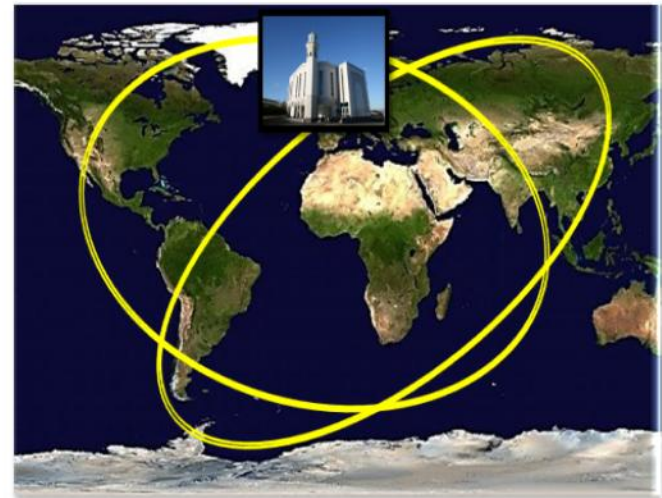


“The Expedition of Tabuk”



**Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat
Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba);
Head of the Ahmadiyya
Muslim Community**



**relayed live all across the
globe**

November 28th 2025

Summary

“The Expedition of Tabuk”

His Holiness (aba) said that he would continue mentioning details from the Expedition of Tabuk.

There were some hypocrites who did not accompany the Muslim army on this expedition, and they presented various excuses for not going.

The Holy Prophet (sa) accepted their apparent excuses, renewed their pledge of allegiance and prayed for their forgiveness, leaving the matter to God

Those who did not go simply on account of their indolence. These included three people in particular: Hazrat Ka'b bin Malik (ra).

Ka'b (ra) stated, ‘When I greeted Allah’s Messenger (sa) he, his face being bright with joy, said “Be happy with the best day that you have experienced ever since your mother delivered you.

Allah's Displeasure

His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) said that he would continue mentioning details from the Expedition of Tabuk.

There were some hypocrites who did not accompany the Muslim army on this expedition, and they presented various excuses for not going. In fact, this has even been recorded in the Holy Qur'an. It was the Holy Prophet's (sa) practice that whenever he returned to Madinah from a journey, he would first stop at the mosque to offer voluntary prayers.

The Holy Prophet (sa) did the same when he returned from the Expedition of Tabuk. Thereafter, the Holy Prophet (sa) remained in the mosque as people came to meet him. These people also included those hypocrites who had not accompanied the Muslim army, and in order to preserve their reputation, they presented various excuses to the Holy Prophet (sa).

Historians say that such people numbered around 80, while others say they were more.

Excuses Presented by the Hypocrites

His Holiness (aba) said that still, the Holy Prophet (sa) accepted their apparent excuses, renewed their pledge of allegiance and prayed for their forgiveness, leaving the matter to God.

However, this crime of the hypocrites could not be forgiven, and God revealed to the Holy Prophet (sa) that their crimes were such that God could not be pleased with them.

**It is stated in the Holy Qur'an:
'They will make excuses to you when you return to them.**

Say, 'Make no excuses; we will not believe you. Allah has already informed us of the facts about you. And Allah will observe your conduct, and also His Messenger; then you will be brought back to Him Who knows the unseen and the seen, and He will tell you all that you used to do.

They will swear to you by Allah, when you return to them, that you may leave them alone. So leave them alone. Surely, they are an abomination, and their abode is Hell – a fit recompense for that which they used to earn. They will swear to you that you may be pleased with them. But even if you be pleased with them, Allah will not be pleased with the rebellious people.'
(The Holy Qur'an, 9:94-96)

Allah's Displeasure

God was very displeased with those who remained behind from the Expedition of Tabuk, and He forbade the Holy Prophet (sa) from offering their funeral prayers or praying at their graves.

They were also forbidden from taking part in any appeal for financial sacrifices or participating in any subsequent military campaigns. God says:

'Those who were left behind rejoiced in their sitting at home behind the back of the Messenger of Allah, and were averse to striving with their property and their persons in the cause of Allah. And they said, 'Go not forth in the heat.'

Say, 'The fire of Hell is more intense in heat.' Could they but understand! They must laugh little and weep much as a reward for that which they used to earn... And never pray thou for any of them that dies, nor stand by his grave; for they

disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger and died while they were disobedient. And their possessions and their children should not excite thy wonder; Allah only intends to punish them therewith in this world and that their souls may depart while they are disbelievers.'

