Some Important Events during the Holy Prophet's Mission in Madinah

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THE DECLARATION OF BROTHERHOOD

After his arrival in Madina, the Holy Prophet (S) was faced with a new challenge. For the first time, the Muslims were centralised and arrangements had to be made to run this new Muslim state.

The Holy Prophet (S) faced three main problems. These were:

The danger of attack from the Quraish in Makka and other idol worshippers from the rest of Arabia. The presence of the Jews of Madina who lived within and outside the city and possessed enormous wealth.

The differences which existed between his own supporters.

He tackled the issue concerning the Muslims first. The people who had migrated with him from Makka (Muhajireen) and the local Muslims who lived in Madina (Ansar) had been brought up in different environments and there was a great difference in their thinking and culture. Moreover, the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, who made up the Ansar, were sworn enemies of each other and had been fighting for over a hundred years. The first thing the Holy Prophet (S) did was to create peace between the tribes of Aws and Khazraj. He united them on the basis of their common faith in Islam, and told them to forget their old differences.

Then, the Holy Prophet (S) turned his attention to the needs of the Muhajireen. These brave Muslims had left all their wealth and possessions in Makka to come with the Holy Prophet (S) to Madina. They had no wealth or property. On the command of Allah, the Holy Prophet (S) established brotherhood between the Muhajireen and Ansar. He paired off each Muhajir with one Ansar and declared them brothers. The generous Ansar gave over one half of their wealth to their new brothers so that they could live comfortably in Madina.

At the end of all the pairings, only Imam Ali (A) was left. He asked the Holy Prophet (S) who his brother would be. The Holy Prophet (S) declared, "O Ali, you are my brother in this world as well as the next."

By this simple method, the Holy Prophet (S) ensured the unity of the Muslims and this unity enabled him to concentrate on the other two problems as well. To tackle the issue of security for all citizens of Madina, the Holy Prophet (S) drafted an agreement to establish peace between the Muslims and the Jews. The contents of that document represented a great leap

forward for the unprincipled Arabs.

For the first time, the Arabs were introduced to a Constitution that outlined the principles of freedom, order and justice. We have quoted only a part of that agreement here.

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful. The signatories of the agreement form one nation. If a Muslim kills someone by mistake or becomes a captive, blood-money or ransom should be paid as necessary. The Muslims should support such a person with the expenses of the payment.

Anybody from amongst the Jews who embraces Islam shall be entitled to the assistance of the Muhajireen and the Ansar. There will be no difference between such a person and any other Muslim, and nobody shall oppress him or be his enemy. Groups of Muslims should go for Jihad (Holy War) alternately, so that the blood shed in the path of Allah is divided equally.

If a Muslim kills another Muslim without a just cause and his crime is proved legally, he shall be executed, unless the heirs of the murdered person forgive him. In either case, it is the duty of the Muslims to be united against the murderer. The authority of resolving differences shall always rest with Allah and Muhammad.

When the Muslims fight for the defence of Madina, the Jews must pay their share in the expenses of war. The Muslims and Jews are free to practise their law and religion. Lives of neighbours and those who have been granted asylum are like our own lives, and must be respected. No asylum shall be granted to the Quraish or their allies.

The signatories of this agreement take joint responsibility for the defence of Madina. When the Muslims invite the Jews to conclude peace with the enemy, they should accept the proposal. The Muslims should also accept any such proposal made by the Jews, except when the enemy is opposed to the religion of Islam.

Allah is the Protector of the good and the pious, and Muhammad is His Prophet." This far-sighted document was gladly accepted by most people in Madina. The few Jews who rejected it at first also added their signatures at a later date. Having made arrangements to secure Madina, the Holy Prophet (S) could now concentrate on the threat of the Quraish of Makka.

THE MARRIAGE OF BIBI FATIMAH (A)

Bibi Fatimah (A), the best of all women, was the only daughter of the Holy Prophet (S). Whenever she came into his presence, the Holy Prophet (S) would stand up in respect, not because she was his daughter, but because she possessed the highest qualities of piety and faith amongst all women. Because of the excellence of Bibi Fatimah (A), the Holy Prophet (S) received numerous offers for her hand in marriage from wealthy families and chiefs of tribes. He refused them all, saying that he was waiting for the order of Allah regarding the person to

whom his daughter should be married.

The Muslims realised that the person who married this great lady would not need to be rich and powerful, but would have to possess her qualities of truthfulness, piety and excellence. Therefore, some people suggested to Imam Ali (A) that he should go to the Holy Prophet (S) and place a proposal for himself. Imam Ali (A) also wished this, and he approached the Holy Prophet (S). Imam Ali (A) felt shy at his request but when the Holy Prophet (S) encouraged him to speak what was on his mind, he managed to tell him.

When the Holy Prophet (S) heard the proposal he was so pleased that he smiled and said, "It is a welcome and happy proposal." However, he asked Imam Ali (A) to wait till he asked his daughter. When the Holy Prophet (S) mentioned the proposal of Imam Ali (A) to Bibi Fatimah (A), she remained quiet due to her modesty. The Holy Prophet (S) declared, "Her silence means her consent."

In those days, Imam Ali (A) owned nothing except his sword and battle armour. He was advised by the Holy Prophet (S) to sell the armour to meet the expense of marriage. With the money from the sale, the items of dowry for Bibi Fatimah (A) were purchased.

These consisted of some perfume, a shirt, a black bath robe, a head-dress, a bed made of wood and date palm fibre, two mattresses of Egyptian linen, four pillows, a curtain, a mat, two millstones (for grinding flour), a water skin, a wooden bowl for milk, a container for water, some jars, two silver bangles and one copper vessel.

The marriage ceremony was performed by the Holy Prophet (S) in the month of Ramadhan 2 A.H. All the Muhajireen and Ansar gathered for the wedding, and Imam Ali (A) arranged for a feast (Walimah) in honour of his wife.

The Holy Prophet (S) informed his daughter of the virtues and qualities of her husband. Then he turned to Imam Ali (A) and mentioned the excellence of his daughter and said that if Imam Ali (A) had not been born, there would have been none else to match her. He then divided the duties of life between them. He told Bibi Fatimah (A) to take care of all the household affairs while he made Imam Ali (A) responsible for the outdoor duties. From this marriage Imam Ali (A) and Bibi Fatimah (A) were blessed with two sons, Imam Hasan (A) and Imam Husain (A), .(and two daughters, Bibi Zainab (A) and Bibi Umme Kulthum (A

THE CHANGE OF QIBLAH

When Allah first ordered the Holy Prophet (S) and all Muslims to offer the daily Namaaz, they were required to pray facing Baytul Muqaddas (Jerusalem). This was the practice in Makka and continued in Madina until the seventeenth month after Hijrat.

In Madina, the Jews also said their prayers facing Baytul Muqaddas. They did not like the fact

that the Muslims had the same Qiblah as they did, and tried to use this fact to discredit Islam and the Holy Prophet (S). They said to the Muslims, "Muhammad claims to have a religion whose laws supersede all other previous laws, yet he does not have an independent Qiblah, and offers his prayers facing the Qiblah of the Jews." After the Holy Prophet (S) received this news he used to come out at night and look into the sky awaiting the revelation from Allah about this matter. The following verse was revealed at this time:

Many a time We have seen you turn your face towards heaven. We will make you turn towards a Qiblah that will please you... Surah al-Baqarah, 2:144

The fact that the Qiblah was the same as that of the Jews was also because it was a test of the faith of the people. The true faith of the followers would be tested by seeing if any of them refused or delayed to turn towards the new Qiblah as chosen by Allah . This is confirmed in the Holy Qur'an in the following verse:

…We decreed your former Qiblah only so that We may know the Prophet's true followers and those who were to deny him. It was indeed a hard test, but not for those whom Allah guided... Surah al-Baqarah, 2:143

One day, while the Holy Prophet (S) and the Muslims were praying together, the command came from Allah to change the Qiblah from Baytul Muqaddas to the Holy Ka'ba in Makka. After the Holy Prophet (S) had already completed two raka'ats of the noon prayer, the Angel Jibraeel (A) communicated to him the command of Allah.

He held the hand of the Holy Prophet (S) and turned him towards the Holy Ka'ba in Masjidul Haraam in Makka. The Holy Prophet (S) at once changed his direction in the middle of Namaaz. Imam Ali (A) followed this change immediately. The other Muslims were confused by this action and only a few followed the example of Imam Ali (A).

