



An Outline of Early Islamic History



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Contents

Chapter 1.....	1
Chapter 2.....	6
Chapter 3.....	9
Chapter 4.....	14
Chapter 5.....	17
Chapter 6.....	23
Chapter 7.....	28
Chapter 8.....	33
Chapter 9.....	37
Chapter 10.....	43
Chapter 11.....	50
Chapter 12.....	57
Chapter 13.....	63
Chapter 14.....	69
Chapter 15.....	75

Chapter 1

Fourteen hundred years ago the world lay in utter moral darkness. Christians ruled in Europe and they ruled indifferently. They believed in Jesus, called him the son of God and worshipped him as they do now. Their kings and cardinals fought one another. They were often very cruel. The priests were held in great honour. They were often very ignorant and dirty. The entire continent was in the depth of darkness. The muses of Greece reposed in sleep and the splendour of mighty Rome shone only through a life of lustrous depravity. Africans were in a pitiable plight. The Northern regions of Africa groaned under a harsh Roman rule. The Church was a house divided because of the ill-treatment of native Africans by the ruling Christian minority. The southern regions of the continent were in the grip of naked barbarism.

The Jews had become neglectful of religious duties and callous to one another. They were bitter enemies of the Christians who paid them back in the same coin.

The Indians were no better. They had millions of gods. They were cut up into four castes. The Brahmans, the highest cast, were the priests, the Rajputs, the second highest, were the rulers. The Shudars who came last were sweepers and scavengers and could not share food or drink with the other castes.

The Chinese worshipped their dead, adored the Budha and many many minor deities.

Arabs

The Romans were in power in Europe. Persia was a great Empire. Both Romans and Persians were rich nations. They were ruled by great kings and generals. Between these two big states lay the vast sandy deserts of Arabia. The Arabs were a wild people. They had no king and no central authority. They were divided into many tribes, who knew no law but the law of vendetta. They worshipped stars and stones.

The climate of Arabia was dry and hot in summer, and dry and cold in winter. There were no rains. They people were poor and ever in search of water. They would, therefore, travel from one place to another. They had no brick houses and lived in tents. They could thus move easily about with their families. Wild life had made them brave and warlike. They had short tempers but long memories. They were, therefore, quick to quarrel but slow in making peace. They loved women and were ever at war with one another over one thing or the other. They also fought for water-rights.

The quarrels of the Arabs were over petty causes but were yet bloody and long. It is said that once a man saw a bird lay eggs in its nest. Passing by, he promised to look after it. Next day he saw two shattered eggs lying near about. A camel was grazing not far away. The man guessed that the camel must have disturbed the nest. He went to the keeper of the camel and told him to stay away from the tree. But the owner of the camel only laughed at him. The man was so angry that he killed the camel there and then. This small matter led to a bloody fight. First the families of the

two and later their tribes went to war. The war lasted for forty years.

Arabs had no schools and no books. Except for a few, no one knew how to read and write. Sons, horses and poets were greatly prized among them. The birth of a daughter brought on great grief. Some of them buried their female children alive. The Arabs were very loyal to their tribes. They kept slaves and were proud of their families. They were cruel in war and had no mercy for the enemy, not even for women and children. But they were very brave. They had no fear of death and were kind to strangers.

Abraham

Four thousand years ago, the Prophet Abraham came from Egypt to Arabia. He brought his wife Hajira and child Ismail with him to a desolate place where Mecca now stands. God had commanded him to leave the two in the deserts. Abraham gave his wife and child some dates and some water and left them in the care of God. The scanty rations were soon finished. The child Ismail was thirsty but there was no sign of water anywhere around. Seven times Hajira ran between the two hills, Safa and Marva. She found no water. Then lifting her eyes to the sky, she prayed to God. Soon a voice spoke, "God has heard thee." She hurried back to the child. There she saw a spring of water close by his feet. The two were saved. Hajira thanked God for His great mercy. Soon Banu Jurham, an Arab tribe settled on the spot. When Ismail grew up, he took a girl of this tribe for his wife.

Call to Hajj Pilgrimage

Abraham used to visit Hajira and Ismail often. Together, the son and the father raised the walls and laid the roof of the Holy House, the Kaaba. When the house of God was ready, Abraham prayed to the Lord to look after his child and his children's children and great-grand children. He begged of Him to make them all His loyal servants. He also begged of Him to raise among them the Great Prophet and feed them with fruits. Then God ordered Abraham to call men to Hajj (pilgrimage) every year to the Kaaba. As time passed, Ismail's children and their children grew in numbers. Their city, Mecca, became a big centre. People would come from every part of Arabia for Hajj. Ismail's children were later known as Quresh. They were the keepers of the Holy Kaaba. They became rich and powerful. But in course of time, Arabs gave up the worship of one true God. They began instead to worship images. They kept their 360 tribal idols in the Holy House. The Quresh prayed to Hubal, a deity made of stone. The Quresh were much feared by their neighbours. It did not make them any better than the other Arabs. In fact they were most forward in evil ways. They drank like fish and danced and had many many wives. They even kept their widowed step-mothers as concubines.

Abraha Attacks Mecca

Abraha, the Governor of Yemen, wanted to break the power of Mecca. He wished to set up another Kaaba. He came with a large army to Mecca to pull down the Holy House. His men

seized some camels of Abdul Muttalib, a Chief of the Quresh. Abdul Muttalib sought an interview with Abraha. He asked him to return his camels. Abraha gave back the camels but said,

“Abdul Muttalib, you seem to care more for your camels than for the Holy House!”.

Abdul Muttalib replied:

“I am the master of the camels only. There is a Master of the Holy House. He would take care of it.”

Abraha became incensed at this retort and said,

“I will see how this master of the House stops me.”

He at once prepared to demolish the Holy House. But his elephant would not move. Abraha’s men died of plague or epidemic of smallpox and then the birds struck the pieces of the dead bodies with stones as birds do with large pieces of meat. The year is known as **“the Year of the Elephant”**.

Chapter 2

Birth of Muhammad

Soon after the Year of the Elephant, Abdul Muttalib lost his young son Abdullah. His grief was great. Abdullah's widow saw in a dream that a light had come out of her body and spread all over the world. She gave birth to a son six months after her husband's death. Abdul Muttalib was beside himself with joy. They named the boy Muhammad. First nurse Sawaiba suckled him. Later, he was turned over to nurse Halima. The child lived among Banu Hawazin, the tribe of Halima, until he was four years old. Halima was a poor woman. When she took the baby Muhammad to her home, the family's luck suddenly changed. Halima loved Muhammad and Muhammad loved her. In later life he never forgot what he owed to his foster-mother. When Muhammad was six years old, his mother also died. Then his grandfather took him in his care. But Muhammad was hardly eight years of age when old Abdul Muttalib also passed away. Now Muhammad was looked after by Abu Talib, an elderly uncle. Muhammad was a quiet and well-behaved boy. His uncle loved him dearly. Muhammad was equally fond of the uncle. When Muhammad was twelve years old, Abu Talib made ready to go to Syria for trade. Muhammad wept so bitterly that Abu Talib was moved to take him along.

Muhammad was a young man now and in trade. This took him to many places, to Syria, Yemen and Bahrin [Bahrain]. He

was honest and straight-forward in his dealings. The people of Mecca called him the “**truthful**” and “**the trusty**”. Muhammad worked for a good lady name Khadija. She was a widow. Muhammad worked hard, was upright and intelligent. There was much profit every time he went out to sell her merchandise. The lady Khadija later offered her hand in marriage to Muhammad. She gave birth to seven children, three boys and four girls. All died early except the renowned daughter Fatima.

Young Peace-Maker

When Muhammad was over thirty, a dispute arose among the Quresh. The House of God (the Kaaba) was being re-built. First the work went on smoothly. But when time came for the sacred Black stone to be put in its place, everyone wanted to have the honour for himself and his family. They were ready to fight and kill. Their work had to be stopped. But it could not be stopped indefinitely. One day they assembled at the site and agreed to make their judge the man who should be the first to come to the Holy House next morning. They waited. Then they saw Muhammad coming. They cried with one voice,

“Here comes the Truthful, the Trusted.”

They made him the judge. Muhammad spread out his sheet. He placed the Black Stone in it. He then asked the heads of the assembled tribes to hold the corners of the sheet and raise it. They did as told. Then taking the stone in his hands, he put it in position. The matter ended happily.

Muhammad was well-to-do now, but Abu Talib was poor. Muhammad wanted to help his good uncle. He took his young cousin Ali home. Another uncle Abbas took Jafar the younger brother of Ali under his care. Muhammad had very gentle ways with the people of his town though he did not mix much with them. He had a few intimate friends. One was Abu Bakr, the other was Hakim bin Hizam. Both were men of good habits and respected for their integrity. Muhammad was given very much to prayer and meditation. He would very often retire to a cave in a hill outside the town, staying there for days.

Chapter 3

Call to Prophethood

It was a Monday of the month of Ramazan. Muhammad was in prayer in the cave Hira. Suddenly an angel appeared before him and asked him to “Read out.” Muhammad replied, “I cannot”. The angel then took hold of him in a tight embrace. Again he asked him to read out. The answer was the same. Then he embraced him a second time and then a third time and said.

“Read out in the name of thy Lord who created man from a blood clot. Read out and thy Lord is of great honour. He taught with the pen, taught man what he knew not.”

After this the angel disappeared. Muhammad was over awed. With trembling heart he went home. He asked the lady Khadija to cover him up. When she did as asked, he told her of his strange experience. He said that he was in mighty fear. The good lady replied,

“Fear not, be happy, God will not cause you any harm. For, you are kind to relations. You speak the truth, you bear the burdens of others. You possess virtues that have become lost. You respect your guests and you help all people in all right things.”

But Muhammad was not at ease. One day as he was returning home from the cave Hira, he heard a voice calling him. When he looked around, he had the vision of the same angel sitting on a chair perched high between the earth and the heavens. Muhammad was alarmed. So, he hurried home. Again he asked his wife to cover him up. Then he heard a mighty voice commanding him to stand up, give glory to the Lord and warn all men. From that day on he heard the voice very often.