Types of People Who Remained Behind

His Holiness (aba) said that there were four types of people who remained behind from the Expedition of Tabuk:

Those fortunate people who were given a specific duty by the Holy Prophet (sa) and remained behind to fulfil that duty.

Those who were unable to go due to some physical limitation, an illness, weakness, or were extremely poor and did not have a riding animal. God attested that the excuse of such people was legitimate and He forgave them.

Hypocrites who were condemned, and God expressed His displeasure with them in the Holy Qur'an.

Those who did not go simply on account of their indolence. These included three people in particular: Hazrat Ka'b bin Malik (ra), Hazrat Mararah bin Rabi' (ra), and Hazrat Hilal bin Umayyah (ra).

The Three Whose Case Was Deferred

His Holiness (aba) explained the details of 'the three whose case was deferred.' Hazrat Ka'b bin Malik (ra) himself narrated: 'I did not remain behind Allah's Messenger (sa) in any Expedition that he fought except the

Expedition of Tabuk, and I failed to take part in the Battle of Badr, but Allah did not admonish anyone who had not participated in it, for in fact, Allah's Messenger (sa) had gone out in search of the caravan of Quraish till Allah made them and their enemy meet without any appointment.

I witnessed the night of Al-'Aqabah with Allah's Messenger (sa) when we pledged for Islam, and I would not exchange it for the Badr battle, although the Badr battle is more popular amongst the people than it.

As for my news, I had never been stronger or wealthier than I was when I remained behind the Prophet (sa) in that Expedition.

By Allah, I had never had two she-camels before, but I had them at the time of this Expedition.

Ka`b bin Malik (ra)

Whenever Allah's Messenger (sa) wanted to make an expedition, he used to hide his intention by apparently referring to different expeditions till it was the time of that Expedition which Allah's Messenger (sa) fought in severe heat, facing a long journey, desert, and a great number of enemies.

So the Prophet (sa) announced to the Muslims clearly so that they might get prepared for their Expedition.

So he informed them clearly of the destination he was going to. Allah's Messenger (sa) was accompanied by a large number of Muslims who could not be listed in a book, namely, a register.'

Ka'b added, 'Any man who intended to be absent would think that the matter would remain hidden unless Allah revealed it through divine revelation. So Allah's Messenger (sa) fought that Expedition at the time when the fruits had ripened, and the shade looked pleasant.

Ka`b bin Malik (ra)

Allah's Messenger (sa) and his companions prepared for the battle, and I started to go out in order to get myself ready along with them, but I returned without doing anything. I would say to myself, "I can do that." So I kept on delaying it every now and then till the people got ready and Allah's Messenger (sa) and the Muslims along with him departed, and I had not prepared anything for my departure, and I said, "I will prepare myself one or two days after him, and then join them."



In the morning following their departure, I went out to get myself ready but returned having done nothing. Then again in the next morning, I went out to get ready but returned without doing anything. Such was the case with me till they hurried away and the battle was missed.

Even then I intended to depart to take them over. I wish I had done so! But it was not in my luck.

So, after the departure of Allah's Messenger (sa), whenever I went out and walked amongst the people, it grieved me that I could see none around me, but one accused of hypocrisy or one of those weak men whom Allah had excused.

Ka`b bin Malik (ra)

Allah's Messenger (sa) did not remember me till he reached Tabuk. So while he was sitting amongst the people in Tabuk, he said, "What did Ka`b do?" A man from Banu Salama said, "O Allah's Messenger (sa)! He has been stopped by his two Burdas and his looking at his own flanks with pride."

Then Mu`adh bin Jabal (ra) said, "What a bad thing you have said! By Allah! O Allahs Messenger (sa)! We know nothing about him but good." Allah's Messenger (sa) kept silent.'

Ka`b bin Malik (ra) added, 'When I heard that the Holy Prophet (sa) was on his way back to Medina. I got dipped in my concern, and began to think of false excuses, saying to myself, "How can I avoid his anger tomorrow?"

And I took the advice of a wise member of my family in this matter. When it was said that Allah's Messenger (sa), had come near all the evil false excuses abandoned from my mind and I knew well that I could never come out of this problem by forging a false statement.

Ka`b bin Malik (ra)

Then I decided firmly to speak the truth. So Allah's Messenger (sa) arrived in the morning, and whenever he returned from a journey., he used to visit the mosque first of all and offer two units of prayer therein and then sit for the people.