The mosque where this happened is known as "Masjide Dhul Qiblatain" which means "The Mosque with the Two Qiblahs". This mosque still exists in Madina today.

With modern instruments and science we can pinpoint the exact location of Madina to be at latitude 24 degrees and longitude 39 degrees. This makes the Qiblah 45 degrees south of Madina. The Holy Prophet (S) turned towards the new Qiblah without hesitation. The old and new Qiblahs can still be seen today in Masjide Dhul Qiblatain. It was one of the Holy Prophet's (S) miracles that he turned exactly to face the Holy Ka'ba without the use of any scientific instrument or computation.

The Holy Ka'ba which serves as the Qiblah for all Muslims today has always been respected by the Arabs, even before the Holy Prophet (S). It was for this reason that this new Qiblah served to attract more Arabs towards Islam.

THE BATTLE OF BADR

In the middle of Jamadil Awwal of 2 A.H., a report was received in Madina that a trade caravan was going from Makka to Syria under the leadership of Abu Sufyan.

The Holy Prophet (S) decided to send two men to find out more facts about this caravan. He told them to find out about its route, the number of guards, as well as the nature of the goods they were carrying. The two men gathered the following information: It was a big caravan and all the Makkans had shares in its goods.

The leader of the caravan was Abu Sufyan and it was guarded by 40 men. The goods were loaded on 1,000 camels and were valued at about 50,000 Dinars.

The Quraish had confiscated the property of all the Muslims who had migrated from Makka, and therefore the Holy Prophet (S) decided to also seize the property of the Makkans as compensation. Although the Muslims pursued Abu Sufyan, they could not reach him. However, the time of the return of the caravan was almost certain because the Quraish always used to return from Syria to Makka in the early autumn.

The Holy Prophet (S) left Madina and proceeded towards the valley of Badr, 80 miles away, where he awaited the return of the caravan. Abu Sufyan realised that the Muslims would wait for him at Badr which was a stopping place on the route to Makka, so he sent an urgent message to Makka for help. The Makkans immediately sent out a large army under the command of Abu Jahl to fight the Muslims at Badr. The Holy Prophet (S) was informed of the march of the Makkan army and he asked the Muslims what they thought about engaging in a battle. Although Abu Bakr and Umar wanted to return to Madina, Miqdaad, who was a true Muslim, stood up and declared, "O Prophet of Allah, we are with you and we shall fight."

Meanwhile Abu Sufyan decided to take a longer and different route back home, and avoid Badr. Once he was safely in Makka, he sent a message to Abu Jahl to return, but Abu Jahl was too proud to go back and wanted to crush the Muslims with his large army.

The two armies clashed on 17th of Mahe Ramadhan 2 A.H. The Muslim army consisted of 313 soldiers, having between them only 2 horses and 70 camels. The Makkan army had 900 soldiers, 100 horses and 700 camels. They were much better equipped than the Muslims.

According to Arab custom, there was single combat before the battle began. Three famous warriors, Utbah bin Rabiyyah, Shaybah bin Rabiyyah and Walid bin Utbah challenged the Muslims. Three Muslims, Awf, Ma'uz and Abdullah Rawahah came forward. Because these men were from the Ansar of Madina, Utbah said, "We have no fight with you. Send us our equals."

The Holy Prophet (S) then sent 'Ubaydah, Hamza and Imam Ali (A). Ubaydah faced Utbah,

Hamza faced Shaybah and Imam Ali (A) faced Walid. Hamza and Imam Ali (A) soon killed their opponents, but Ubaydah was badly hurt and later died. Imam Ali (A) then killed Utbah. The Quraish were disturbed to see the skill of the Muslim warriors and began to attack together. The Holy Prophet (S) held back his small army and ordered them to fire arrows at the enemy. This organised attack broke up the ranks of the Makkans and, seeing their confusion, the Holy Prophet (S) ordered a general attack. The Muslims began to fight with conviction and the valley of Badr rang with the sounds of battle. Then Imam Ali (A) tore into the heart of the Makkan army, killing enemy soldiers with terrifying ease. His power and skill with the sword struck terror into the hearts of the Makkans, who began to flee.

Before long, the battle was over and the Muslims had achieved a great victory, despite being outnumbered.

In this battle the Muslims lost 14 men, while 70 Makkans, including their chiefs Abu Jahl, Nawfal, Umayyah and others were killed. Out of these, Imam Ali (A) killed 36 men himself and helped in killing several others.

70 prisoners were taken by the Muslims. The prisoners were treated with much kindness by the citizens of Madina and some became Muslims. "Blessing be on the men of Madina", said one of these prisoners in later days, "they made us ride, while they themselves walked, they gave us wheat and bread to eat when there was little of it; contenting themselves with dates". The rich prisoners paid ransom and were set free. Others were asked to teach 10 children each to read and write while the rest were released by the Holy Prophet (S), and allowed to return to Makka.

The victory at Badr strengthened the faith of the Muslims and warned the unbelievers of Makka that Islam was now a force to be reckoned with. During the same year Allah sent down the command making fasting compulsory on Muslims. The following verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed in this respect: The month of Ramadhan (is) that in which the Qur'an was sent down; a guidance for mankind and clear evidence of guidance and discrimination (between right and wrong). So whoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is ill or on a journey, (he shall fast) the same number of other days... Surah al-Baqarah, 2:185

THE THREE GHAZWAS

The news of the defeat of the Quraish by the Muslims in the Battle of Badr spread throughout Arabia. In Makka, the unbelievers were shocked at their defeat and many said they would not rest till they took revenge for their dead companions. The rich Jews of Madina, Khaybar and Wadiul Quraa became alarmed at the rapid increase in the power and popularity of the Muslims. For these reasons, these two groups became deadly enemies of the Muslims. The

Jews of Bani Qaynqaa lived in Madina with the Muslims, and they controlled most of the businesses in the city. To try to break the strength of the Muslims, they spread rumours against Islam and made fun of the verses of the Holy Qur'an.

The Holy Prophet (S) decided to bring an end to their harmful activities and delivered a warning speech to the Jews in the market-place of Bani Qaynqaa. He said to them, "The fate of the Quraish serves them right. It is a lesson to you as well. I am afraid the same fate will overtake you if you continue with your ways. There are many religious scholars amongst you, and they will confirm that I am the Prophet of Allah because this fact is recorded in your own Book, the Tawrat".

Instead of remaining silent at the words of the Holy Prophet (S), the proud Jews replied that they were not as weak as the Quraish and went on to say many disrespectful things. In reply, the Holy Prophet (S) reminded them of the Islamic Constitution that governed the city of Madina and warned them not to break the law. The Jews were overconfident due to their strength, so they continued to act arrogantly against the Muslims. They were waiting for an excuse to force the Muslims into attack.

One day a Muslim woman went to the market place of the Bani Qaynqaa and a Jew shopkeeper demanded that she remove her veil so that he could see her face. When the lady refused, somebody stitched up her dress in such a way that when she rose, a part of her body was revealed. On seeing the poor woman being insulted in this shameful manner, a Muslim who was present struck the shopkeeper and killed him. At once all the Jews turned on the Muslim and put him to death.

When the Muslims learnt of the massed attack of the Jews on a single Muslim they were extremely angry. The Jews realised that the situation was now serious and so they left their businesses and took refuge in their homes in strong forts outside Madina. The Holy Prophet (S) ordered the Muslims to lay siege on the forts and after 15 days, the Jews surrendered. In return for mercy, the Jews agreed to leave their weapons and wealth behind and leave Madina forever.

Although the Muslims were now free of the poisonous influence of the Bani Qaynqaa, several other plots were being hatched against them all the time and brief accounts of some Ghazwas .are given below. Ghazwa means a battle in which the Holy Prophet (S) himself participated

Ghazwatul Kadar. .1

The tribe of Bani Salim lived in an area called Kadar. News reached Madina that the people of that tribe were gathering arms to attack the Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) went with a small army towards Kadar. The enemies, however, scattered when they heard of his march and the

Holy Prophet (S) returned without any fighting. Later, he sent a second force and this time they engaged the Bani Salim in battle and returned to Madina victorious.

2. Ghazwatus Saweeq.

Abu Sufyan in Makka had vowed to take revenge for the defeat at Badr and came out with 200 men to cause trouble. He did not have an army strong enough to attack Madina directly, so with the help of the chief of the Jewish tribe of Bani Nuzayr, he attacked the Muslims in the region of Ariz. He killed one Muslim and set fire to a palm grove. When the Holy Prophet (S) heard about the incident he came out with a group of men and pursued Abu Sufyan and his warriors. The enemy ran away, leaving behind bags of "Saweeq", (a food prepared with flour and palm dates). The Muslims took possession of these bags and gave this Ghazwa the name Ghazwatus Saweeq.