Early Converts

He now knew that he had been raised a Prophet. He started in earnest his great work of calling men to the One True God, the Lord of the Heavens and Earth. First he worked quietly among his friends and relations. His wife, the good lady Khadija, was the first to believe him. Among his friends Abu Bakr, among his relations Ali and among slaves Zaid readily accepted him. Abu Bakr was a wise man and highly respected by the people of Mecca. Ali was a boy of eleven and Zaid was the Prophet's freed slave. Five more joined the new faith through the efforts of Abu Bakr. They were Usman bin Affan, Abdur Rehman bin Auf, Saad bin Abu Viqas, Zubair bin al Awam and Talib bin Ubaidullah. In a short time, more were added to the list. Their names are: Abu Ubaida bin al Jarrah, Abdullah bin Jahsh, Ubaidullah bin Jahsh, Abu Salma bin Abu Asad, Abu Hafiza bin Utba, Abdullah bin Masood, Saeed bin Zaid, Usman bin Mazoon, and Bilal the Abyssinian. Umm-e-Fazal, wife of Abbas, Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr and Fatima bin Khattab were the only ladies beside Khadija,

who were the first to believe. Most of the men were either slaves or poor.

The religion the Prophet taught was simple. The believers were asked to say,

“There is no God but Allah. He has no partner and Muhammad is His Prophet.”

They were required to obey the Prophet in all good things.

Relations Rebuff

It was the fourth year of the Prophet’s call when God commanded him to warn his relations. The Prophet went straight to the top of Mount Safa. He called every clan of the Quresh by name. When they were assembled he said,

“If I tell you that a big army is in wait for you behind this hill, would you believe me?”

They all said,

“Yes, because you have spoken the truth always.”

The prophet then said,

“I warn you of the anger of God. Believe in Allah so that you may be saved.”

They laughed at him and walked away.

One day the Prophet asked Ali to call all their relations to a meal. When they were assembled, the Prophet addressed them

thus,

“O children of Abdul Muttalib, I have come to you with a great thing. Nobody brought a greater good for his people. I invite you to God. If you believe me, you will have the best of this life and of the life after death. Now which of you will help me?”

They all laughed except Ali. Ali said,

“I will be with you.”

And he was with the Prophet till the end. From that day Islam was the talk of the town.

The prophet now began to call men to God openly. Muslims used to meet in a house called **Dar-ul-Islam**. They would pray and learn their new duties. Others would also come there to hear the Prophet. For three years this centre remained open to all new comers. Many more believed and became Muslims. They were Masab bin Omair, Abdullah bin Umme Maktum, Zaid bin Khattab, Jafar bin Abi-Talib, Omar bin Yaseer, Abu Moosa al Ashari.

Meccans Get Angry

The Quresh had made fun of the Prophet. But, as time went on, they began to fear Islam. They therefore decided to use force. Their chief leaders were Abu Jahl, Abu Lahb, Ommaiya bin Khalf and al Nazar bin Haris. First they tried to win over Abu Talib, the uncle of the Prophet. They asked him to give up Muhammad.

Abu Talib told the Prophet that the Quresh were very angry with him. The Prophet replied,

“By God if they placed the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left hand, I will not give up my mission.”

As the Prophet started to depart, Abu Talib called him back. He was in tears. He said,

“Go ahead, nephew, I am with you as long as I live.”

Abu Talib then told Quresh to do what they pleased, he would stand by his nephew.

Converts Persecuted

The Quresh then decided to punish the Muslims. Hakim bin Abila, the uncle of Usman bin Affan, tied him with a rope and beat him up. An uncle of Zubair bin al-Awam wrapped up his nephew in a mat and smoked him through his nose. Saeed bin Zaid and Labina, a slave girl, were beaten up by Omar bin al-Khattab. Abu Jahl beat Zinnira, another slave woman. The Quresh often used to hit Suhail bin Sanan. Bilal was a slave of Omaiyya bin Khalf. His master would order him to lie on hot sand. He could then cover his naked body with burning hot stones and drag him in the street. The Quresh did not stop at that. They made Khabab bin Alarat lie on coal fire. Abu Jahl speared old lady Samiya to death. Muslims bore their troubles patiently. They remained calm. Their faith in God and His Prophet was firm.

Chapter 4

Muslims Advised Patience

When the Hajj was drawing near, the Quresh had a new fear, the fear that the tribes coming to Mecca from outside would learn of the Prophet. They would want to know about him and his new religion. After a long debate among themselves, the Quresh decided to tell them that Muhammad was a sorcerer. Every child of Mecca was taught to repeat this lie. At the same time, the Quresh set ruffians upon the Prophet, to hurl abuse at him and say dirty things to his face. At times they would stone his house. Once the Prophet was praying in the Holy Kaaba, when Utba bin Abi Moit took off his mantle and tried to garrote the Prophet. Abu Bakr intervened. He said to Quresh,

“Would you kill a man because he says Allah is the only God?”

At another time, when the Quresh got around the Prophet in the Holy Kaaba with the intent to do him bodily harm, Harith bin Abi Halla came to his help. Harith was killed instantly.

In short, Muslims were shown no mercy. The Quresh were after their blood. This was too much for the believers. Once Abdur Rahman bin Auf and a few others requested the Prophet

to permit them to fight back the Quresh. The Prophet said,

“I have been commanded to forgive. Fight not therefore.”

Dutiful companions of the good Prophet obeyed and remained patient as before.

Migrate to Abyssinia

But the Prophet was in deep grief. He was distressed on account of the sad plight of Muslims. He advised some to depart for Abyssinia. The Prophet told them that they would find peace there. Many Muslims left Mecca. Among them were Jafar bin Abi Talib, Uthman bin Affan and his wife Rukkiya, a daughter of the Prophet, Zubair bin al-Awam, Abdur Rahman bin Auf, Mazhar bin Umair, Abu Salma bin Abdul Asad, Abu Hazifa, Abu Salma bin and Uthman bin Mazoon. Most of them commanded respect among the Meccans before joining the ranks of Islam. But now things had changed. They lived happily in Abyssinia. Soon some more followed them.

Negus Offers Protection

In all one hundred Muslims went over to seek asylum with the Negus. The Quresh of Mecca were angry at this. They sent two men, Amar bin Alas and Abdullah bin Rabi, with presents to the King of Abyssinia. Addressing the monarch, they said,

“O King, some fools of our town have given up the religion of their fathers. They have started a new faith,

which is also against your faith. They have made trouble in their own land. Some of them have come to your country. We beg of you to send them back with us."

The Negus summoned the Muslims to his court and asked them what they had to say. Jafar, their leader, said,

"O King, we were ignorant. We worshipped idols. We had evil ways. We were bad to our relations and neighbours. The hand of the strong among us was heavy on the weak. God raised a Prophet among us. We knew well that he was a honest and a man of truth. He taught us to worship one God, to give up idols, to speak the truth, to be honest, to be kind to neighbours, to give up evil ways and not to eat the property of the orphans. We believed in him and obeyed him. But our people were cruel to us and used force against us. We left our homes and are now refugees in your land. We hope, O King, that we would not come to any harm under you."

The Negus then asked Jafar to read to him the Quran. He read out a part of Sura Maryam. The Negus was deeply moved. He ordered the Quresh back to their homes and returned to them their presents.

Chapter 5

Two Powerful Converts

Muslims in Mecca were still in trouble. The Quresh showed no mercy. But two strong men joined Islam. They were Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet and Umar bin al-Khattab, a fiery chief of great influence.

One day a slave girl told Hamza that Abu Jahl had abused his nephew, Muhammad, violently. She said,

“Muhammad did not say back a word.”

Hamza felt stung and deeply hurt. He made straight for the Kaaba. Abu Jahl was sitting there with some friends. Hamza hit him with his bow across his face and said:

“You abused Muhammad. Listen, I too believe in his religion. I say what he says. Have you anything to say now?”

Abu Jahl held his peace. He did not want to alienate Hamza. Hamza went straight to the Holy Prophet and accepted Islam. When Abu Bakr learnt this he was overjoyed. He went to the Kaaba. There he openly glorified God. The Quresh seized hold of him and beat him hard.

A few days later, Umar bin al-Khattab decided to slay the

Prophet. He set out on his errand with a naked sword. On the way he was met by an acquaintance who asked him where he was going. He said,

"I am going to finish Muhmmad."

The man told him to clean up his own house first, that his own sister and her husband had embraced Islam. Umar was furious. He turned to his sister's house. When he reached there, he heard some one in the house reading the Quran. He went in and said,

"I hear you have given up your father's faith."

Then he fell upon his brother-in-law Saeed bin Zaid. His sister Fatima tried to come in between. She was wounded in the attempt. She then said,

"Yes, we are Muslims. So do what you like. We cannot give up Islam."

As Umar saw his sister wounded and bleeding, he felt contrite and wanted to see what they had been reading. She said he should wash before he could see it. He did. When he read the Quran, he said.

"How wonderful, how pure."

Khabbab, a companion of the Prophet, had been hiding inside the house. He at once came out and said,

"The Prophet's prayer has been heard. He begged of God

only yesterday to grant him one of the two, either Abu Jahl or Umar.”

Umar made straight for the house where the faithful met, the Darul Islam. When he knocked at the door, he was admitted by the Prophet himself. The Prophet said,

“What brings you here Umar? By Allah, I see you have not been made for the punishment of God.”

Umar replied,

“O Prophet of Allah, I have come to embrace Islam.”

The Prophet said aloud:

“Allah-o-Akbar” (Allah is Great).

The companions repeated the cry so loud that the echoes were heard in the hills around Mecca. From that day onwards, Muslims started saying their prayers openly.

Meccan Offer

The Quresh begin to feel embittered against Islam more and more. They first tried to bribe the Prophet. They met him in the Holy House. All their chiefs were there – Abu Jahl, Walid bin Mughira, Omayya bin Khalf, Abu Sufiyan, Shaiba, Aswad bin Muttalib, Utba, Nazar bin al-Haris and Abul Bakhtari. They asked the Prophet to give up Islam. They said,

“If you want money, we can give you enough to make you

the richest man amongst us. If you want to become a leader, we will make you our king. If you want to have a pretty wife, we can find you the most beautiful in all Arabia.”