So when he had done all that, those who had failed to join the expedition came and started offering excuses and taking oaths before him.

They were something over eighty men; Allah's Messenger (sa) accepted the excuses they had expressed, took their pledge of allegiance, asked for Allah's Forgiveness for them, and left the secrets of their hearts for Allah to judge.

Then I came to him, and when I greeted him, he smiled at the smile of an angry person and then said, "Come forward." So I came walking till I sat before him. He said to me, "What stopped you from joining us? Had you not purchased an animal for carrying you?"

Ka`b bin Malik (ra)

I answered, “Yes, O Allah’s Messenger (sa)! But by Allah, if I were sitting before any person from among the people of the world other than you, I would have avoided his anger with an excuse.

By Allah, I have been bestowed with the power of speaking fluently and eloquently, but by Allah, I knew well that if today I tell you a lie to seek your favour,

Allah would surely make you angry with me in the near future, but if I tell you the truth, though you will get angry because of it, I hope for Allah’s forgiveness.

Really, by Allah, there was no excuse for me. By Allah, I had never been stronger or wealthier than I was when I remained behind you.”

Then Allah’s Messenger (sa) said, “As regards this man, he has surely told the truth. So get up till Allah decides your case.”

Change in People's Attitude

I got up, and many men from Banu Salama followed me and said to me. "By Allah, we never witnessed you doing any sin before this. Surely, you failed to offer an excuse to Allah's Messenger (sa) as the others who did not join him, have offered.

The prayer of Allah's Messenger (sa) to Allah to forgive you would have been sufficient for you." By Allah, they continued blaming me so much that I intended to return and accuse myself of having told a lie, but I said to them, "Is there anybody else who has met the same fate as I have?"



They replied, Murara bin Al-Rabi Al-Amri and Hilal bin Umaiya Al-Waqifi. By that they mentioned to me two pious men who had attended the Expedition Badr..... Allah's Messenger (sa) forbade all the Muslims to talk to us, the three aforesaid persons out of all those who had remained behind in that Expedition.

So we kept away from the people and they changed their attitude towards us till the very land appeared strange to me as if I did not know it. We remained in that condition for fifty nights.

Prayers Along With Muslims

As regards my two fellows, they remained in their houses and kept on weeping, but I was the youngest of them and the firmest of them, so I used to go out and witness the prayers along with

the Muslims and roam about in the markets, but none would talk to me, and I would come to Allah's Messenger (sa) and greet him while he was sitting in his gathering after the prayer,

and I would wonder whether the Prophet (sa) did move his lips in return to my greetings or not. Then I would offer my prayer near to him and look at him stealthily.

When I was busy with my prayer, he would turn his face towards me, but when I turned my face to him, he would turn his face away from me.

A Letter from the King of Ghassan

When this harsh attitude of the people lasted long, I walked till I scaled the wall of the garden of Abu Qatada who was my cousin and dearest person to me, and I offered my greetings to him.

By Allah, he did not return my greetings. I said, "O Abu Qatada! I beseech you by Allah! Do you know that I love Allah and His Apostle?" He kept quiet.

I asked him again, beseeching him by Allah, but he remained silent. Then I asked him again in the Name of Allah.

He said, "Allah and His Messenger know it better." Thereupon my eyes flowed with tears and I returned and jumped over the wall.' Ka'b added, 'While I was walking in the market of Medina, suddenly I saw a Nabati who came to sell his grains in Madinah.

He came to me and handed me a letter from the king of Ghassan in which the following was written: "To proceed, I have been informed that your friend has treated you harshly. Anyhow, Allah does not let you live at a place where you feel inferior and your right is lost. So join us, and we will console you."

Separation from Wife

When I read it, I said to myself, "This is also a sort of a test." Then I took the letter to the oven and made a fire therein by burning it. When forty out of the fifty nights elapsed, behold! There came to me the messenger of Allah's Messenger (sa) and said, "Allah's Messenger (sa) orders you to keep away from your wife,"

I said, "Should I divorce her; or else what should I do?" He said, "No, only keep aloof from her and do not cohabit with her." The Prophet (sa) sent the same message to my two fellows. Then I said to my wife. "Go to your parents and remain with them till Allah gives His verdict in this matter."

The wife of Hilal bin Umaiya said, "O Allah's Messenger (sa)! Hilal bin Umaiya is a helpless old man who has no servant to attend to him. Do you dislike that I should serve him?"