3. Ghazwa Zil Amr.

Reports were received in Madina that the tribe of Ghaftaan had gathered to attack the Muslims and conquer Madina. The Holy Prophet (S) came out with 450 men to face the enemy. The enemy lost heart and ran to hide in the mountains. In the meantime, due to heavy rain, the clothes of the Holy Prophet (S) had become wet, so he took off some of his clothes and put them to dry on a tree branch.

One of the enemy saw that the Holy Prophet (S) was unarmed, so he came down from the mountain and threatened him with a sword, saying, "Who can save you today?" The Holy Prophet (S) calmly replied, "Allah." The man was so stunned by this confident reply that he lost his nerve and began to tremble. At once the Holy Prophet (S) grabbed the sword and said to him, "And who can save you now?" The man was an idol worshipper and knew that his wooden gods could not help him and he admitted, "None can save me."

The Holy Prophet (S) did not take any action against this man and he became a Muslim and stayed steadfast to the religion till his last days. In these early days of Islam, the Muslims were called to defend their religion time and time again. But they never gave in to the pressure from their neighbouring tribes, who could not stand and watch the increasing strength of Islam.

THE BATTLE OF UHUD

The Makkans were determined to take revenge for their defeat at Badr. Their women could not

accept that their brave champions had been so easily killed by the Muslims, and they mocked their men for their weakness. Abu Sufyan wanted to keep the anger of the people high and he forbade any mourning within Makka until they had fully avenged their dead companions. The emotions of the people were further fuelled by some Jews, who composed poems to incite them to war.

The final straw was when the Holy Prophet (S) blocked the trade routes of the Quraish to Iraq. The chiefs of the Makkans decided that they now had enough reasons to march against the Muslims. The Quraish traders would regain access for their caravans if the Muslims were defeated, so they agreed to pay all the expenses of the proposed war.

Abu Sufyan was aware of the bravery of the Muslims, and he knew that he would have to outnumber them if he wanted to win. He therefore enlisted the tribes of Kanaanah and Saqeef, promising them weapons and full provisions for the journey.

A large number of slaves also joined the Quraish army tempted by promises of freedom. Amongst them was Wahshi, an Ethiopian slave. He possessed great skill in the use of the throwing spear, and had been promised his freedom if he killed the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali (A) or Hamza. Abu Sufyan managed to prepare a large army consisting of 700 armour-clad men, 3,000 camel soldiers, a cavalry of 200 men and a group of foot soldiers. This army marched towards Madina and camped at the foot of the hills of Uhud, on 5th Shawwal 3 A.H.

The Holy Prophet (S) had already received news of the plans of the Quraish from his uncle Abbas, who lived in Makka. After consultation with the Muslims he decided to meet the enemy outside the city limits of Madina for three reasons. These were: Hand to hand fighting in the narrow streets of Madina would be very disorganised and the soldiers could not be used together against the enemy. Moreover, once the enemy was allowed into the city, the lives of the women and children would be in danger.

The enemy could surround the city and control all roads leading out of the city. Such a siege could break the morale of the Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) did not trust some hypocrites like Abdullah Ubayy, and feared that they might harm the Muslims from within the city. The Holy Prophet (S) came out to meet the Quraish with 1,000 men at Uhud, 3 miles outside Madina. Abdullah Ubayy, who had wanted to fight in Madina, then deserted the Muslim army with 300 of his men.

He gave the excuse that the Holy Prophet (S) had taken the advice of younger men over his own. Thus, the Holy Prophet (S) was left with only 700 men. Only 100 of them were armour-clad and between them they had only two horses.

The Holy Prophet (S) began to set up his army in fighting formations. 50 archers were posted

at a pass between the hills of Uhud to guard the army from any attack from the rear. They had strict orders not to leave their post, whatever the outcome of the battle.

The Holy Prophet (S) knew that the Muslims would be worried at being outnumbered in the battle, so he strengthened their morale with an address. He said to them, "It is a difficult task to fight the enemy, and only those who are guided and supported by Allah can remain steadfast. Remember that Allah is with those who obey Him, while Shaitan is the companion of those who disobey Him. Remain firm in Jihad and use it to acquire the blessings that Allah has promised you. None dies in this world until Allah decides." He then told them not to start fighting until orders were given to fight.

On the side of the Makkans, Abu Sufyan had divided his army into 3 parts. The armoured men were placed in the middle. Preparations were now complete and the small band of Muslims stood against the large army of unbelievers, ready to give their lives away for the sake of the defence of Islam. The man who began the Battle of Uhud was Talha bin Abi Talha, a great warrior from the army of Abu Sufyan. He entered the battlefield and challenged the Muslims to individual combat. The challenge was accepted by Imam Ali (A) and very soon Talha's dead body lay on the ground. The standard was taken by his two brothers but they were both cut down by arrows from the Muslims.

Thereafter nine people of the Makkan army took the standard, one after the other, but every one of them was sent to Hell by Imam Ali (A). After them, an Ethiopian soldier by the name of Sawaab came to the field. He had a frightening figure and on seeing him none of the Muslims dared to come forward. This man was killed by Imam Ali (A) by a single blow.

Seeing his men being so easily killed, Abu Sufyan ordered a general attack. The two armies met and the air was filled with the sound of weapons. From the side of the Muslims, Hamza, Abu Dujana and Imam Ali (A) gave a heroic account of their valour and began to create chaos in the army of Abu Sufyan. At this time, the Ethiopian slave Wahshi got behind Hamza unnoticed. With a swift and accurate throw, the accursed man managed to pierce the abdomen of Hamza and kill him. The Muslims continued to attack the enemy successfully and the Makkans began to lose heart. After losing a lot of men they decided that they had had enough and fled the battlefield.

It was at this point that the Muslims made a grave error that cost them dearly. Instead of following the Holy Prophet's (S) orders and pursuing the enemy out of the battlefield, they lay down their own weapons and started gathering the booty. Thinking that the battle was over, the majority of the archers guarding the passage in the hill left their posts to gather the spoils, against the orders of their leader.

One of the Makkan commanders, Khalid bin Walid, was fleeing when he saw the opportunity to attack the Muslims from behind. He gathered his men and launched a furious attack from the rear.

The Muslims were taken so much by surprise that they did not know what to do. In the confusion, their ranks became disorganised. The retreating Makkan forces rallied again and began a fresh onslaught from the front.

The Muslim army's standard bearer, Mus'ab bin Umair was killed. He bore a great facial resemblance to the Holy Prophet (S) and so the Makkans raised a cry that the Holy Prophet (S) had been killed. This threw the Muslims into further chaos and utter dismay.

Many of their famous personalities were disheartened. Some of the weak hearted like Abu Bakr and Umar bin Khattab threw away their swords saying there was no use fighting when the Holy Prophet (S) was no more. Uthman also fled, running so far away that he returned to Madina after 3 days. On the other hand, many valiant soldiers remained faithful and entered the middle of the Makkan ranks determined to fight to their last breath.

This went on until a Muslim saw the Holy Prophet (S) and shouted at the top of his voice that he was still alive. The spirit of the Muslims revived but the Holy Prophet (S) now became the chief target of the Makkan forces. The Makkans attacked him and his two upper teeth were broken by the sword of one of them. He had fallen into a pit where Imam Ali (A) found him and protected him against the continuous furious attack of the Makkans. Other faithful companions, including the brave lady Umme Ammaarah, also prevented the enemy from getting too close to the Holy Prophet (S) and shielded him against the rain of arrows.

It was in this battle that the reputation of Imam Ali (A) was confirmed and he was acknowledged as a master in the field of sword fighting. He fought so hard that his sword broke. The Holy Prophet (S) then gave him own sword "Zulfiqar". In appreciation of the bravery of Imam Ali (A) the voice of the angel Jibraeel (A) was heard from above saying, "There is no warrior except Ali; there is no sword except Zulfiqar."

The Makkan forces had turned the tables but they were too exhausted to push their advantage either by attacking Madina or by driving the Muslims from the heights of the hills of Uhud. They satisfied their desire for revenge by committing horrible brutalities upon the slain and the injured, cutting off their ears and noses and mutilating their bodies. The brave Hamza was amongst the martyrs. His liver was torn out and chewed by Hind, wife of Abu Sufyan.