The Prophet replied,

“O Quresh, I do not want any of these things. I am a Prophet of God. I have been sent to you with a message. If you hear me, it will be to your good. If you do not I will patiently wait on the Lord.”

The Quresh then asked him to change the dry sands of Mecca into green gardens. He said,

“I am only a Prophet and servant of God. But if you obey God, you will have the best of this world and of the life to come.”

The Quresh then said,

“Then bring on us the punishment of God.”

Finally they decided to finish him. Next day Abu Jahl stood outside the Kaaba with a big stone in his hand. But when he saw the Holy Prophet, he felt too frightened to use it.

The Boycott

The Quresh next decided to boycott the Prophet, his family and friends. They agreed in writing on the cruel step. The document was placed in the Kaaba. The Banu Hashim the family

of the Prophet and the few Muslims who were with them at Mecca, camped in a pass in the hill. This place was called **Shaab-i-Abi-Talib**. The boycott lasted three years. Muslims had no provisions. They could not buy anything. Nobody would sell them any thing, not even food. At times they lived on leaves of tree. When children cried for hunger, the Quresh heard the cries and laughed. Some good men among them did not like this cruelty. But they were few and weak.

One day the Prophet said to his uncle Abu Talib,

“God has told me that the boycott paper has been eaten up. Only the name of Allah remains on it.”

Abu Talib went to the Kaaba. He said to the Quresh,

“How long will your oppression last? My nephew tells me that the boycott paper has been eaten up. See therefore whether he be right.”

They found the paper had been moth eaten. It has only Allah’s name left on it. The good men among them said,

“Let us end this boycott now.”

Abu Jahl said, “No.” But Mutam bin Adi took hold of the paper and tore into pieces. He and Hisham bin Amar with Zaheer bin Abi Ommaiya and Abul Bakhtari went up to the mouth of Shaab-i-Abi-Talib and set free the Prophet, his family and followers.

Death of Abu Talib and Khadija

Now Islam had entered its tenth year. Abu Talib, the uncle of the Prophet, died soon after the end of the boycott. A few days later, Khadija, the wife of the Prophet, also passed away. The grief of the Prophet was great but his patience was greater. Abu Talib and Khadija had stood by him firm like two rocks till the end and now they were no more.

The Quresh had become very bold now. Often they threw refuse on the Prophet. One day when he was praying in the Kaaba, they placed a camel's entrails on his back.

The same year the Prophet married Ayesha, the daughter of Abu Bakr.

Chapter 6

Hounded out of Taif

The Prophet found little response in Mecca. At the time of Hajj the Arabs came to visit the Kaaba from different places. He went round their camps. He called each tribe to Islam. The Quresh had their men everywhere. No one heard him. He next turned to Taif. It was a big town, some sixty miles to the south-east of Mecca. He stayed there for ten days. He met the chiefs of the city. They all laughed at him. Abdial, the leading man of the town, told him to depart. Then he set the young men of the locality at him. They stoned the Prophet for three miles. Ten miles outside the town, the Prophet rested for a while in a garden. Rejected and forlorn, he prayed to God for help. Then an angel said to him,

"I would like to crush these people between two hills."

The Prophet told him,

"Nay, their children might yet worship the true God."

"There is something lofty and heroic in this journey of Muhammad to Al-Taif; a solitary man, despised and rejected by his own people, going boldly forth in the name of God, like Jonah to Ninevah, and summoning an

idolatrous city to repent and support his mission. It sheds a strong light on the intensity of his belief in the divine origin of his calling.” [Life of Muhammad, by Sir William Muir, pp. 112-113]

In the face of the bitter hostility, and in the midst of all his grief, the Prophet did not lose heart. He again went round the tents of the tribes who had come again on the annual Pilgrimage to the Kaaba. Abu Lahab and Abu Jahl were not far behind. They would warn people and say,

“Hear him not. He has given up his religion. He wants you to do the same.”

The Prophet met there some tribesmen of Yasreb or Medina. They were six chiefs of Khazraj tribe. He read to them the Quran. He spoke to them of Islam. They had had heard the Jews of their town say that time was ripe for a Prophet to appear. They said to one another,

“Let the Jews not be the first to accept him.”

The all became Muslims. They were Abu Amama, Asad bin Zarrara, Auf bin Haris, Rafi bin Malik, Qutba bin Amir, Uqba bin Amir and Jaber bin Abdullah.

At the time of the next Hajj five of these men came back from Yasreb. With them were seven more. Some belonged to the influential Aus tribe. They met the Prophet at Aqba, a hill outside Mecca. They embraced Islam at his hands. This is called the **Baiat Aqba Ula** – the first allegiance pact at Aqba. The Prophet sent

them Musab bin Umair to teach them the Quran and the disciplines of Islam. Soon the new religion had many new followers in Yasreb (Medina). Saad bin Maaz, the chief of Aus, became a Muslim. His whole tribe followed him. Usaid, the chief of Abdul Ashhal, also accepted Islam.

Invited to Medina

More men came from Yasreb to meet the Prophet at the time of the next Hajj. The Prophet was now ready to leave Mecca. God had commanded him to go to Yasreb. Seventy men met him where they had met last year. The Prophet's uncle Abbas was present on the occasion. He said to the tribes of Yasreb,

"Muhammad is loved by his family. They have been with him through thick and thin. Now he wants to leave Mecca and go over to you. You will have to guard him well against every enemy. If you can, say so. If not, then say now straight."

Albaraa, an old chief, said,

"We would like to hear the Prophet."

The Prophet said,

"I only want you to guard me as you would guard your relations."

Albaraa took the hand of the Prophet in his own hand and said,

“By Allah, we shall guard you with our lives.”

The Prophet then said,

“Your blood will be my blood. Your friends will be my friends. Your enemies will be my enemies.”

Then Abbas bin Obada, chief of Yasreb, said to his men,

“Do you know what it means? You should be ready to fight every black or red and make every sacrifice.”

They all answered,

“We know.”

Prophet told them,

“They will have God’s Paradise in return.”

They answered,

“We agree, O Prophet of God, give us your hand.”

The Prophet did. They all promised to obey him. This is called the **Baiat Aqba Sani** (the second allegiance pact at Aqba). The Prophet then chose twelve leaders from among them.

Plot to Kill Muhammad

The Quresh came to know of this meeting. They made enquiries. They could get no proof but they were alert. The Prophet told Muslims to leave for Yasreb. Most of them went

away. Only the Prophet, his family, Ali and some poor Muslims were left behind. The Quresh saw the Prophet was friendless. They thought they could finish him now, believing that Islam would then die soon. They met together and agreed to kill him. One man from each family was chosen for the job. These men were to attack the Prophet together. The Prophet's family would not fight back everyone, they believed. God commanded the Prophet to leave Mecca at once. He went straight to the house of Abu Bakr and told him that he had been ordered to depart for Medina.

"Will you not take me with you, O Prophet of Allah?"

asked Abu Bakr.

"I will,"

said the Prophet. Abu Bakr was moved to tears of joy. He said,

"I have two camels ready, one for each of us."

Chapter 7

The Prophet Leaves Mecca

The Quresh kept a vigil around the house of the Prophet. They were waiting to lay their swords on him. The Prophet asked Ali to sleep in his bed. He then departed. The Quresh did not expect that he would leave so early. They were hardly aware of him when he went out from their midst. He met Abu Bakr, waiting on the way, as arranged before. Both made for the cave Saur, a cosy hide-out three miles south of Mecca. The Quresh found Ali in the Prophet's bed. They were mad with anger and beat him mercilessly. They placed a reward of 100 camels for any one who would bring Muhammad back dead or alive. Many men set out to win the prize. The search grew hot. The Quresh soon reached the mouth of the cave. They found a spider's web across it. They also found a pigeon's nest on a branch of the tree that shaded the cave. The guide of the Quresh said,

"Muhammad is either in the cave or has gone up to the heaven."

Nobody looked down into the cave. The Prophet and Abu Bakr could see the men outside. They could see their feet. Abu Bakr felt afraid on account of the Prophet. He spoke out his fear to him. The Prophet said,

"Fear not. For surely Allah is with us both."

The Prophet and Abu Bakr left the cave after three days. On the way they were overtaken by one Suraqa bin Malik. He was pursuing them on horseback. His mount stumbled three times. Suraqa took fright at this and, calling them, sought peace. He told them that he had come to win the reward set on their heads. But, he said, he had changed his mind. He then rode back. The Prophet said to him,

"O Suraqa, how will you feel with the bangles of Hormoz on your wrists?"

"Hormoz, the Emperor of Iran?"

asked Suraqa.

"Yes,"

said the Prophet. Suraqa stood rooted to the spot in utter amazement.

Welcome to Medina

After a hard journey of eight days, the Prophet reached Yasreb. It was the 20th day of September 622. The people of the town had learnt of his departure from Mecca. They were expecting him. They kept turning out en masse for several days to receive him. One day a Jew espied from his house a party dressed in white. He shouted at the top of his voice:

“O people of Arabia, there comes the man you have been waiting to see.”

Soon the whole of Yasreb resounded with the cries of Allah-o-Akbar (Allah is great). Big crowds rushed to welcome the Prophet. They went wild with joy. Yasreb had never been so happy before. The Prophet then proceeded to **Quba**. Kalsum bin Alhadam, chief of the place, gave him a big welcome there. The Prophet put up at his house. The first thing he did there was to build a mosque. It was called **Masjid-i-Quba**.

Yasreb was now called **Madina-tul-Nabi**, the city of the Prophet. Muslims of Medina were called *Ansars* (helpers). And the refugee Muslims were called *Muhajirs*. Every Ansar family wanted the Prophet to stay with them. He chose to put up with Banu Najjar, the relations of his grandfather Abdul Muttalib.

Friday Congregational Prayers

After about ten days, the Prophet moved from Quba mounted on the back of a camel. Ansars and Muhajirs followed him. On the way he stopped for Juma – Friday congregational prayers. From that day, Juma prayer has become a regular weekly worship in Islam. On the way to Medina proper the Prophet was warmly greeted by groups of Ansars. Women and little girls sang with joy.

“The full moon has arisen on us from the top of mount Vida.

It is our duty now to give thanks to God.”

When he reached the quarter of Banu Najjar, the girls chanted merrily.

