could not bear the thought of the loss of her beloved father and tears fell continuously from her eyes. The Holy Prophet (S) gently asked her not to weep and then whispered something in her ear that made her stop crying and smile. When she was asked about it later by Ayesha, Bibi Fatima (A) said that her father had told her not to worry because she would be the first after him to leave the world and join him.

The Holy Prophet (S) said his farewell to his companions and kept on reminding them to follow the Holy Qur'an, and not to abandon the Ahlul Bayt, who would guide them on the right path of virtue and truth. He then called his grandsons and hugged them warmly. With tears in his eyes, he kissed Imam Hasan (A) on the mouth and Imam Husain (A) on the neck.

When asked about this he said that one of his grandsons would be given poison to drink while the other would have his neck cut. As the condition of the Holy Prophet (S) worsened, the whole of Madina was immersed in grief, sorrowful at the thought of losing the beloved Prophet of Allah, who had taught them everything about the true path to salvation.

THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF THE HOLY PROPHET (S)

During the last moments of his life, the Holy Prophet (S) opened his eyes and asked for his brother to be called. Ayesha called her father Abu Bakr, but when the Holy Prophet (S) saw him he placed his head back on his pillow and repeated that his brother should be called for. Hafsa, another wife of the Holy Prophet (S) called her father Umar, but the same thing happened. Ayesha then sent for Imam Ali (A) saying that the Holy Prophet (S) would see no one else.

When Imam Ali (A) arrived, the Holy Prophet (S) raised his cloak and took him under its cover. He then placed his head on the chest of Imam Ali (A) and talked to him for a long time. In the last moments of his life a knock was heard on the door. Bibi Fatima (A) told the caller to come later, because her father was very ill. However, the caller was insistent and kept on knocking. Bibi Fatima (A) told him again to come later. When the third knock came, tears welled up in Bibi Fatima's (A) eyes, but her father said to her, "O Fatima, let him in. For it is none other than the Angel of Death. It is only in respect of your presence that he is asking for permission to enter, otherwise he waits for nobody when he comes to take away the soul." Soon afterwards the signs of death began to appear on his face. The last sentence he spoke was, "No. With the Divine Companion". It appears that at the time of his last breath the angel Jibraeel (A) gave him the option to recover from his illness and remain in this world or to allow the Angel of Death to remove his soul so that he may proceed with him (the Divine Companion) to the next world. The Holy Prophet (S) uttered this sentence and passed away on Monday 28th Safar 11 A.H. He was 63 years old.

As the sound of mourning rose from the house of the Holy Prophet (S) the people outside knew that he had breathed his last. Soon afterwards the news of his death spread throughout Madina, plunging everyone into sorrow. Imam Ali (A) bathed the sacred body of the Holy Prophet (S) and shrouded him. The Holy Prophet (S) had directed that his body should be bathed by one who was nearest to him, and such a person could be none else than Imam Ali (A).

The first person to offer the funeral prayers for the Holy Prophet (S) was Imam Ali (A). Thereafter the companions came in groups and offered prayers, and this practice continued till noon on Tuesday. It was then decided to bury the Holy Prophet (S) in the same house where he had passed away.

It was a most tragic event. The great personality who had changed the future of humanity with his efforts and sacrifice was no more. The Holy Prophet (S) had made a great contribution to the welfare of humanity at large. He had spread the message of Allah, practising the religion himself and then asking others to follow him.

He had established the rights of people when everywhere their rights were being violated; he had spread justice when tyranny was the norm; he introduced equality at a time when discrimination was so common; and he gave freedom to the people when they were suppressed by injustice. He had faithfully carried out the great mission entrusted to him by Allah.

The Holy Prophet (S) had always told the people, "I have only been sent to perfect your Akhlaq

(moral character.)" In appreciation of the character of the Holy Prophet (S) himself, the Holy Qur'an testifies:

(O Our Prophet,) Verily for you there is a great unending reward. And most certainly you have outstanding Akhlaq. Surae Qalam, 68 : 3,4 May Allah send His blessings on the Holy Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (S) and his Progeny.