In this battle, 70 Muslims were martyred and 70 wounded. Imam Ali (A) was also heavily wounded. The Makkans lost 22 warriors, 12 of them at the hands of Imam Ali (A). The defeat of the Muslims was a test for them and through the ashes of the battle they emerged more

.eager and determined to defend their faith and the cause of Islam

THE MISSIONARIES OF ISLAM

After the defeat of the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud, many tribes became bold and started thinking that they could send in their armies to take over Madina. The Muslims, however, had only lost at Uhud because of a lapse in their discipline and they had learnt from their experience very well. They were still a very powerful force. As a warning, the Holy Prophet (S) silenced the tribes who were thinking of attacking Madina, by sending small military units to them to suppress any plots against the Muslims. These military units also prepared the ground for the Holy Prophet (S) to send groups of missionaries to teach the various tribes about Islam. Some of the enemy tribes resorted to deceitful means to weaken Islam. The representatives of some tribes living outside Madina came to the Holy Prophet (S) and claimed that they wished to become Muslims and that they needed someone to teach them and their people about Islam. It was the duty of the Holy Prophet (S) to give this request a positive reply, because the men represented several large tribes. Accordingly, he authorised 10 trained missionaries to accompany the representatives of the tribes.

Once the group were out of the zone of authority of the Muslim government, they revealed their evil intentions. Suddenly they encircled the missionaries. The Muslims had no choice but to draw their swords to defend themselves. Their enemies, however, swore that all they wanted to do was to arrest them and hand them over to the Quraish and claim a reward. The Muslims looked at one another and decided to fight. They replied that they did not believe the words of idol worshippers and bravely resorted to lay down their lives in the path of Islam. All of them were killed, except three. These three persons put away their swords and surrendered, trusting the goodwill of the enemies.

While they were being led away , one of them felt ashamed at having surrendered. He managed to release his hands and took a sword to attack the enemies. The enemies retreated and overcame him by throwing stones at him. When he fell, they stoned him so much that he died and was buried on the spot.

The other two prisoners were handed over to the Quraish in Makka and exchanged for two prisoners of their own. In Makka, a man whose father was killed in the Battle of Badr by the Muslims, purchased one of the missionaries. As revenge, he hanged him. The second man was kept in prison for a time before he too was hanged. Before his death he bravely asked the Makkans for some time to offer his Namaaz. Thus, even as he died, he impressed upon his murderers the strength of his faith in Islam.

When the Holy Prophet (S) heard about the fate of the missionaries, he was very grieved and sent two men secretly to bury the second missionary, whose body had been left hanging on the gallows for several days. A few months later, a man of the tribe of Bani Aamir came to Madina. The Holy Prophet (S) invited him to Islam. The man requested that some people be sent to his tribe in Najd as missionaries. When the Holy Prophet (S) expressed concern for their safety, in view of past experiences, the man said that he himself would stay in Madina so that his tribe would not harm the Muslims.

The Holy Prophet (S) then decided to send 40 learned Muslims to Najd under the leadership of a man called Munzir. He also sent a letter to the chief of one of the other tribes in Najd, inviting him to Islam. However, the chief did not even bother to read the letter and immediately put the bearer to death. He then asked for assistance from the neighbouring tribes to attack the missionaries, who had camped at Najd. Although the tribe of Bani Aamir tried to change his mind, they were outnumbered.

Two of the Muslims were grazing the camels when the attack took place. One was killed but the other, whose name was Amr, managed to escape. The rest of the Muslims were not only senior missionaries, but also brave and well trained in warfare, so they considered it a shame to surrender. They all took up their arms to fight, but they were hopelessly outnumbered by the treacherous enemies. After a brave fight, they were all martyred, except for one man whose name was Ka'b . He was wounded, but managed to reach Madina and gave information about what had happened. These events teach us about the great sacrifices made by the early Muslims in the spreading and defence of Islam. May Allah bless their efforts.

THE BATTLE OF AHZAB

When the Jews of Bani Qaynqaa were expelled from Madina because of their trouble making, their sister tribe, the Bani Nuzayr, were very angry. They became deadly enemies of Islam and waited for an opportunity to do the Muslims harm.

Once the Holy Prophet (S), together with a few companions, went to the fort of the Bani Nuzayr. While he waited outside the fort, the Jews sent one of their men to climb out from inside and kill him by throwing a huge rock on his head. The Holy Prophet (S) came to know of this treacherous scheme just in time and immediately left the place. Since the Bani Nuzayr had broken the treaty which they had signed, the Holy Prophet (S) gave them ten days to leave Madina. After some resistance, they left Madina, demolishing their houses so that the Muslims could not occupy them. They were allowed to take away all the possessions that they could carry, except for weapons of war. Some of them went to Syria and others settled with the Jews

of Khayber.

On settling down at Khayber, the Banu Nuzayr became determined to take revenge on the Muslims. They contacted the Quraish in Makka and 20 leaders from the Jews and 50 from Quraish signed an agreement in the Holy Ka'ba that so long as they lived, they would fight the Holy Prophet (S). Thereafter, the Jews and Quraish contacted their allies and sent agents to a number of tribes for help. In this way, 10,000 soldiers gathered. They then marched upon Madina under the command of Abu Sufyan.

When the news of these preparations reached Madina, the Holy Prophet (S) consulted his companions. Salman Farsi advised to dig a deep and wide ditch on the unprotected side of Madina. This plan was accepted and the Muslims were divided into parties of 10, and each party allotted 10 yards to dig. The Holy Prophet himself participated in this task. The ditch or moat (Khandaq) was completed in time, just three days before the forces of the enemy reached Madina. The Muslims could gather only 3,000 men to oppose this huge army. They camped a few miles outside Madina.

Meanwhile, the leader of Bani Nuzayr met secretly with some Jews who still lived in Madina. He convinced them to violate the treaty which they had concluded with the Muslims. Thus, the Muslims were exposed to danger within Madina, and the Jews began terrorising the women and children. When the Holy Prophet (S) learnt about what was happening he sent back 500 men to patrol the city.

The enemy was astonished to see the moat because it was a new thing for Arabs. They tried day and night to cross over, but each time they were repelled by the Muslim soldiers. The enemy began to shower arrows and stones at the Muslims in their frustration.

Finally, some of the Quraish's warriors – including the famous Amr bin Abdiwad – succeeded in crossing the moat at a point where it was not very wide. Amr was one of the best warriors in all of Arabia. In battle he was considered equal to 1,000 warriors. He began to challenge the Muslims to fight, but his reputation made them hesitate. Three times the Holy Prophet (S) urged the Muslims to fight Amr. Each time only Imam Ali (A) stood up. Finally, the Holy Prophet (S) allowed him to go, giving him his own sword and tying a special turban on his head. As Imam Ali (A) went to the battle field, the Holy Prophet (S) exclaimed, "The whole Faith is going to fight the whole Infidelity".

When Amr learnt who Imam's (A) identity, he refused to fight him, saying that Abu Talib had been his friend and he did not want to kill his friend's son. Imam Ali (A) told him not to be concerned about his death because if he died he would be blessed with a place in Heaven while Amr would end up in Hell. He then reminded Amr that he had once said that if any

opponent made three requests, Amr would always grant one of them. Amr agreed to this. Imam Ali (A) then invited Amr to accept Islam or to return to Makka or to come down from his horse as Imam (A) had no horse and was on foot. Amr agreed to the last request and came down from his horse. A fierce battle followed.

For a time, so much dust covered both warriors that nobody knew what was happening. Amr sent a murderous blow to the head of Imam Ali (A). Although Imam Ali (A) blocked it with his shield, Amr's sword broke through and inflicted a serious cut on his head. Imam Ali (A) then struck a blow to Amr's feet which brought Amr down. Suddenly the shout of "Allahu Akbar" was heard from Imam Ali (A) as he chopped off Amr's head. The killing of Amr shocked the other warriors who had crossed the moat, and they fled away.

The battle was brought to an end because of three factors:

The Holy Prophet (S) signed an agreement of peace with some of the tribes who had gathered to fight the Muslims. The enemy was demoralised at the death of Amr ibn Abdiwad.