*“We are the girls of Banu Najjar.
How good the Prophet will be our neighbour.”*

Now the question was where the Prophet would stay. He said his she-camel would sit where God wished him to stay. The animal sat down in an open space. The Prophet dismounted and asked,

“Who lives near here?”

Abu Ayub Ansari came forward saying,

*“O Prophet of Allah, this is my house and this is my door,
pray step in.”*

The Prophet stayed there for seven months. Abu Ayub Ansari and Saad bin Obada served him meals and felt greatly honoured for it.

Soon after his arrival in Medina, the Prophet sent Zaid bin Haris to Mecca to fetch his family. After a few days he returned with members of the Prophet’s household. Ali reached Medina three days after Prophet’s arrival.

The Prophets Mosque

The Prophet bought the land where his she-camel had stopped and where he had dismounted. Here he built the **Masjid Nabavi**, the Prophet’s mosque and a one room house for himself.

In one corner he built a shed or *suffa* for the poor refugees, the Muhajirs. They were without means. The Prophet provided victuals, often starving himself to feed them. The Ansars brought them dates and other eatables. They lived a life of prayer and devotion. They kept the Prophet's company day and night.

The Prophet's mosque was his court, his prayer-hall, and his council room. Here he trained soldiers and here he kept his prisoners of war. Here he received embassies.

The call to prayer was simple in the beginning. Later the present Azan became the call for the five daily prayers and Bilal, an African convert, became the first *Moazzin* (caller). The Prophet gave the first place to prayer in all the duties. This, he said, was the badge of a Muslim, which distinguished him from others and led the faithful to the summit of true felicity.

Chapter 8

Life in Medina

Medina is an old town. It lies some two hundred miles north of Mecca across the trade route between the Hijaz and Syria. Cold in winter and hot in summer, Medina has plenty of rain. It is a valley dotted with hills. People lived there in villages. Each tribe had his own village, its own fort. There were Jews and pagans. Jews had three tribes – **Banu Nadhir**, **Banu Quraiza** and **Banu Qainqa**. The pagan tribes were **Aus** and **Khazraj**. Jews were smart traders. They held great power. There had been plenty of trouble between Jews and pagans. Jews succeeded in dividing pagans, making them fight among themselves. There was a big war between Aus and Khazraj. It is called the war of *Buas*. The Banu Qainqa Jews aided the Khazraj and Banu Nadhir and Banu Quraiza Jews helped the Aus. There was much killing. When both Aus and Khazraj became exhausted, they realized their mistake and made peace. Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul became their chief. It was at this time that Islam made its way into Medina.

The Jews did not like the new religion. Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul did not like the Prophet. The Quresh were bitter enemies of Islam. The future of Medina was in the hands of God. Muslims were no doubt comparatively safe now. But security was

yet far off. The drums of war could be heard from a distance.

The Ansar treated the Muhajirs with great kindness. The gave the equal share in their trade, in their gardens and in their crops. The Prophet formed bonds of brotherhood between two groups. One Ansari and one Muhajir were made brothers. The Muhajirs started business. Some grew well off. They all lived as good Muslims loving one another like real brothers.

The Medina Pact

Next the Prophet made a pact with the Jews and the other tribes of Medina. It was agreed that both non-Muslims and Muslims should live peacefully. Both should enjoy freedom of faith. Both would respect life and property. In all disputes the Prophet was to be Judge. Nobody was to go to war without his consent. Parties to the pact were to fight together against their enemies. Both agreed to defend Medina. The Jews promised not to aid the Quresh or their friends.

Islam now had a state and a government. It had now a law and it had a head, the Prophet.

Meccans Prepare for War

The Quresh were very furious. The Prophet had escaped. His friends had found refuge in Medina. Islam had found a home. It had found a following. They decided to fight. So they began to get ready. They made friends with many tribes. They sent their agents all over Arabia to war against the Prophet. They wrote a letter to the people of Medina which said:

“Fight Muhammad. At least turn him out of your town. Otherwise we will wage war on you. Then we will slay all your men take away your women.”

The Meccans also changed their normal caravan routes and took to routes lying through areas around Medina and incited local tribes against Muslims. Muslims were in great fear. They had to keep watch at night. Some were armed even when asleep. The Prophet would keep awake the whole night. Almost a whole year went by in this manner. God then commanded Muslims to prepare to meet force with force. They were few and the Quresh were many. They were poor and the Quresh were rich. They were without friends. The Quresh had all Arabia with them. But God promised them victory. For, they were not the first to draw the sword. They had faith in the word of God and His great Prophet. They had been forced out of their homes. They had lost everything. All they wanted was peace. But the Quresh wanted their blood. Muslims were helpless. The Quresh were active among the tribes. The Prophet too was alert. He took very wise step to meet the enemy.

1. He sent out small scout parties to report on enemy movements in the territory.
2. He made treaties of friendship with tribes around Medina.

The Quresh were on the war path. Their letter to the chiefs of Medina had not been answered. They decided to attack Medina. First a small party of Meccans raided a place three miles outside the town. It made off with some camels belonging to

Muslims.

Chapter 9

The First Battle of Islam

This was the **second year of the Hijrah** (Prophet's escape from Mecca). Muslims were commanded to turn their faces to the Kaaba, the Holy House at Mecca, instead of Bait-ul-Muqaddus, the Holy Place in Palestine. The **Qibla** (point of attention in prayer) was thus changed. Also **fasting** was made compulsory during the month of Ramazan. The year is important for other things too. For the first time in the city, courts started functioning, hygienic measures were introduced, lanes were widened and arrangements made to promote literacy, laws regulated the rights and duties of slaves, and people were enjoined to commit to writing all civil contracts.

Yet another great thing happened during the year. Muslims and the Quresh fought their first battle at **Badr**. The Prophet learnt that the Quresh were on their way to Medina with a big army. He started to meet the enemy far away from the town. He also came to know that a big trade caravan of the Quresh was on its way to Mecca; the Meccan army was there ostensibly to protect it. The prophet was prepared as best as he could. But he had not many means for an armed conflict. He had not many men either. Muslims were prepared to meet only the caravan. They were not in a position to meet the Quresh army.

The Meccans had raised a big force. They had enlisted every fighting man. Only two chiefs of the town were not willing to join them. One was Abu Lahab, an uncle, but a great enemy of the Prophet. His sister had had a fearful dream. He was frightened on that account. The other was Umaiyya bin Khalaf, another bitter enemy of Islam. He greatly feared death. He had learnt that Prophet had predicted that he would die in the battlefield. He knew the Prophet spoke the truth but he was forced to join the army against his will.

Before the Prophet took to the field, he wanted to know the mind of the Muslims. The Muhajirs were eager to lay down their lives at his command. The Ansar were no less willing. When asked, their chief, Saad bin Moaz, said,

“We are with you, wherever you go, o Prophet of Allah, if you tell us to jump in the sea, by God, we will.”

The Prophet was highly pleased. He told them that God had promised him a great victory. When they reached the valley of Badr, they found the enemy camp already there. Its force numbered **one thousand**. The Muslims numbered **313**. The Quresh had 800 mounts, the Muslims only 30. Three hundred of the enemy had armour, of the Muslims only two.

The follower of the Prophet camped close to the enemy. A pavilion shaded the Prophet where he and Abu Bakr spent the night together. The Prophet prayed throughout the night and the next day. It was the 17th of Ramazan. Soon after sunrise the enemy made advance. Some of them came to the spring to fetch water. Muslims made to stop them. But the Prophet said,

“No, let them have access to the water.”

The Quresh sent out one Umar bin Wahab to do scout duty. He went round the Muslims on horse back. He returned to the Quresh in a state of panic. He said,

“O Quresh I did not see men on the mounts, I saw death riding on the backs of camels.”

So did the Muslims appear to him.

The first of the enemy force to seek battle were Utba, Shaiba and Walid. The Prophet ordered Hamza, Ali and Ubaidah to meet them. Hamza and Ali killed all three. Ubaida was fatally wounded. Then the Quresh made a general attack. The Prophet, who watched from his tent, prayed thus:

“O Lord, make good Thy promise. If today this party of Muslims is wiped out, there will be none left to worship Thee.”

Abu Jahl was also praying. His prayer was:

“O God, if we are in the wrong then stone us from above or punish us otherwise.”

First Victory of Islam

Both were heard. The Muslims won, the Quresh lost the battle. Muslims fought with great courage. Two Ansar youth rushed to the spot where Abu Jahl had taken his position. In an instant they cut him down. The Prophet then ordered a general

attack. Muslims fell on the enemy like lightning. The Quresh fled. Seventy were taken prisoner and as many lay dead. Among them were 24 leading chiefs. Umaiyya bin Khalaf was on the casualties. Thus was cut off the root of Meccan strength.

The dead Quresh were buried in one pit. The Prophet addressing the dead enemy, said,

*“Did you find true the promise God had made to you?
Well, I found His promise to me true.”*

Then he said,

*“O ye who lie in the pit, you were bad relations of your
Prophet. You rejected me, others accepted me. You turned
me out of my home, others gave me shelter. You made
war on me, others aided me.”*

Grief in Mecca

Only fourteen Muslims were slain in the battle. There was great joy in Medina. There was great grief in Mecca. The star of the Prophet was up. The name of the Quresh was mud. They felt the disgrace keenly. They forbade all mourning and pledged to wipe out their shame with revenge. They will then and only then mourn their dead. But many had lost their sons, many their brothers, many their fathers and many their husbands. They could not bear the grief in silence for long. It is said that a man named Aswad once heard a woman weep. He had lost two sons and a grandson in Badr. He asked his servant to enquire if mourning had been permitted. He said, if it was so, he would like

to cry.

“There is a fire burning inside me. I would love to weep to my heart’s content.”

The servant returned with the answer that woman had lost her camel and was therefore crying. Aswad was a poet. He at once uttered these lines:

“O woman, thou art weeping over the loss of a camel. Its grief is keeping thee from sleep. If thou must weep, then weep over Badr where our luck failed us. Aye, if thou must weep, then weep over my Adil and weep over my Harith, who was a lion among lions.”

Then there followed general mourning in Mecca. The only house that did not join was that of Abu Sufiyan. His wife Hinda would not shed a tear. She had lost her father and two brothers in Badr.

