

(.Treaty of Hdaybiya (627 A.D

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On the first day of the month of Thul-Qi'dah, of the same year, 5 A.H./March 27, 627 A.D., a month in which no fighting was to take place according to the ancient Arabian custom, the Prophet saw in a dream that he and his followers were mcircling the Ka'ba and performing all the rituals of the pilgrimage. The next morning, he communicated his dream to his followers who were very glad to have such good news. Particularly happy were the Muhajirun who had not forgotten about their families and relatives whom they had left behind in Mecca and whom they very much longed to see. Almost six years had passed since they had seen the Ka'ba and their families, relatives and friends.

The Prophet decided to perform the 'Omrah (the lesser pilgrimage) to the Ka'ba which had been till then denied to the Muslims due to the hostility of the Meccans. About fourteen hundred Muhajirun and Ansar expressed their readiness to go with him. Lest there should be any misgivings in any quarter about his intentions, he directed the Muslims not to carry any arms other than travellers' sheathed swords, and he himself put on the robes of ihram and took his wife Umm Salamah with him. He also took seventy camels to sacrifice. On the way, they halted at Thul Holayfa. Then the Muslims reached Hdaybiya, ten miles from Mecca, where the Prophet's she-camel Qaswa stopped on her own, knelt down and refused to go any further. Some people said that she was exhasuted, but the Prophet interpreted it as a Divine sign that he should not proceed any further. He, therefore, camped at Hdaybiya.

There was no water available in the place where they had camped. There were some wells there, but they were all filled up with sands. Taking an arrow from his quiver, the Prophet planted it in one of those wells. Immediately water came out to the great relief of everybody.

An envoy was sent to the Meccans to obtain their permission to visit the Ka'ba but it was rejected. Instead, the Meccans collected a force of 200 cavaliers under the command of Khalid ibn al-Walid and 'Ikrimah son of the infamous Abu Jahl to prevent the Muslims from entering Mecca. Soon the Prophet and his companions were face to face with this force. The Quraishites sent Budayl ibn Warqa' al-Kuza'i with a number of men from his tribe Khuza'ah to tell the Prophet that he was not allowed to visit the Ka'ba. "I have left behind me,' said Budayl, "Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy and 'Amir ibn Lu'ayy, accompanied by a powerful host, and they shall fight you and prohibit you from reaching the sanctuary.'

The Prophet said, "We did not come here to fight anyone; rather, we came to perform the

'umra. War has exhausted and harmed Quraish. If they wish, we can agree on a period of truce so that they may leave me and the people alone. If they wish to embrace what other people have embraced, they may do so; otherwise, I swear by the One Who holds my life in His grip, I shall fight them in defence of my mission till I perish or Allah carries out His command.' Budayl said, "I shall convey to them what you have just said.'

Quraish deputed 'Orwah ibn Mas'ud al-Thaqafi to have a talk with the Prophet, but nothing came out of it. The Prophet then sent Karrash ibn Umayyah to Quraish to assure them that they had no hostile intentions at all, only to perform the 'Omra. He rode his own camel Tha'lab, but he was mistreated and his camel maimed, and it was only with difficulty that he was able to escape with his life. He could have been killed had no Ethiopians interfered and assisted his escape.

At that juncture, the Prophet thought that the best person to speak to the haughty Quraishites would be "Omar ibn al-Khattab, so he asked him to be his emissary to those who used to be his bosom friends, but "Omar asked to be excused saying that he was not on good terms with Quraish and suggested that his friend 'Uthman ibn 'Affan would be a more suitable envoy. 'Uthman, who belonged to the same clan to which Abu Sufyan belonged, was sent to persuade Quraish to allow the Muslims to visit the Ka'ba. He told the riders that Muhammad had come only to visit the sacred sanctuary and that after slaying the sacrificial camels, he and his followers would all return.