The severe winter caused the enemies' horses to perish and their food was almost finished. Finally, the Holy Prophet (S) went to the place where the Mosque of Victory (Masjid-ul-Fath) now stands, and prayed to Allah for help. A fierce storm raged which uprooted the tents of the enemies, sending their belongings flying on all sides, and causing terror in their ranks. The Makkans and Jews fled away from the battle field. This battle is known as Ahzab (Battle of the Tribes) or Khandaq (Battle of the Moat) and the Muslims emerged victorious in spite of their fewer numbers. The Holy Qur'an says: O you who believe! Remember the blessing of Allah unto you when the tribes came to you. We sent upon them a strong wind and an army that you did not see. And Allah sees all that you do. Surah al-Ahzab, 33:9

THE PLEDGE OF RIZWAAN

In 5 A.H. the Holy Prophet (S) received the commandment of Allah making Haj Wajib on all Muslims. In the following year he saw in a dream that he was actually performing the Haj along with his companions. He therefore decided to perform Haj that very year. The Holy Prophet (S) announced to the Muslims that he intended to go for pilgrimage to Makka in the month of Zilqad of 6 A.H. The Muhajireen, who had migrated to Madina with the Holy Prophet (S), were delighted at this opportunity to return to their beloved home town. The Ansar, who were the original residents of Madina, were also keen to undertake this blessed journey. In all, about 1,400 Muslims prepared to accompany the Holy Prophet (S) to Makka.

The Holy Prophet (S) left Madina on schedule and sent an advance party to scout the route ahead and to warn him of any threat from the Quraish. He ordered the Muslims not to carry any

arms other than swords. Along the journey, the Holy Prophet (S) and his companions put on their Ehram, and chose 70 camels for sacrifice during the Haj.

Meanwhile, the Quraish learned of the advance of the Muslims towards Makka and despatched 200 soldiers to stop them. When the Holy Prophet (S) received word that an ambush awaited them, he asked their guide to take them on a route that would bypass the enemies. Finally, after travelling through rough country, they reached a place where there was a well by the name of Hudaybiya, 10 miles from Makka. Here, the Holy Prophet (S) ordered the Muslims to stop and pitch their tents. He then sent a message to the Quraish that he wished to enter Makka to perform the pilgrimage. He also let them know that he had come in peace and wished to settle matters by discussions.

The Holy Prophet (S) then asked Umar bin Khattab, who had not fought the Quraish in any battle, to act as a representative of the Muslims and go to Makka. Umar excused himself, saying that his position was weak. The Holy Prophet (S) therefore sent Uthman bin Affan, who was the nephew of Abu Sufyan, the chief of the Makkans.

Because he was related to Abu Sufyan, Uthman was warmly received in Makka. The Quraish told him that he was free to do the Haj himself, but they would not allow the rest of the Muslims to enter the city. Uthman refused to perform the Haj alone, so he was detained in Makka. When Uthman did not return, the Muslims feared that he had been killed. The Holy Prophet (S) said that there was a possibility of battle breaking out, so he took a solemn oath of allegiance from the Muslims that they would support him even in the face of death. This famous allegiance was taken under an acacia tree, and is known as the Pledge of Rizwaan. The event has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as follows:

Indeed Allah was well pleased with the believers when they pledged their allegiance to you under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts so He sent down peace on them and rewarded them with an immediate victory. Surah al-Fath, 48:18

Soon afterward, Uthman returned from Makka, safe and unharmed. With him was a man called Suhail who was sent by the Quraish with instructions to settle the dispute peacefully. As a result of the discussions between Suhail and the Holy Prophet (S), a peace treaty was signed between the Muslims and the Quraish. The conditions of the treaty were: The Muslims should return to Madina that year without performing Haj.

They could return the next year but their stay would not exceed 3 days. The Muslims should not bring any arms with them except sheathed swords.

There would be no war between the Quraish and the Muslims for 10 years.

Any idolater or Makkan Muslim visiting Madina without permission of his tribe would be sent

back to Makka, but a Muslim of Madina going to Makka without permission would not be allowed to return.

Any tribe of Arabia would be free to join any of the parties to the treaty and the allies also would be bound by this treaty. At the conclusion of this treaty, the weak-faithed Umar accused the Holy Prophet (S) of selling them short. Although some of these terms seemed to be against the interests of the Muslims, it proved not to be the case. After staying 3 days at Hudaybiya, the Muslims returned to Madina. On the way, the Surah of Fath (Victory), was revealed, which described the treaty as an open victory for the Muslims. The Treaty of Hudaybiya brought welcome peace to Arabia after a long period of unrest. In the 2 years after this treaty, more people accepted Islam than in the whole 19 years since the beginning of the .Holy Prophet's (S) mission

THE INVITATION OF FOREIGN STATES TO ISLAM

In the peace that followed the signing of the Treaty of Hudaybiya, the Holy Prophet (S) had a great opportunity to spread the religion of Islam. In 7 A.H. he wrote letters to several neighbouring states inviting their rulers and people towards Islam. At the time, there were four powerful states around Arabia. On one side there was Iran, which ran from Central Asia up to Iraq. The second state was Byzantine, known as Rome amongst the Arabs. The Byzantine Empire included Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine. The third state was Egypt, which had been a part of the Byzantine Empire, but was now independent.

The fourth state was Abyssinia, which lay to the south of Egypt, and whose influence extended to other populated areas in Africa. A brave officer by the name of Abdullah Huzafah was sent by the Holy Prophet (S) to Khusro Parvez, the Emperor of Iran. When the letter inviting him to Islam was read before him, the Emperor flew into a rage. He tore the letter to pieces and rudely turned Abdullah out of his court. When Abdullah returned to Madina and related his experience, the Holy Prophet (S) was displeased and cursed Khusro saying, "O Lord! Break his kingdom into pieces."

Meanwhile, the arrogant Emperor sent a letter to the ruler of Yemen, who was under him, ordering him to send some men to capture the Holy Prophet (S) and bring him to his court. Accordingly, two officers from Yemen came to Madina to carry out his orders. When they saw that the Holy Prophet (S) had the powerful support of the Muslims, they realised that they had no chance of capturing him.

However, they informed the Holy Prophet (S) of their orders and warned him of the consequences of displeasing the powerful Emperor of Iran. In reply the Holy Prophet (S) told

them that Khusro Parvez had just been killed by his own son, Shirviyah, who was now the new Emperor. The Holy Prophet (S) then advised them to tell the people of Yemen to come out of Iranian control and come towards Islam. The officers were so impressed with the miraculous knowledge of the Holy Prophet (S) that they accepted Islam on the spot and later many people from Yemen also became Muslims.

To Hercules, the Kaiser of Rome, the Holy Prophet (S) sent Dihyah bin Kalbi with a letter of invitation to Islam. The Kaiser received Dihyah with honour and was impressed with the contents of the letter. After making enquiries in Arabia and discussions with the Roman priests, he was convinced that the message was from the very same Prophet whose coming had been foretold in the Tawrat and Injeel.

However, he was afraid that if he openly declared himself a Muslim, he would be removed from power by the influential Christians priests. Nevertheless, he wrote a letter to the Holy Prophet (S) expressing his faith and devotion to him and sent to him several presents. Amongst the gifts were a white mule named Duldul which later remained with Imam Ali (A) and his progeny for many years. The Kaiser also sent two slave girls. One of them, Maria Qabtia, was married by the Holy Prophet (S) while Hasan bin Thabit married the other. To the Maqauqis, the Ruler of Egypt, the Holy Prophet (S) sent Haatib bin Abi Balta'ah, a wise and experienced traveller.

After the king read the message he thought over the contents of the letter for a long time. In the discussion that followed, Haatib explained in length the message and mission of the Holy Prophet (S). Although he was convinced by the arguments of Haatib, the Maqauqis was not prepared to give up his position as the head of the Coptic Church. He wrote a letter of regret to the Holy Prophet (S) and sent some presents back with Haatib. When the Holy Prophet (S) received the letter in Madina he remarked, "He has not accepted Islam on account of fear for his rulership, but his rule and authority will come to an end soon."

To Asmaha, the Negus of Abyssinia, the Holy Prophet (S) sent two letters with 'Amr bin Umayyah. In one letter he invited the Negus to Islam. In the other he requested him to allow and make arrangements for the return of Ja'far bin Abu Talib and the other Muslims who had migrated to Abyssinia in the early difficult days of Islam.

The king received the messenger of the Holy Prophet (S) with great respect and kissed the letters as a mark of respect before reading them. On finishing the letter regarding the invitation to Islam, the Negus immediately recited the Kalima and became a Muslim. He also obeyed the request of the Holy Prophet (S) regarding the arrangements for the return of the Muslims and sent his own son Raarhaa with them.