“Tears cannot put out the fire of my grief,”

she said,

“If they could, I would shed plenty.”

She wanted them to go to war against Muhammad. So did many others. Mecca made ready for revenge. It was to be a great battle. They wanted to finish the Muslims! So they made big preparations.

For the Muslims it was a great honour to have fought in Badr. **Saad bin Abi Viqas** was one of them. Later, he founded Kufa.

He was also governor of Iraq. He conquered Iraq. He conquered Iran. He was young when he took part in the battle of Badr. He died at the age of eighty. Before his death, he asked for the cloak he had worn at Badr. He had kept it safe. He put it on when he was dying. He said he had saved it for that day. He was buried in the same cloak.

Humane Treatment of enemy P.O.W's

The Prophet ordered that the enemy prisoners of war should be treated with kindness. At that time prisoners of war were dealt with very savagely. They were kept as slaves and used as beasts. The Prophet was the first man in history to give prisoners of war humane treatment. He ordered that they should be set free on payment of ransom. Some prisoners were asked to teach Muslims how to read and write. This duty was to earn them their freedom. Abbas, an uncle of the Prophet, who had been forced to join the Meccan army, was taken prisoner. He was bound up like the others. He felt pain and moaned at night. The Prophet felt very uneasy on that account. The Muslims noted this. They at once loosened the bonds of Abbas. He felt at peace. When he did not moan any more, the Prophet knew the reason why. He ordered all the prisoners to be treated alike. Soon the bonds of all were made loose.

Muslims were very good to the Quresh prisoners of war. They gave them food and starved themselves. They gave them mounts and themselves walked on foot.

Chapter 10

Medina Faces Threat of Invasion

But Medina was again in great danger. A few days after the battle of Badr, Salim and Ghatfan tribes raised a big army at Qarqaratul Kadar. It was to invade Medina. The Prophet set out with a party of his companions. When he reached the plain of Al-Kadar, the enemy had dispersed.

Some two months later Abu Sufiyan entered the Medina valley with two hundred armed Quresh. At night he met Salam bin Mushkam, the chief of Banu Nadhir, the Jewish tribe. He requested their help against the Prophet. The Jewish chief agreed. Next day Abu Sufiyan's party raided valley Ariz. He burnt down some date-trees and a few huts. He killed two men and then retired. He was chased by the Prophet but he made off in haste leaving behind many bags of barley porridge.

During this year, another great event took place. It was the **marriage of Fatima**, the daughter of the Prophet. He loved her dearly. Ali applied for her hand at the instance of Abu Bakr and Umar. It was granted. The marriage ceremony was a simple affair. Lady Fatima's dower was made up of a few things – a head cover, a leather cushion, a bag and a grinding stone. The Prophet prayed for the couple thus:

“O Lord, bless them between themselves, bless them in their relations with others and bless them in their

generations.”

Jews on War

The Jews now were working hand in glove with the Quresh. The Banu Nadhir had already promised them help. Now Banu Qainqa also started making trouble. In fact, they were very much alarmed at the growing power of the Prophet. The victory of Badr had made them bitter. The Prophet, however, treated them as People of the book. He invited them to accept the new faith, proposing to them a get-together for a free exchange of views on the subject. They were full of scorn. They told him that the victory of Badr had turned his head.

“You had to fight Quresh there. If you have to fight us, you would know.”

The Prophet remained calm. He also advised Muslims to remain calm. But the Jewish leaders did not want peace. They made trouble every time. Once a party of them insulted a Muslim woman. She cried for help. A Muslim rushed to protect her. A fight ensued. One Jew and one Muslim were killed. Soon there was a big riot. The Prophet hastened to the place. He advised peace and patience. But, as later events showed, the Qainqa were on the war path. Mutual relations got strained and both parties were soon up in arms. After fifteen days the Jews sued for peace. They offered their properties to Muslims. Only they begged that their lives be spared. The prophet agreed. The Banu Qainqa then departed for Syria.

Rukkiya, a daughter of the Prophet, died this year. She had been married to Uthman. The Prophet gave away in marriage to Uthman his other daughter, **Ummi-Kalloom**.

Again Banu Ghatfan raised an army to attack Medina. Before the enemy could march, the Prophet dashed to meet them. They again dispersed.

A trade caravan of the Quresh was on its way through Najaf. Zaid bin Harith attacked it with a small party of Muslims. Abu Sufiyan and Safvan, two Quresh chiefs, were leading the caravan. They were so frightened that they made off at once leaving everything behind.

Now the **third year of Hijra** had begun. God blessed Fatima and Ali with a son. He was named **Hassan**. The Prophet loved him greatly. He once said,

“This child of mine is a great leader. Allah will make him one day the means of peace between two parties of Muslims.”

Meccans March on Medina

During the month of Ramazan, the Quresh marched on Medina with an army of three thousand, with Abu Sufiyan as their commander. They had two hundred mounts and seven hundred men under arms. This army camped near Mount **Uhud**. The Prophet met the enemy with a force of 700 men. He had only two mounts and one hundred men under arms. Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul deserted along with his men. The Prophet camped at the foot of the hill. He put a party of fifty under

Abdullah bin Jabar to guard the pass. He told them not to leave their posts until ordered. The two armies came to blows. There was a great battle. Muslims fought without fear. They spread all around. The Quresh were defeated. The field was soon clear of the enemy.

A Bloody Battle

Muslims started collecting the dead and the wounded and the spoils of war. The men on guard duty at the pass left their posts to join them. Khalid bin Walid, a Quresh general, saw from far that the pass was unguarded. He collected his men and advancing from the pass made a surprise attack on Muslims. Some one at the same time shouted that the enemy had also come up from behind. Muslims were caught unaware. There was confusion and Hamza fell fighting in the fray. Even the Prophet was seriously wounded. Many Muslims were killed. Only a few men remained around the Prophet. Seeing this the Quresh charged. The handful of Muslims guarding the Prophet had fought them with mad courage.

It was said at this stage that the Prophet had been slain. Some Muslims gave up heart, others stood fast. A bitter fight raged for a time. The Prophet stood firm in the thick of the battle. He had with him, Abu Bakr, Ali, Omar, Talha, Saad bin Abi Viqas, Zubair, Abu Ubaida bin al-Jarrah, Abdul Dujana and Zaid bin Sakan. They shielded him against all attacks. They intercepted arrows aimed at the Prophet. They received sword-cuts. But they did not budge. Talha lost his hand; the arrows fell so thick and fast on him. They were aimed at the Prophet's face. A woman,

Umm-e-Amara, stood guard with a drawn sword. The Prophet moved with his party to another pass. Khalid made to attack it. He was repulsed by Umar. There were Fatima, Aisha, and Umm-e-Salma to attend the wounded.

Since it was rumoured that the Prophet had died of enemy arrows, Abu Sufiyan could not contain his joy. Climbing a cliff he called out,

“Where is Muhammad?”

Muslims wanted to reply but the Holy Prophet forbade them. Abu Sufiyan felt greatly encouraged. He next asked if Abu Bakr was alive? Again the Muslims were forbidden to answer. He next asked if Omar was there. Since there was no reply again, he felt certain that the Prophet, Abu Bakr and Omar were all dead. Triumphantly he shouted:

“Glory to Hubbal”

Hubbal was the chief Meccan idol. The Holy Prophet could not stand this insult to Allah. Turning to his comrades he said,

“Why are you silent now? Say Allah, The Almighty, the Glorious”.

The Muslims accordingly thundered back **“Allah the Mighty, the Glorious.”**

It was highly crucial moment. Muslim force had been severely mauled and scattered. The Meccans were in high spirits. They could be provoked to fresh assault. But the Holy Prophet could not care less; he was the Prophet of Allah and could not put up with an insult to Him. Before withdrawing, Abu Sufiyan said,

"We promise to give you battle next year in Badr."

The Prophet accepted the challenge. The Quresh had mutilated the dead bodies of Muslims. Hinda, the wife of Abu Sufiyan, had disfigured Hamza. The Prophet was deeply grieved at this. Some seventy Muslims lay dead. They were all buried on the spot. There was not enough cloth to cover their bodies.

When the Prophet went to Medina, he was received with great joy. He had been believed to have been slain. Muslims were happy to know he was alive. An old Ansari lady had started for the battlefield when she heard of his death. On the way she was told that her father had been killed. She asked,

"How is the Prophet?"

Then someone told that her husband had been slain. She only wanted to know if the Prophet was safe. Next she was informed that her son had fallen in the battle. All she said was,

"How is the Prophet?"

When she saw the Prophet, she exclaimed:

"All misfortunes are nothing if you are safe."

When the Quresh were half way to Mecca, they felt they had made a grave mistake. They thought they should have finished Medina for good. They decided to turn back. The Prophet came to know of this and prepared to meet them. He gathered his men and set forth. This army camped at **Hamra-al-Asad**.

Maadaban, an Arab chief, met the Prophet there. He was on

his way to Mecca. Next day he found the Quresh at Rauha. They were ready to march on Medina. He warned Abu Sufiyan against this. He said he had seen Muhammad and his men. He assured him that he had never seen a more determined force. Abu Sufiyan at once decided to march back home.

The **battle of Uhud** taught Muslims a bitter lesson. If they had not left the pass, complete victory would have been theirs.

Chapter 11

Wine Forbidden, Women Honoured

It was soon after the battle that the Prophet received a revelation in favour of women. God commanded Muslims to give share to their women-folk in the property of their parents, their husbands, their brothers and sons. Women had no share in property anywhere at the time.

The same year Muslims were forbidden to drink wine. When this order was received, a man went round the city proclaiming the prohibition. Abu Talha Ansari sat drinking with a few friends. When they heard the cry of the man, they first wanted to make sure. One of the party said,

“Break the jars first and then make sure.”

They did so at once; that wine flowed like water in the lanes of Medina.