But the Quraishites replied that they had sworn not to allow Muhammad to enter the city that year and that if he, 'Uthman, wished to visit the Ka'ba himself, he could do so. 'Uthman declined their offer saying that he could not do so without the Prophet first performing the rites of the lesser pilgrimage. He then returned to the camp. Since it took so long for 'Uthman to return, rumour was in the Muslim camp that he had been murdered by the Meccans, and the Prophet was quite upset.

The vanguard of Quraish, only eight in number, but some accounts say forty, attacked the Muslims from the direction of the Tan'eem mountain with the intention to massacre them as they were performing the early morning prayers, but the attackers were captured. The Prophet demonstrated great clemency and generosity, setting them all free. The Muslims took a pledge on the hands of the Prophet, known as "Bay'at al-Ridwan', to stand by him to the last. Referring to this pledge, the Qur'an says: Indeed God was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to thee under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility on them and rewarded them with a near victory.(Qur'an, 48:18)

Those who study the Islamic history impartially will conclude that there were many who swore

the pledge of "Bay'at al-Ridwan" and who forgot it or claimed to have forgotten it as soon as the Prophet died... Surely these will be called to account before the Almighty on the Day of Judgment and to answer to the deviation they caused in the march of Islam, reverting to the jahiliyya, the pre-Islamic era, following their own inclinations and seeking their own vested interests rather than implementing the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah... 'Abdullah ibn Mughaffal, an eye witness to Bay'at al-Ridwan, said that the Prophet took a pledge from them not to flee from the battle again, since some of them had done just that before, leaving him an easy target to the mischief of his foes and the foes of his Lord.

It came to be known later that the news of 'Uthman's murder was not true. After considerable difficulty, a treaty was ultimately signed with Suhayl ibn 'Amr, Quraish's envoy, on the following terms reproduced in almost all the Arab Chronicles:

- (1) Muslims should return to Medina that year without performing the pilgrimage.
- (2) They could return the next year but their stay should not exceed three days.
- (3) The Muslims should not bring any arms with them except sheathed swords.
- (4) There would be no war between Quraish and the Muslims for ten years.
- (5) Muslims residing in Mecca would not be allowed to migrate to Medina, but if any Muslim wanted to settle in Mecca, he should not be prevented from doing so.
- (6) Any idolater or Meccan Muslim migrating to Medina without the permission of his clan will be sent back to Mecca, but a Muslim of Medina going back to Mecca without permission will not be allowed to return.
- (7) Any tribe in Arabia will be free to join any of the parties to the pact, and the allies also will be bound by this treaty.

Although these terms were apparently disadvantageous to the Muslims, the Prophet accepted them.

Ali wrote the peace treaty himself, and it was witnessed by a number of the most prominent companions of the Prophet (sahaba) despite the fact that they had their own reservations in its regard, considering it a most unfavourable and humiliating one.

Some Muslims were unhappy about this treaty. "Omar ibn al-Khattab talked very rudely to the Prophet. "Are you not a true Prophet of Allah?," Omar asked the Prophet. "I am, no doubt," answered the Prophet. "Are we not right and the adversaries are wrong?" he asked the Prophet again. Muhammad answered him in the affirmative, whereupon he went on to ask one more time, "Why should we, then, obliterate our faith and bear the brunt of humiliation?" The Prophet answered, "I am only a messenger of Allah, and I can do nothing against His will; He will help me."

"Omar, however, was not satisfied with the Prophet's answers. Ibn Hisham, the renowned historian, goes on to record the dialogue between "Omar and his friend Abu Bakr wherein the former exclaimed: "Is not Muhammad the Messenger of Allah? Are we not Muslims? Are they not infidels? Why should our divine religion be thus humiliated?' Al-Waqidi, who also researched this topic, cites "Omar adding, "Had these terms been fixed by anyone other than Muhammad himself, even by a commander whom I appoint, I would have scorned to listen to them.' Afterwards, he used to say: "Never did I have doubt (about the truth of Islam) since my acceptance of Islam except on that day (of Hdaybiya).' A copy of the agreement was given to

Suhail, whereas the original remained with the Prophet.