In addition, the Holy Prophet (S) also sent letters to many other tribes and states, notably the

prince of Ghassaan and the ruler of Yamamah. Both these men, however, did not give a firm commitment to Islam because it did not suit them politically. However, many other chiefs and rulers became inclined towards Islam and sent their representatives to Madina to learn more about the Holy Prophet (S) and Islam. By sending his messengers far and wide, the Holy Prophet (S) showed that Islam was a religion not only for the Arabs, but for the whole world.

THE BATTLE OF KHAYBER

To the north of Madina was situated a fertile land known as the Valley of Khayber. The area was populated by 20,000 Jews who were skilled in farming and warfare. They had built seven strong forts in Khayber to protect themselves from any attack. When the Jewish tribes of Bani Qaynqaa and Bani Nuzayr were expelled from Madina because of their plots against Islam, some of them settled at Khayber. Here, they continued in their old ways, encouraging and helping the Arab tribes to harm the State of Islam.

Even after the Jews had lost against the Muslims in the Battle of Ahzab, they remained a source of danger to the Muslims. Moreover, the Holy Prophet (S) had sent letters to various leaders of neighbouring countries, and he was worried that those leaders who had rejected the message of Islam might pair up with the Jews of Khayber to threaten the Muslims.

Since he had just signed a peace treaty with the Quraish, the Holy Prophet (S) knew that he would have no trouble from them and he could thus concentrate on removing the danger to Islam from Khayber. He therefore ordered the Muslims to get ready to conquer the last centre of the Jews in Arabia.

The Muslim army consisted of 1,600 men, of whom 200 were mounted soldiers. The army marched out under standard of Imam Ali (A). To stop the tribes of Bani Ghatfaan and Bani Fazarah from assisting their Jewish allies, the Holy Prophet (S) first marched towards them so that they moved away from their homes. Then, the Holy Prophet (S) changed his direction for Khayber and by the time the two tribes realised that the real target was the Jews, it was too late for them to help their allies.

The seven forts of Khayber were named Na'im, Qamus, Katibah, Nastaat, Shiq, Watih and Sulaalim. All the forts had watchtowers with sentries posted to keep a lookout for any trouble. The forts were specially constructed to defend the entire area and the walls were equipped with weapons like giant catapults to push back an enemy attack. The Muslim army reached the area of Khayber and after studying the situation, they occupied all the important points of access so that the Jews could not escape.

The arrival of the Muslims went unnoticed and when the farmers came out of the forts the next

morning, they were shocked to find themselves confronted by an army. The Jews rushed back into the forts and held meetings to decide how to tackle the situation. Finally, it was decided to move the women and children to one fort and the food to another. This could be done because the forts were connected by underground tunnels. The Jews then planned to attack the Muslims with the best warriors from each fort. Meanwhile the Muslims also prepared for war. The first fort of Khayber to fall to the Muslims was Na'im. In the conquest of this fort, some Muslims were killed and many were wounded. These soldiers were taken to a make-shift hospital where their injuries were treated by the women of the Bani Ghifar tribe.

The next fort that was attacked was Qamus. After a struggle, this fort was also captured. Two women who were present in the fort were arrested, one of whom was Safiyah, daughter of Hay bin Akhtab. This lady later became the wife of the Holy Prophet (S). The conquest of the two forts greatly increased the confidence of the Muslims, while the Jews became very disturbed and frightened. As the siege of the forts continued, the Muslims began to run out of food and were forced to eat the meat of horses, which is Makruh but not Haraam to eat.

At this difficult time, one shepherd who tended the sheep of the Jews approached the Holy Prophet (S). After some discussions, he was convinced of the truth of Islam and became a Muslim. When he asked what he should do with the sheep that were in his care, the Holy Prophet (S) told him in clear terms in the presence of hundreds of hungry soldiers, "In my religion, the breach of trust is one of the greatest crimes. Take the sheep to the gate of the fort and hand them over to their owners". The shepherd did as he was ordered and then participated in the battle and was martyred. By his action the Holy Prophet (S) showed clearly that he was not in Khayber to conquer land and wealth, but his aim was to remove the threat to Islam from the Jews. In spite of the needs of his men, he would not permit the unlawful use of the enemy's property and instead prayed to Allah to grant the Muslims victory over the fort where food was stored.

As days passed, one fort after another came under the hands of the Muslims. Time and time again, the heroes of Islam showed their bravery and spirit of self-sacrifice to attain the blessings of Allah . After capturing the forts of Na'im and Qamus, the Muslims turned their attention to the forts of Watih and Sulaalim. These forts were very heavily guarded and the Muslims could not gain victory even after trying for ten days.

Both Abu Bakr and Umar led the Muslims on separate occasions to try and enter the forts but they were forced to retreat. Umar even demoralised the Muslims by praising the courage of the chief of the Jews, a fearful warrior by the name of Marhab. This action of Umar displeased the Holy Prophet (S) very much.

Finally, the Holy Prophet (S) announced a famous message. He declared, "Tomorrow I shall give the standard to a person who loves Allah and the Prophet and who is loved by Allah and the Prophet, and Allah will accomplish the conquest of this fort at his hands. He is a man who has never turned his back to the enemy and does not run away from the battlefield". All the soldiers were curious to learn who that person would be, and the next morning they gathered around the Holy Prophet (S) to see who would be chosen to lead the soldiers. The Holy Prophet (S) asked, "Where is Ali?".

He was informed that Imam Ali (A) was suffering from an eye infection so severe that he was unable to see. The Holy Prophet (S) ordered that Imam Ali (A) be brought to him. When Imam Ali (A) came, the Holy Prophet (S) rubbed his eyes and prayed for his recovery. The eyes of Imam Ali (A) were instantly cured and he never had trouble with them again. The Holy Prophet (S) then ordered Imam Ali (A) to advance against the enemy. He told him to ask the chiefs of the forts to accept Islam. If they refused he was to ask them to surrender and live freely under Muslim protection and pay tax to the Muslim state. If this offer was also refused, then he should fight.

Imam Ali (A) approached the forts wearing a strong coat of armour and carrying his twin-tongued sword, Zulfiqar. The Jews sent out one of their best warriors, Harith the brother of Marhab, to fight the Muslims. The soldiers of Islam were struck with fear when they saw the powerful Harith advance toward them. However, Imam Ali (A) met his challenge and after a brief fight, Harith lay dead on the ground. The death of his brother enraged Marhab. He came out of the fort fully armed and in a deadly mood. He was dressed in a heavy coat of armour and wore on his head a cap made of stone which he had covered with a helmet. As he challenged the Muslims, he recited his war poem stating, "The walls of Khayber testify that I am Marhab. I am the best of warriors and those who face me in the battlefield are coloured with their own blood."

Imam Ali (A) stepped forward and recited his own poem, stating, "I am the person whose mother named him Haidar, a wild lion. In battle I make short work of my enemies." The words of Imam Ali (A) were carefully chosen. He knew that Marhab had been recently having bad dreams about being ripped apart by a lion and his words therefore caught Marhab by surprise and disturbed him. However, Marhab advanced with a terrible fury, determined to use all his skill to avenge his dead brother.

The blows of the two warriors struck awe in the hearts of the onlookers. Suddenly Marhab plunged his three-pronged lance towards Imam Ali, who avoided the thrust and struck a powerful blow to the head of Marhab. The sword of Imam Ali (A) broke through the helmet,

stone cap and head of Marhab and finally stopped at his teeth. A silence fell as the Jews unbelievingly watched their champion fall dead. As he shouted "Allahu Akbar!" in victory, Imam Ali (A) was surrounded by several experienced Jewish soldiers. However, they could not match his skill and soon they lay dead. During the fight someone struck a blow at Imam Ali (A), breaking his shield. He turned to the gate of the fort and wrenched it off its hinges and used it as a shield. When he finally threw it away, even 10 Muslims could not lift it. Imam Ali (A) later commented that he had lifted the gate by the strength granted to him by Allah due to his firm faith in the Day of Judgement.

As a result of the bravery of Imam Ali (A), the fort was taken and soon all forts were within the hands of the Muslims. The Muslims lost 20 men in this battle while the Jews lost 93 men. The Holy Prophet (S) had made the Jews realise how useless it was to plot the downfall of the Muslims. After the victory he restored all their land to them with the orders that half of the profit from their agricultural activity should be given over to the Muslims in return for protection.

The Jews however, did not forget their humiliation at the hands of the Muslims. After their defeat, a Jewish woman by the name of Zainab brought some lamb meat as a gift for the Holy Prophet (S). The meat was poisoned and the Holy Prophet (S) ate only a little bit, but that poison had an effect on his health in the long term and when he was on his death bed a few years later, he said that his illness was partly due to the poison he had been given at Khayber.