Enemy Uses Foul Methods

Muslims were in great danger at this time. The outcome of the battle of Uhud had turned many more tribes against them. Most of them made ready to attack Medina. The Prophet was very watchful. He met danger half way whenever he heard a tribe was preparing to march on Medina. The tribes decided to use foul

methods to finish the Muslims. The Banu Qara came with a request to the Prophet to send some Muslims with them to teach Islam. The Banu Adl made a similar request. The Prophet sent a party of Muslims with the Qara tribesmen and another party with the Banu Adl. Both parties were treacherously killed by these tribes. Only two men escaped. It was later known that they were slain in a most cruel manner. But they remained steadfast till the end. They accepted death with good cheer. One Fahira, a servant of Abu Bakr, died with these words on his lips:

“By Allah, my wish is granted.”

His slayer was amazed. He became a Muslim later. Another Muslim named Zaid was put to death in Mecca. He had been sold to the Quresh. Before he was murdered, Abu Sufiyan asked him,

“Would you not wish that Muhammad was here in your place?”

Zaid said,

“By God, I would not wish the Prophet even as little harm as a scratch on his foot by a thistle.”

Abu Sufiyan exclaimed,

“By God, I have never seen any one loving anybody more than Muhammad’s men love Muhammad.”

The Prophet was deeply grieved when he learnt of these terrible events. He prayed long, begging of God His mercy and help.

Jews Prepare to Fight

Some elements of the Jewish community again started giving trouble. Banu Nadhir made a plot to kill the Prophet. They invited him to their place with thirty men. They said they would have the same number of their own men there. They wanted to know the truth. They said, they would accept Islam if it was the truth. Actually, they had no such wish. They wanted to have the Prophet at their place to kill him. The plot became known to Muslims through a Jewish lady. The Prophet asked the Jews to make a new treaty. They refused. There was open fighting. The Jews lost and sued for peace. They agreed to leave Medina and went away to Khaibar.

The Quresh army did not turn up at Badr as promised. But the Prophet kept his word. He went with a small force and came back after camping out for a week.

In the **fourth year of Hijra** another son was born to Fatima and Ali. He was named **Hussain**. The Prophet was very fond of him. The same year Ali's mother Fatima bin Asad died. This good lady had brought up the Prophet like her own child. He was deeply grieved at her death. When her body was laid down in the grave, he prayed,

"May God reward thee for being a mother to me. Thou wert a good mother indeed."

In the **fifth year of Hijra**, some tribes made trouble in Daumatul Jandal. They were busy in loot. They were a public danger. The Prophet set out with a thousand companions. He

reached there after fifteen days, long journey. He found the miscreants had fled. There was peace there after that.

A **famine** raged in Mecca the same year. The Prophet sent to help their poor. Abu Sufiyan visited the Prophet in Medina. He requested him to pray that the famine might be lifted.

The Prophet gave away in marriage to Zaid bin Harith, a freed slave, his own cousin Zainab.

Muslim women were ordered to cover their faces.

Jews and Muslims

The same year another army made ready to attack Medina. Banu Khaza and the Muslims joined battle at Marisi. First the Prophet invited them to peace. They answered back with an arrow. A general attack was ordered. Muslims surrounded the enemy force. When the Banu Khaza found their retreat cut off, they sued for peace. One Muslim was killed. Ten men of the enemy fell in the battlefield.

All Tribes Attack

The Jews who had left Medina were now free to make trouble. They visited the Quresh and several other tribes. Soon they had them on their side. It was agreed to mount an all-tribes attack on Muslims. A force twenty thousand strong took to the field with Abu Sufiyan as their commander. When the news reached Medina, the Prophet decided to **dig a ditch** to make the city safe. The Prophet and his companions worked hard for many days together.

During this period many went without food. The Prophet missed his meal for days. One day Jabir bin Abdullah saw the Prophet in a very weak condition. He went home and asked his wife if she had any foodstuff. She said that she had a goat and some barley. The goat was killed. She told Jabir to bring to meals the Prophet and a few friends. Jabir spoke to the Prophet aside. He invited him to dinner at his house, with a party of friends to share. The Prophet asked how much food he had. Jabir told him the position. The Prophet said, "That is a lot." Turning round he called out,

"O Ansar, O Muhajir's, come, Jabir has asked us to meals."

One thousand starving companions followed him. The Prophet asked Jabir to hurry home and tell his wife not to bake bread until he was there and not to remove the meat-pot from the fire. When the Prophet reached Jabir's house, he blessed the pot and the dough. Then Jabir's wife started baking bread with another woman to help. The Prophet started serving out meals. Jabir said,

"I swear by God who holds my life in His hands, all the people were satisfied while my wife was still baking bread and the meat-pot was still on the fire."

Medina Under Attack

The enemy attack on Medina was heavy. Muslims were without means. They had no rations. The Banu Quraiza had also

joined the enemy. But the Muslims fought back bravely. Many times the enemy tried to cross the ditch but failed. The fight went on, growing fierce. Muslims requested the Prophet to pray to God for help. And God did help. They were in great trouble and pain. At night a dust storm blew out the campfire of the enemy. It was considered a bad omen among the Quresh. Abu Sufiyan decided to run. So did the others. Some time before dawn the Prophet asked his companions,

“Would any of you go and get news about the enemy?”

They were very weak because of hunger, cold and fatigue. They heard but did not have the strength to answer. The Prophet then called Hazifa bin Yaman. He was shivering when he turned up. The Prophet patted his head and asked him to go and find all about the enemy. *“Fear none!”* said he.

Hazifa felt a new courage in him. He went and saw the Quresh preparing to decamp. He reported this back to the Prophet. The Prophet was overjoyed. He said it was all due to God’s grace.

“They will never dare take to the field against us again.”

Saad bin Maaz, the great Ansar leader, was fatally wounded in this battle.

Banu Qurayza, the Jewish tribe, had been secretly in league with the enemy during the battle. They had to defend Medina in terms of the Treaty of Medina signed early. When required to explain their conduct, they prepared to fight and shut themselves up in their forts. After twenty days they agreed to end the war,

proposing Saad bin Maaz as the judge. He decided against them. Their fighting men were put to death under Mosaic Law. The rest were asked to leave Medina. Saad died soon after this. The Prophet was moved to tears at the death of this devoted companion.

This year **Hajj** (pilgrimage) became obligatory.

Chapter 12

Prophet decided to visit Mecca

As the **sixth year of the Hijra** set in, the word of God said to the Prophet,

“Surely you will, God willing, enter the house of God safe.”

There was great joy in Medina. The Muhajirs (refugees) hoped to return home soon. But they wondered how. Will they have to go to war against Mecca? Or will the Quresh give in peacefully? The Prophet soon decided to pay a visit to Mecca. He made his wish known to the local people. Agents were also sent to friendly tribe to apprise them of his intentions. They were asked to accompany the Muslims to the Kaaba. He also made know the purpose of his visit. It was not war, he said, It was to make Umrah, the lesser pilgrimage. He wanted non-Muslims to go with him too. The idea was that his goodwill should be made clear to the Meccans.

The party proceeded as planned. The Prophet had 1400 companions, both Muhajirs and Ansars. There were also some non-Muslim tribesmen in the multitude accompanying him. Muslims had their swords sheathed as was the custom.

Prophet by-passes Meccan Force

When the Quresh learnt that the Prophet was on his way, they sent an army to meet him. When he reached Usfan, he was told that the Meccan forces were not very far. The Prophet felt deeply grieved for the Meccans. He said,

“Wars have ruined them and yet they know not.”

The Prophet wanted to avoid war. He had come for a peaceful purpose. When he saw the Meccan army coming he started on a side-path that led to Mecca. When Meccans saw this, they feared the Prophet was marching to attack Mecca. They turned back so that they could reach Mecca before the Prophet would. They planned to give him battle there.

The Bait-ul-Ridhwan

The Prophet stopped at **Hudaibia**. He said he would agree to any terms the Quresh gave, if conducive to peace and public welfare. The Quresh were also very uneasy. They knew that if they lost the battle this time, they would lose Mecca forever. They, therefore, sent agents to the Prophet to talk peace terms. The agents advised the Quresh to let Muslims in. Hulaish told them that his tribe would not stand in the way of Muhammad. Another agent, Urwah, also advised them to change their minds. He said,

“I have been to the courts of Iran, Rome and Abyssinia. I saw no king with the majesty of Muhammad.”

The Prophet also sent an agent to Mecca. The Quresh killed his camel and attacked him. At night some Meccan youth stoned

the Muslim camp. They were taken prisoners. In the morning the Prophet set them all free. The Prophet next proposed to send Umar to speak to the Meccans. He said the Quresh were very angry with him and he had little mercy for them. The Prophet then sent Uthman. The Meccans permitted him to make the pilgrimage. He refused. He said, he would not if the Prophet could not. The Quresh answered that they would not let him that year. News reached Muslim camp that the Quresh had killed Uthman. There was great anger among them. The Prophet called them to assemble under a tree. There they took an oath on his hand to punish Meccans for the crime. This is called the **Baiat-ul-Ridhwan**. The Prophet put his right hand on his left and said it was Uthman's hand.

The Hudaibia Treaty

After some time peace was made. The Quresh agreed to let the Prophet visit the Kaaba the following year. The Prophet agreed to go back that year. He agreed to send back to Mecca the Muslims who escaped from Mecca. He also agreed to return to the Quresh any Muslim who gave up Islam. Both parties agreed to end war for ten years. Both were free to have friendly relations with other tribes.

Medina was now a state. Islam was free. So were other religions in Arabia. The Prophet was the head of the State. Mecca had agreed to that much. The Treaty of Hudaibia was thus a great victory. But a greater one was yet to come.

Khaiber Fort Reduced

The Jews of Khaiber began hostilities. Efforts to make peace with them failed. The Prophet took to the field with 1000 Muslims. The Jews had very strong forts. The Prophet gave Ali the flag of Islam. Ali fought with unusual courage. The Jews gave in. The Prophet let them stay there on easy terms. They agreed to give half the produce of the land to him. His agents would go every year to collect the share. Two lots were made. The agents would ask the Jews to choose their lot.

Relations with Jews were now completely normal. But some among them were very angry at heart. A Jewish lady once invited the Prophet and his companions to dinner. She had poisoned the food. The Prophet refused to eat. She admitted her crime. She was forgiven. But Muslim lost all faith in Jews and never trusted them any more. Relations between the Jews and Muslims have remained strained since.

Embassies to Neighbouring State

On return to Medina, the Prophet sent embassies to Iran, Abyssinia, Rome, Egypt, Oman, Bahrin, Ghassan, Yamama and Yemen.