No sooner had the terms been agreed upon than a critical occasion arose. Abu Jundal son of Suhail had been imprisoned by his father for having accepted Islam and was being severely mistreated. He managed to escape and, with his fetters on, reached Hdaybiya just before the treaty was signed. His father, Suhail ibn 'Amr, the emissary of the Meccans, demanded his return according to the terms of the treaty. The Muslims said that the treaty had by then not signed yet. Suhail said that if his son was not returned to him, there would be no treaty at all. Abu Jundal pleaded with the Muslims in the name of mercy not to throw him back to the tyranny of the Meccans and showed them the injuries they had inflicted on him.

The Muslims were moved to plead his cause and "Omar made an impassioned appeal, but the Prophet silenced them by declaring that he could not break a treaty. He consoled Abu Jundal by saying that God would create some way for his deliverance. "Omar Leaped to comfort the young man thus: "These infidels' blood is no better than the dogs' blood,' encouraging him to kill his father so that the whole peace treaty would amount to nothing... Abu Jundal, however, did not consent to undo what the Messenger of Allah had just done; the peace treaty has to be respected.

Having concluded the Hdaybiya peace treaty, the Prophet wanted to perform as many of the rituals relevant to the lesser pilgrimage as possible. He ordered his sahaba to slaughter their sacrificial animals and to shave their heads, but he was sorely grieved to see that nobody paid heed to his command. It grieved him so much that he mentioned it to his wife Umm Salamah. But when he sacrificed his animals and shaved his head, removing the robes of ihram, they, too, did likewise, though reluctantly.

After three days' stay at Hdaybiya, the Muslims returned to Medina. On the way back, Surah 48 titled "Victory' was revealed describing the treaty as an open victory for the Muslims. Later events confirmed that it was really a great victory for them. The first six of its 29 verses are: In the Name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful

Surely We have bestowed upon you a clear victory so that Allah may forgive your past faults and those to follow and complete His favour upon you and keep you on a right course. And so that Allah may help you with a mighty victory. He it is Who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers so that they may have more faith added to their faith, and Allah's are the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is Knowing, Wise, so that He may cause the believing men and the believing women to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein (forever) and to wipe out their sins, and that is a grand achievement with Allah. And so that He may punish the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women, and the polytheistic men and the polytheistic women, those who entertain evil thoughts about Allah. On them is the evil turned, and Allah condemns them and has cursed them and prepared hell for them, and evil is its resort. (Qur'an, 48:1-6)

There were, unfortunately, a number of hypocritical men with the Prophet at Hudaibiya, those opportunists who pretended to be more zealous about Islam than they really were, and their future actions proved so.

Till then, idolaters and Muslims had not been mixing with each other. By virtue of this treaty, they started doing so freely. Muslims, now more than ever before, openly declared their faith and invited others to embrace it. The enemies of Islam were silenced; they could not freely persecute the Muslims. On account of their family ties and trade connections, the Meccans started visiting Medina, and many of them stayed there for months. Peace became a reality, and both parties started enjoying its fruits. Non-Muslims were getting acquainted with the teachings of Islam and were deeply impressed by the righteous conduct and moral integrity of the Muslims.

The Muslims of Medina who were visiting Mecca left behind them similar impressions. The result was that the Meccans were themselves attracted to Islam and many of them embraced the new religion. It is recorded that during two years after this treaty, more people accepted Islam than all those who did so during the nineteen years since the inception of the mission put together. A clear proof is found in the fact that while only 1,400 Muslims had accompanied the Prophet for the lesser pilgrimage when the treaty of Hudaibiya was concluded, two years later, that is, when Mecca fell in the hands of the Muslims, he was accompanied by at least 10,000 Muslims.

Immediately after the signing of the treaty, Banu Khuza'ah, who for a long time were inclined to the new faith, openly embraced it, entering further into an alliance with the Prophet in 629 A.D.

.This, in fact, was the first practical benefit of the treaty