On the day of the victory, the Muslims who had migrated from Makka to Abyssinia returned home. The Holy Prophet (S) was overjoyed and commented that he did not know what pleased him more - the victory at Khayber or the return of his cousin Ja'far bin Abu Talib with the Muslims from Abyssinia.

THE EVENT OF FADAK

After his victory at Khayber the Holy Prophet (S) decided to destroy the remaining strongholds of the Jews and thus end the danger to Islam. He therefore turned his attention to the Jewish village of Fadak, which was a fertile territory 180 kilometres north of Madina. He sent an envoy to the elders of Fadak. The chief of the village, preferred peace and surrender to fighting. In return for the protection of the Muslims, he agreed to give half of the produce of the region to the Holy Prophet (S).

According to the rules of Islam, the lands conquered through war and military power are the property of all the Muslims and their administration lies with the ruler of the Muslims. However, those lands that are submitted to the Muslims without war, as in the case of Fadak, belong to

the Holy Prophet (S) and after him, to the Holy Imam (A) of the time. They have the right to distribute such properties as they see fit. This is evident from the following verse: Whatever God has bestowed on His Prophet from the people of the towns is for God and the Prophet and his relatives and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not circulate among the rich ones of you...

Surae Hashr, 59 : 7(Part) The land of Fadak thus came into the possession of the Holy Prophet (S), and when the following verse was revealed, And give the kinsman his due, and the needy and the wayfarer... Surae Bani Israa'il, 17 : 26(Part) he made a gift of Fadak to his dear daughter Bibi Fatima (A).

He did this for several reasons. Firstly, he was commanded to give his near ones their due. The Holy Prophet (S) and all the Muslims were indebted to Bibi Khadija (A) who sacrificed her entire wealth for the sake of the early Muslims. Her money had been used to spread Islam, free those Muslims who were slaves and support them in their times of trouble as in the three years of social boycott that they had faced in Makka. Now the Holy Prophet (S) could return her favours by gifting her daughter the rich land of Fadak. He also knew that after him, Imam Ali (A) would need Fadak as a source of income to safeguard his position as Caliph.

Finally, he wanted to leave some provision for his daughter and grandchildren so that they could live with dignity after his death. However, after the Holy Prophet (S) passed away, Abu Bakr, who had stolen the right of Imam Ali (A) to the Caliphate, took Fadak away from Bibi Fatima (A). He did this to ensure that Imam Ali (A) would not have the means to regain his rights. When her agents informed her that they had been replaced by the Caliph's men at Fadak, Bibi Fatima (A) decided to contest her right by legal means. Abu Bakr refused to acknowledge her claim, and asked her to provide witnesses. Although she already possessed the property of Fadak and there had never been any doubt about her ownership, she brought two witnesses. These were Imam Ali (A) and a woman named Umme Ayman, about whom the Holy Prophet (S) had guaranteed that she would go to heaven.

Even then, Abu Bakr would not agree and he quoted a fake tradition saying, "The Holy Prophet has said, `We the group of Prophets do not inherit, nor are we inherited and what we leave is for alms.'" This was a blatant lie and moreover no one but Abu Bakr claimed to have heard it. Bibi Fatima (A) then gave an eloquent lecture in which she first explained about the Oneness of Allah and the nature of the mission of her father. She then proved that Abu Bakr was lying by quoting the following verse:

And Sulaiman inherited Dawood... Surae Naml 27 : 16(Part) Although Abu Bakr was ashamed of his conduct and decided to return Fadak to her, she never forgave him for his actions. She

did not speak to him again as long as she lived and at her funeral six months after her father died, he was not allowed to take part as per her will. Eventually, Abu Bakr wrote a certificate to the effect that Fadak was the absolute property of Bibi Fatima (A) and gave it to her. However, when she was going back to her house, Umar al-Khattab chanced to meet her and came to know the contents of the certificate. He brought it back to Abu Bakr saying, "As Ali is a beneficiary in this case, his evidence is not acceptable. As for Umme Ayman, being a woman, her testimony is also of no value on its own."

Saying this, he tore up the certificate in the presence of Abu Bakr. This action grieved Bibi Fatima (A) so much that she cursed him saying, "May Allah cause your abdomen to be torn in the same way." This prayer proved fateful, because in 24 A.H., Umar was stabbed thrice in the stomach by his killer, Abu Lulu. After this, Fadak remained in the hands of successive rulers until the time of the Umayyad Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz, who returned it to Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A). However, the next Caliph took it away and it remained with the Bani Umayyah Caliphs until their rule ended. During the rule of the Bani Abbas it was returned briefly, but then taken away forever.

THE LAPSED UMRAH

One of the conditions of the Peace Treaty of Hudaybiya was that the Muslims would be permitted to visit Makka the following year. They would be allowed to stay there for three days to carry out their religious duties.

After a year had passed, the Holy Prophet (S) declared that the Muslims should prepare for the Umrah, the minor Haj. The announcement was met with great joy, especially by the Muhajirs, who had not seen their relatives and home town in seven years. 2,000 Muslims prepared to make the journey. The Holy Prophet (S) put on his Ehram in the mosque and the others followed him. Then the Muslims proceeded to Makka reciting the Talbiyyah (Labbayk, Allahumma Labbayk - Here I am, my Lord, here I am). They took with them 80 camels for sacrifice. The sight of this caravan, which possessed so much majesty and dignity, made many idolaters inclined towards Islam. As a result, many became Muslims.

One of the conditions of the treaty was that, when entering Makka, the Muslims should be unarmed except for a single traveller's sword. The Holy Prophet (S) knew that this made them vulnerable to attack from the Quraish, whom he did not trust. Therefore, he sent 200 well armed men in a valley near Makka and to wait there for his arrival.

When the Quraish learnt of this action of the Holy Prophet (S) they realised that it was useless to plan any surprise attacks on the Muslims. They therefore opened the gates of Makka and

vacated the city for the nearby mountains and hills. From here, they could observe all their activities of the Muslims during their three days' stay.

The Holy Prophet (S) entered Makka with the Muslims and the sound of "Labbayk" echoed throughout the city, filling the Makkans with awe. He performed Tawaaf of the Holy Ka'aba while mounted on his camel. At this stage he ordered that the Muslims join him in saying: "There is no god but Allah. He is One and Matchless. He has acted according to his promise (He had promised that the Muslims would visit the Holy Ka`ba soon). He helped His servant. He raised the army of One God to the highest rank and condemned the armies of the idol worshippers to loneliness".

On that day all the centres of pilgrimage and the places where ceremonies of Umrah are performed, including Masjidul Haraam, the Holy Ka`ba and the hills of Safa and Marwah were under the control of the Muslims. Seeing the Muslims perform their sacred rites at these places made a great impact on the leaders of the Quraish, and now they finally believed that this mighty religion and its leader could never be stopped.

The time for noon prayers arrived. The Holy Prophet (S) ordered Bilal to recite the Adhaan. Bilal climbed onto the roof of the Holy Ka`ba, and loudly announced the call to prayer. Every word was like an arrow in the hearts of the listening Quraish. One of them hid his face in his handkerchief as he heard Bilal's recitation. He could not bear to hear the open declaration of the Oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muhammad (S) which had once been the greatest crime according to the disbelievers of Quraish.

Afterwards, the Holy Prophet (S) led the Muslims in performing Sa'i between the hills of Safa and Marwah. The hypocrites and idolaters had spread the rumour that the Muslims had become weak due to the poor climate in Madina. To show them that they were wrong, the Holy Prophet (S) did "Harwalah" during part of the Sa'i, and the Muslims followed him. Harwalah is a type of quick walking, just short of running. Then the Muslims sacrificed their camels and came out of the state of Ehram and had their hair cut. The Holy Prophet (S) then ordered that 200 Muslims should proceed to the valley where the Muslim soldiers were camped, to replace them so that they could come and perform their Umrah. The rites and ceremonies of Umrah came to an end. The Muhajirs went to their homes to meet their relatives. They also invited some Ansar to their homes to return some of the hospitality that the Ansar had shown them on their arrival in Madina.

After three days the Holy Prophet (S) gave the order for the Muslims to leave Makka for Madina. Before he left, he received a proposal of marriage from a Quraish woman Maimoona, who was the sister-in-law of Abbas, the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S). He accepted this

proposal and married her in Makka.