The Roman emperor read the Prophet's letter with due deference. The Iranian emperor tore it to pieces. On hearing this, the Prophet said that God would treat his empire in the same manner. The Negus received the Embassy very respectfully. The King of Egypt sent to the Prophet costly presents. Yemen and Oman showed disrespect to the envoys. The Amir of Bahrin

accepted Islam. The Amir of Yamama was very rude to the agent of the Prophet.

Peaceful visit to Mecca

A year after the Hudaibia treaty, the Prophet as agreed set forth to Mecca. 10,000 Muslims accompanied him. They carried their swords in sheaths. The Meccans left the town. They did not like to come into contact with Muslims. The Prophet and his men performed the pilgrimage. They offered prayers in the Holy House. The Meccans watched them from hills. The Prophet returned to Madina after staying three days in Mecca.

A quiet change began to take place among the Quresh after Prophet's visit to the Holy House. They knew they had been defeated. They saw that Islam was now in power. They also saw with their own eyes that Muslims were better men. The great Quresh commander Khalid bin Walid said,

"It is now clear to the wise that Muhammad is not a sorcerer. Nor is he a poet. His speech is the word of God. It is, therefore, the duty of all to obey him."

Khalid joined Islam. He was soon followed by Amr Bin al-Aas and Uthman bin Talha.

Muslim Envoy and Teachers Killed

Fifteen teachers sent by the Prophet to Zati Talh (Syria) were attacked by the tribes. Fourteen were killed. The Prophet's ambassador to the emperor of Rome was intercepted by

Shurahbil, the ruler of Ghassan, and was murdered. The Prophet sent a force to punish the killers. He enjoined on them fear of God and just treatment of Muslim comrades.

“Go to war in the name Allah and fight the enemy in Syria, your enemy and Allah’s enemy. You will meet in Syria people who remember God much in their houses of worship. Molest them not and have no quarrel with them. Molest no women nor children nor the old nor the blind. Neither cut down trees nor pull down houses.”

Three thousand Muslims faced an army of 100,000 enemy. Zaid bin Harith, the Muslim Commander, fell fighting. Jabar bin Abu Talib took the command. He too was killed. Abdullah bin Ravah followed next. He met the same fate. Then Khalid bin Walid took over. Muslims gave hard blows to the enemy but they were many and the Muslims were few. Khalid hid away a large section of the army at night. They marched up in the morning. The enemy thought Muslims made a quiet retreat from Mauta, the field of battle. Later a force was sent by the Prophet under Amr bin Alas. He was helped with another force under Abu Ubaida bin al-Jarrah. Abu Bakr and Omar were also serving under his command. The enemy force dispersed without giving battle. Many tribes joined Islam after this victory. The Arab volunteers who had helped the enemy walked over to the Muslims.

Chapter 13

Prophet Marches on Mecca

After the treaty at Hudaibia, Muslims entered into a pact of friendship with Banu Khuzaa. The Quresh did the same with Banu Bakr. Trouble shot up between the two tribes. Some men of Banu Bakr, with the help of a party of Meccans, attacked a party of Banu Khuzaa at night at Vatr. They killed them in their sleep. Their chief Amr bin Salam applied to the Prophet for help. The Prophet was bound under treaty to come to their aid. He ordered Muslims to stand by.

The Prophet marched on Mecca with ten thousand men. He prayed for victory without bloodshed. The army moved with speed and was soon near Mecca. Abbas begged the Prophet for mercy on behalf of the Quresh. The Prophet did not want war. He sent Abbas to the town to work for peace. Abbas brought Abu Sufiyan to the Prophet's camp. Abu Sufiyan saw a big army there. Every tribe has its own campfire.

The sight gave him a big fright. When he faced the Prophet, he was no more the big-mouth enemy who had boasted loud at Uhud. He knew the Prophet had won. He knew the idols of the Quresh had lost. He had the sense to know what was coming. He had to save Mecca. He could do so only by making peace. He appealed to the Prophet for mercy. It was granted. Abu Sufiyan, the enemy warlord, was from that moment a Muslim. Abbas

begged the Prophet for a favour for Abu Sufiyan.

“Why not?”

said the Prophet.

“Whoso enters his house shall be safe. Whoso keeps indoors shall be safe. Whoso enter the Holy House shall be safe.”

A Peaceful Entry

Abu Sufiyan hurried to Mecca. From the top of hill, he said,

“O Quresh, Muhammad is here with what you cannot fight. Whoso enters my house shall be safe, whoso keeps indoors shall be safe, whoso enters the Kaaba shall be safe.”

The Prophet then proceeded to Mecca. On the way he made a halt at Zitowa. As he saw no Meccan coming to give him battle, he gave thanks to God. Then the forces of Islam made a peaceful entry into the town. The Prophet first visited the Kaaba. There he made a short speech. He said,

“There is none worthy of worship but Allah. He made good His promises and helped His servant and defeated all the tribes.”

He next said all men were equal and that all were children of Adam and Adam was made of clay. He then asked the Meccans,

“O Quresh, what kind of treatment do you expect from me?”

They said,

“Mercy.”

He answered back,

“There shall be no action against you today. Go, you are all free.”

Then the House of God was cleared of all idols. The Quresh saw their gods in dust. They wondered how helpless the false deities were. The Prophet then strictly forbade fighting in Mecca.

Battle with Hawazan

Tribes from everywhere started accepting Islam. Some Meccan chiefs also became Muslims. Two weeks later news came that the Hawazan were preparing to march on Mecca. The Prophet proceeded to engage the enemy with an army of twelve thousand. The Hawazan were great soldiers and expert archers. They had taken their position in the pass. When the Muslim army passed through it they rained arrows on them. Some Meccans had also joined them to fight the aggressive tribe. They had not yet accepted Islam. And as they were caught between the cross fire of enemy archers, they went into panic and ran helter skelter. The ranks of Muslims were thus broken and their mounts got out of hand. When the Prophet called them back to victory, suddenly the panic ended. Muslims were again in good spirit.

They threw themselves into the fray with great courage. They had no fear of death. The Hawazan soon knew that they had no chance of victory. They fled leaving behind their families and their flocks. Their commander, Malik bin Auf, took refuge in Taif. Among the prisoners of war was a lady name Shaima. She was the daughter of Halima, the Prophet's foster mother. When Muslims captured her, she said,

"Do you know, I am the foster sister of your Lord?"

They did not believe her and brought her to the Prophet. On seeing her, the Prophet laid out his blanket for her to sit. Then he said to Shaima,

"Sister, if you want to stay with me, my house is yours."

But she wanted to go back. The Prophet sent her away with many presents. All the prisoners of her tribe were set free.

Taif Captured

Shortly after this, the Prophet started for Taif. Muslims laid siege to the fort where Malik bin Auf had taken refuge. The people of Taif had only one fear. They figured Muslims would burn down their gardens. This was their only wealth. They told the Prophet to take over all their gardens. He lifted the siege.

The Prophet later announced a reward of 100 camels for Malik bin Auf. He also promised to set free his prisoners of war. The only condition was that he should give himself up. Malik bin Auf lost no time winning the prize.

Memorable Address

Before leaving for Medina, the Prophet made grants to some chiefs of Mecca who had accepted Islam. Abu Sufiyan, his son Muavia, Harith bin Hisham, Hakim bin Hizam and Safvan bin Umayya given 100 camels each. Lesser men were granted 50 each. The Prophet gave gifts freely. This did not please some young Ansars. They complained that while they had fought the battles, the Quresh had had the rewards. On hearing this, the Prophet summoned the Ansars to a conference. He said,

“O Ansars, what is this that you have said? What is this that has come to me from you? You forget, you were on the wrong path and Allah guided you. You were poor and Allah gave you plenty. You were enemies and Allah made you brothers. By God, you could also say to me that after my people had called me a liar, I came to you and you believed me; that others harmed me and you aided me, then when I was turned out of my home, you gave me refuge. Ansars, what I am giving away is a little wealth so that this people may have a warm heart for the faith. O Ansars, would you not like the others to take away some camels and some goats but that you should take away with you the Prophet of Allah? By Allah who holds the life of Muhammad in His hands, if I were not a Muhajir, I would have loved to be an Ansari. And if others went by one path and the Ansar by another, I would surely go by the path the Ansar took. O Allah have mercy of the Ansar and on their children and on their

children of their children!"

The Ansars were moved to tears. They deeply regretted the folly of some of their raw youth. They all said with one voice,

"We are pleased with the Prophet of Allah as our share and as our lot."

After performing the Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) the Prophet left for Medina.

More tribes came to Medina to join Islam. Soon after this **Zainab**, a daughter of the Holy Prophet, died. The same year a son was born to the Prophet. He was named **Ibrahim**.

Poor-Rate Imposed

The Prophet appointed officers to collect Zakat. This tax was for the benefit of the poor. The tax is a yearly due.

Chapter 14

There were persistent rumors and reports that the Romans were preparing for war. The Prophet made ready to meet the new danger. The season was hot and the journey was long. The enemy had large armies. Muslims could not raise even a fraction of it. They did not have much money. The Prophet made an appeal for funds. Abu Bakr came with all that he had. Others too gave generously. Othman gave 300 camels and a big amount of ready cash. When the Muslim army reached Hajar, the Prophet forbade them to drink the water of that place. The Samud, a rich tribe, used to live there in the past. They had ill treated their prophet Hud. They had been punished. God had been angry with that land. The Prophet, therefore, would not touch even the water of the place. Next day there was heavy rain. Muslims had plenty of fresh water to drink. When the Prophet reached the frontier, he found no sign of Roman concentrations. There was no fight, therefore. The Prophet made the frontier secure. The rulers of the area were Christians. Treaties were made with them.

The Prophet's son **Ibrahim passed away**. It grieved him deeply but he remained patient and resigned to the will of God.

Tribes Join Islam in Legions

After the return of the Prophet from **Tabuk**, the whole of Arabia realized that Islam had become a great power. Tribe after

tribe came from far and near to join the ranks of the new faith. There were both pagans and Christians. The Prophet sent teachers and governors to the new areas. He advised Muaz who was appointed governor of Yemen, in these words:

“Make things easy for the people. Do not make it hard for them. Give them happiness and do not create hate.”