He said, "No but he should not come near you." She said, "By Allah, he has no desire for anything. By Allah, he has never ceased weeping till his case began till this day of his."

The Period of Fifty Nights

On that occasion, some of my family members said to me, “Will you also ask Allah’s Messenger (sa) to permit your wife (to serve you) as he has permitted the wife of Hilal bin Umaiya to serve him?”

I said, “By Allah, I will not ask the permission of Allah’s Messenger (sa) regarding her, for I do not know what Allah’s Messenger (sa) would say if I asked him to permit her while I am a young man.” Then I remained in that state for ten more nights after that till the period of fifty nights was completed starting from the time when Allah’s Messenger (sa) prohibited the people from talking to us.

When I had offered the Fajr prayer on the 50th morning on the roof of one of our houses and while I was sitting in the condition which Allah described i.e. my very soul seemed straitened to me and even the earth seemed narrow to me for all its spaciousness, there I heard the voice of one who had ascended the mountain of Sala’ calling with his loudest voice, “O Ka`b bin Malik! Be happy.”

Acceptance of Repentance

I fell down in prostration before Allah, realizing that relief has come.

Allah's Messenger (sa) had announced the acceptance of our repentance by Allah when he had offered the Fajr prayer.

The people then went out to congratulate us. Some bringers of good tidings went out to my two fellows, and a horseman came to me in haste, and a man of Banu Aslam came running and ascended the mountain and his voice was swifter than the horse.

When he whose voice I had heard, came to me conveying the good tidings, I took off my garments and dressed him with them; and by Allah, I owned no other garments than them on that day. Then I borrowed two garments and wore them and went to Allah's Messenger (sa).

The people started receiving me in batches, congratulating me on Allah's Acceptance of my repentance, saying, 'We congratulate you on Allah's acceptance of your repentance.'

Forgiveness From Allah

Ka`b further said, "When I entered the mosque. I saw Allah's Messenger (sa) sitting with the people around him.



Talha bin Ubaidullah swiftly came to me, shook hands with me and congratulated me. By Allah, none of the Muhajirin got up for me except him, and I will never forget this for Talha.'



Ka`b (ra) added, 'When I greeted Allah's Messenger (sa) he, his face being bright with joy, said "Be happy with the best day that you have experienced ever since your mother delivered you."

Ka`b added, 'I said to the Prophet (sa) "Is this forgiveness from you or from Allah?" He said, "No, it is from Allah."

Whenever Allah's Messenger (sa) became happy, his face would shine as if it were a piece of the moon, and we all knew that characteristic of him.

Foretelling the Truth

**When I sat before him, I said,
“O Allah’s Messenger (sa)!
Because of the acceptance of
my repentance I will give up all
my wealth as alms for the sake
of Allah and His Messenger.”**

**Allah’s Messenger (sa) said,
“Keep some of your wealth, as
it will be better for you.” I said,
“So I will keep my share from
Khaibar with me,” and added,
“O Allah’s Messenger (sa)!
Allah has saved me for telling
the truth; so it is a part of my
repentance not to tell but the
truth as long as I am alive. By
Allah, I do not know anyone of
the Muslims whom Allah has
helped foretelling the truth
more than me.**

**Since I have mentioned that
truth to Allah’s Messenger
(sa) till today, I have never
intended to tell a lie. I hope
that Allah will also save me
the rest of my life. So Allah
revealed to His Messenger
the verse:– ‘Allah has
certainly turned with mercy
to the Prophet and to the
Emigrants and the Helpers
who followed him in the hour
of distress after the hearts of
a party of them had well-nigh
swerved. He again turned to
them with mercy. Surely, He
is to them Compassionate,
Merciful.’
(The Holy Qur’an, 9.117)**

Allah's Mercy

By Allah, Allah has never bestowed upon me, apart from His guiding me to Islam, a greater blessing than the fact that I did not tell a lie to Allah's Messenger (sa) which would have caused me to perish as those who have told a lie perished.'

Ka'b added, 'We, the three persons, differed altogether from those whose excuses Allah's Messenger (sa) accepted when they swore to him. He took their pledge of allegiance and asked Allah to forgive them, but Allah's Messenger (sa) left our case pending till Allah gave His judgment about it. As for that Allah said: "And He has turned with mercy to the three whose case was deferred." (The Holy Qur'an, 9.118)

What Allah said does not indicate our failure to take part in the Expedition, but it refers to the deferment of making a decision by the Prophet (sa) about our case in contrast to the case of those who had taken an oath before him and he excused them by accepting their excuses.'