The short visit of the Muslims and the glory of Islam had made a deep impression on the minds of the citizens of Makka. Many of them were left with a longing to learn more about the religion and the conduct of the Muslims had won a greater victory than any war. The Holy Qur'an says: Allah made the dream of His messenger come true for a genuine purpose. If Allah wills, you (believers) will enter the Sacred Mosque in security with your heads shaved, nails cut and without any fears in your heart. Surae Fat'h, 48 : 27

THE BATTLE OF MOOTA

By 8 A.H. there was security in most of Arabia and the call of Islam had extended to many parts. The Jews in the north and the Quraish in the south had been subdued by the victories of the Muslims in battle and they did not pose a threat any longer. The Holy Prophet (S) sent envoys to neighbouring countries and invited their rulers to embrace Islam. Some of these envoys were well received, while others were mistreated and even killed. One such envoy, Harith bin Umayr Azdi was sent with a letter to the ruler of Syria. Before he could reach his destination, he was captured at Moota by Shurahbil, the governor of the ruler of Syria in the border towns. Disregarding the universal law about the safety of envoys, Shurahbil killed Harith. In a separate incident, 15 missionaries sent to the Syrians were also killed.

When the Holy Prophet (S) received the sad news, he was deeply grieved and decided to punish Shurahbil and those who obstructed the spread of Islam. He gave orders for Jihad and 3,000 men assembled at Jurf, the military station of Madina. He instructed the army to march towards Moota and first invite the people to become Muslims. If they accepted Islam, the murder of the envoy would not be avenged but if they resisted, the Muslims should fight against them in the Name of Allah .

Ja'far bin Abu Talib was appointed as the commander of the army and the Holy Prophet (S) said that if Ja'far was killed then Zayd bin Harith would lead them, and if he was killed then Abdullah bin Rawaahid would assume command. If he too was killed, then the Muslim army should select their commander from amongst themselves. Before dispatching the expedition, the Holy Prophet (S) instructed them to observe the following rules:

1. Not to interfere with the monks and nuns who were worshipping in their monasteries.
2. Not to lift their hand against any women, children or old people.
3. Not to cut down trees or destroy buildings.

These instructions were an example of the Holy Prophet's (S) vision and the efforts he was making to bring about changes and reforms in all walks of life, in a period in Arabia when no

scruples were exercised, particularly in war. In response to the news of the march of the Muslim army, Hercules of Rome and the Syrian Ruler sent their best troops to the borders and Shurahbil gathered an army of 100,000 soldiers.

In addition to being hopelessly outnumbered, the Muslims were also facing a professional army. Due to their constant wars with Iran, the Romans had become experts in war strategy and tactics. They were also equipped with better weapons and transport. Also, the Romans had the advantage that they were fighting at home while the Muslims were in a foreign land.

Despite being in a weaker position, the Muslim forces gave a heroic account of their valour. Ja'far divided his men into 3 divisions and the armies met at Sharaf near Moota. The battle began with single combats but soon turned into a full scale war. The Muslims fought courageously but soon the differences in number proved too great. Ja'far was surrounded and lost one arm and then the other. Eventually, he was killed with a blow to the head and after him Zayd and then Abdullah were also martyred.

By the end of the first day the Muslim army was in disarray and their numbers were severely reduced. As their new commander, the Muslims chose Khalid bin Walid. During the night, Khalid ordered the remaining wings of the Muslim army to change sides with each other, and the sound of the movements of a large number of men convinced the enemy that reinforcements had arrived.

On the next day Khalid arranged the Muslim army in such a way as to give an impression that new troops had joined them. These tactics made the enemy hesitate and Khalid took the opportunity to withdraw the Muslim army and return to Madina.

The retreat of the Muslims was not well received by some in Madina who said that they should have fought on till the very end. However, given the circumstances, Khalid was right in bringing them back because it would have been pointless to sacrifice the lives of more Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) was much grieved at the loss of Muslim lives and especially that of his cousin Ja'far. He saw in his dream that Ja'far had been given 2 wings like angels in heaven and since then Ja'far in known as Tayyaar – the one who flies.

Just before his death, the Holy Prophet (S) prepared a strong force under Usama bin Zayd, to return to Moota. However, this expedition never got off the ground because of his illness. Although Usama was ready to march, some Muslims, especially Abu Bakr and Umar, were worried that they would be absent from Madina when the Holy Prophet (S) passed away. They wanted to be present to put a stop to the successorship of Imam Ali (A) and put their own plans into action. However, two years later, a powerful Muslim army returned to Syria and conquered the Romans in the battle of Yermuk, bringing a large part of Syria under Islam.

THE BATTLE OF ZATUS SALAASIL

From the day the Holy Prophet (S) entered Madina and made it the capital of the Muslims, he set up a network of spies and observers throughout Arabia. These men informed him about the plans of his enemies and allowed him to take precautionary measures. At the times of the Battles of Uhud and Ahzab these spies had proved invaluable to the Holy Prophet (S). In 8 A.H. the intelligence network of the Holy Prophet (S) reported to him that, in the valley of Yaabis, thousands of people were gathering to sign a mutual agreement to make a full-scale attack on Madina. They were willing to lay down their lives to destroy Islam and their main objective was to kill the Holy Prophet (S) or his valiant officer Imam Ali (A).

On receipt of the news, the Holy Prophet (S) gathered the Muslims in the mosque and informed them of the danger. A group of men were appointed to counteract the threat and Abu Bakr was nominated as its commander. The small unit left Madina for Yaabis. When they reached the stony valley of Yaabis, they found their way blocked by the men of Bani Salim.

The chiefs of the tribe asked Abu Bakr, "What is the purpose of this military expedition?" Abu Bakr replied, "I have been appointed by the Prophet of Allah to present Islam to you and to fight you if you decline to accept it." At that moment, the chiefs displayed the large number of men in their army and this sight unnerved Abu Bakr. He ordered the Muslims to retreat to Madina although they were inclined to put up a good fight.

The return of the army disappointed the Holy Prophet (S). He now entrusted the army to Umar. This time the enemies were on the alert and had hidden themselves behind the stones and trees at the entrance to the valley. When the Muslims arrived they were ambushed by the enemy and Umar ordered a retreat. Amr al-Aas, a cunning politician who had just become a Muslim, came to the Holy Prophet (S) and said, "War is deceit."

He meant that victory in war was not always achieved by strength and valour but could also be achieved by clever planning and deceit. He added, "If I am allowed to lead the soldiers I will achieve victory."

The Holy Prophet (S) accepted this proposal but the cocky Amr was no more successful than the two commanders before him. The successive defeats had demoralised the Muslims. Now the Holy Prophet (S) organised an army once more but this time selected Imam Ali (A) as commander and gave him the battle standard in his hand. Imam Ali (A) marched off at the head of the Muslims, carrying a spear. As he watched him ride off, the Holy Prophet (S) commented, "He is an attacking commander who never flees the battlefield."

This statement shows what the Holy Prophet (S) thought of the disgraced earlier commanders.

Imam Ali (A) took an entirely different route to Yaabis to avoid being spotted by any scouts of the Bani Salim. He travelled by night and concealed his men by day. When they arrived closer to the valley he ordered the men to rest and refresh themselves. The next morning, after praying the dawn prayers, he led his men up the mountainous land behind the valley. From that point the army descended into the valley.

Inspired by the presence of Imam Ali (A), the Muslims proceeded forth in an irresistible tide. They caught the enemy by surprise and caused havoc in their ranks. Before the enemy could organise themselves they were facing the furious onslaught of Imam Ali (A) who overpowered them by quickly killing seven of them. Some more men were killed and the others ran away leaving a large booty behind.

The brave and victorious commander returned to Madina and the Holy Prophet (S) came forward to receive him. On seeing the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali (A) dismounted immediately in respect. The Holy Prophet (S) patted the back of Imam Ali (A) and said, "O Ali, mount the horse, Allah and His Prophet are pleased with you."

At that time the Holy Prophet (S) uttered a famous sentence saying, "O Ali, if I had not been afraid that a group of my followers might say the same thing about you as the Christians say about Prophet Isa (A), I would say something about you that would make people gather the dust of your feet as an article of blessing." The bravery and conduct of Imam Ali (A) was so valuable that Allah revealed Surae Aadiyaat about the event. The Sura contains powerful and stirring oaths in appreciation of the military spirit of the soldiers who took part in the battle.

The Holy Qur'an says:

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful. By the snorting chargers (of the warriors), whose hooves strike against the rocks and produce sparks, while they run during a raid at dawn, and leave behind a trail of dust that engulfs the enemy. Surae Aadiyaat, 100 :1