Farewell Pilgrimage

It was the **tenth year of the Hijra** now. Muslims were the rulers of Arabia. They were one brotherhood. They worshipped one God and followed one Prophet. Past enmities had been forgotten. New friendships had grown fast and firm. The Prophet made known that he would be going to Mecca for Hajj. Men from all over Arabia rushed to Medina. There were to be seen hundreds of tents around the capital. The Prophet left for Mecca with about one hundred thousands Muslims. Next day they put on the *Ihram* dress – two sheets. They all looked alike, the rich and the poor, the master and the servant. Then all turned to God with these words:

“At Thy service, o Lord, at Thy service! There is no partner with Thee; we are at Thy service. For Thee is all praise, from Thee are all gifts and to Thee are all thanks. We are at Thy service; there is no partner with Thee; we are at Thy service.”

The Farewell Address

On reaching Mecca, the Prophet and the Muslims performed all the rites of Hajj. On the **ninth of Zilhajj**, the Prophet went to Arafat. Mounted on a camel, he said:

“O ye people, hear my speech. I do not know whether I will be meeting you here after this year. O ye people, your blood and your property and your honour are sacred amongst you until you meet your Lord as is sacred this day, this month, this town. Whoso has with him the trust of the other he should render it to him. Every kind of interest is forbidden this day. The interest due to Abbas bin Muttatabib is remitted today. All the bloodshed in the time of ignorance is forgiven. I forgive first the blood of Ibne Rabia bin Harith bin Abdul Muttalib. God has appointed for every one a share in the property. No “will” shall now be accepted that wrongs a rightful heir. A child born in a house shall be regarded the child of the father in the house.

O men, you have some rights over your wives. Your wives also have rights over you. Your right over them is that they should lead chaste lives and not take ways that bring shame to the husband in the sight of the people.

Your duty is to provide them with food and garments and shelter according to your standard. Remember, you should always treat your wives well. God has charged

you with the duty of taking good care of them. Woman is weak and cannot protect her own rights. God has appointed you the trustee of those rights.

O men, you still have with you some prisoners of war. I advise you to feed them and clothe them in the same way and style as you feed and clothe yourselves.

O men, what I say to you, you should hear and remember. All Muslims are as brethren to one another. All of you are equal. All men of whatever nation or tribe, and whatever position are equal.”

Then lifting two hands, the Prophet joined the fingers of one to the fingers of the other and said,

“Even as the fingers of the two hands are equal, so are human beings equal to one another. No one has any right, nor any preference to claim over another. You are brothers.”

Then he asked,

“Do you know what month is this? What city we are in? What day of the year it is today?”

It was the sacred day, the Prophet announced:

“Even as this month is sacred, this land sacred and this day sacred, so has God made the lives, property and honour of every man sacred.”

Proceeding he said:

“What I command you today is not for today only. It is for all times to come. You should remember and obey until you leave this world and go to the next to meet your Creator. What I have said to you, carry it to the ends of the world. May be the one who has not heard benefits from it more than the one who has.”

His Last Advice

On his way back to Medina, the Prophet said it to a gathering of the companions:

“O ye people, I am only a man, perhaps God’s angel might come and I have to accept the call. I am leaving in your midst two things. The first is the Book of Allah which has guidance and light. Hold fast to the Book of Allah, therefore, hold fast to it; and my house-hold. I remind you of Allah in respect of the people of my house.”

Last Days: Last Words

After his return from his last Hajj to Medina, the Prophet fell ill. The day before he became indisposed, he had ordered an army to be sent to the Roman frontier, Usama bin Zaid as its commander, to avenge the murder of his envoy. He remained ill for some thirteen days. For the first few days he could move about. When he became too weak to walk he went to the house of

Ayesha. There he stayed laid up with high fever till his death. As long as he could, he would lead the prayers even in extreme illness. But during the last three days he was too weak to do that. He appointed Abu Bakr to do the duty of Imam (prayer leader). Once when he felt a little better he came to the mosque. After prayers he made a short speech. He said God has granted a person one of two things. It could be happiness of this world or presence before the Lord. The servant of God has chosen the latter, said the Prophet. Abu Bakr burst into tears. He knew the Prophet had hinted at this approaching death. The Prophet then said that of all men he was greatly obliged to Abu Bakr, for the help and sincere companionship he had given him. He next advised Muslims against worshipping their Prophet and their saints.

The Prophet also advised his followers to honour the good Ansars and to overlook the errors of the weak among them.

"They have done their duty. Now you have to do your to them,"

said he.

As his condition grew gradually worse, death seemed laying its hand on him. He was last heard murmuring the prayer,

"Allah the best friend."

When the breathing became hard he uttered his last advice,

"Mind your prayers and your slaves."

Chapter 15

The Prophet Passes Away

Three times he repeated in a weak voice the words,

“To the best friends, to the best friend, to the best friend.”

And breathed his last. Ali and Abbas gave the Prophet the last bath. Now the question arose where should they bury him. Abu Bakr said,

“The place where he breathed his last.”

The Prophet was then laid to his final rest in the living room of Ayesha, where now stand a dome and minaret.

A Brief Sketch

The Holy Founder of Islam (peace be upon him) was **63** at the time of his death. He was raised as **Prophet at the age of 40**. He devoted the whole of his life to the service of God. Born an orphan without any riches, he died a king leaving no wealth behind. He never ate a full meal all his life nor wore a rich garment. His house was a mud hut, his court room was the mosque and his throne was its dusty floor. His bed was made of straw, his own arm, his pillow. For months there was no smoke in

the chimney of his house. There was nothing to cook. The family lived on dates or goat's milk or would go hungry. His wives had no maidservants, no silk, no jewellery. Their raiment was as simple as their resources were scanty. The Prophet kept no gold or silver with him. He gave away to the poor all that he received. There was nothing in the house when he died except a small quantity of barley.

The Prophet was of middle height, well built, fair faced, had a broad and high forehead, flowing hair, a thick beard, straight nose, beautiful black eyes and long eye-lashes. Fast in walking, he was slow in talk. Always the first to greet, he received friends and strangers with a smile, heard patiently, would never turn down a request for help, never withdraw his hand first. His habits were simple and his manners sweet. Ever willing to forgive, he punished only when punishment appeared to do greater good than forgiveness. His words, acts and thoughts were devoted to the service of God. He had no other aim in life. He sought only His pleasure. If he made peace at Hudaibiya it was to please God. The terms of the Treaty were harsh. He accepted them even though they hurt the feelings of some of his companions. He marched on Mecca with 10,000 believers. Mecca had treated him cruelly. The city was at his mercy. It begged for mercy. He granted it readily. For, so had God willed, though he knew well that some of his companions had suffered terribly at the hands of Meccans. Bilal the African was one of them. He had been treated with utmost cruelty. The Prophet wisely gave him the duty of calling Meccans to the flag of peace.

Ikramah, son of Abu Jahal, was a bitter enemy of the Prophet.

He escaped from Mecca and was on his way to Abyssinia. His wife was a Muslim at heart. She asked the Prophet if he would forgive Ikramah. He said he would. The lady next asked if he could stay in Mecca a non-Muslim. The Prophet said he could. She went after her husband and brought him back. Ikramah wanted to hear all that she told him from the Prophet himself. So he went and asked him,

“My wife tells me that you have forgiven even me.”

The Prophet said he had. Ikramah at once joined Islam. Putting his mantle over him, the Prophet said,

“Whoever come to me as a Muslim is one with me. My house is his.”

Habbar had caused the death of Zainab, a daughter of the Prophet. He had run away to Iran. But there it occurred to him to come back and beg the Prophet’s forgiveness. He returned to Mecca and sought forgiveness. He was forgiven.

Hinda, the wife of Abu Sufiyan, and Vahshi, a slave, had mutilated the dead body of Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet. Both were forgiven.

Shaiba, another Meccan, joined the Hawazin to fight the Prophet. Full of hate, he advanced with a sword. He had only one thought – and that was to kill the Prophet. When he approached, he heard a voice, “Shaiba come closer,” said the Holy Prophet. He obeyed. The Prophet moved his hand across his chest. Shaiba was a changed man. He had only one thought now and that was to give his life for the Prophet.

A few days before his death, the Prophet said to the companions,

"If I have wronged anyone, let him have his revenge."

All were in tears. One man came forward. He said the Prophet had hit him once; he had passed by him and dug his elbow in his side. The Prophet bared his back and asked him to hurt him as he had been hurt. The companions were taken aback. The man bent and kissed the Prophet's bare back. All were surprised. The man wanted to have this last pleasure since the Prophet was not to be among them very long.

The Prophet loved cleanliness – in speech, in thought, in habits, in dress, in body, in the house, in the mosque and in the streets. He washed very often, before meals and after meals and before prayers.

He looked to the comfort of all. Friend and foe alike received of his kindness. Companions, relations, neighbours, strangers, all were treated generously. He himself looked to the requirements of guests and attended to the wants of the poor.

Once a pagan chief visited him. There was a large flock of goats grazing nearby. He asked for it as a gift from the Prophet. It was granted. When he went back to his tribe he told them that Muhammad had great faith in His God; he had no fear of poverty.

The Prophet always kept his word and observed his treaties. After the fall of Khaibar, a shepherd accepted Islam. He tended the sheep of a Jewish chief. He said to the Prophet,

"I cannot go back to my people now. What shall I do

with the sheep and goats of my old master?"

The Prophet told him to set their face to Khaibar and drive them off. They would, he said, be guided to their master. And so they were.

After the treaty of Hudaibiya, a Muslim turned up to ask for protection. He said he was ill-treated and feared persecution if he was sent back. The Prophet had agreed to send back any Meccan who joined him after the treaty. He kept his word and asked him to go back trusting in God.

Even the enemies of the Prophet spoke highly of his virtues. When Heraclius the Emperor of the Byzantines received the Prophet's letter, he asked if an Arab caravan was in town. Abu Sufiyan, a Meccan chief, happened to be there. He was called to the court. The Emperor put some questions to him.

Heraclius: Do you know this man who calls himself a Prophet? Can you tell me what family he belongs to?

Abu Sufiyan: He comes of a noble family.

Heraclius: Did any Arabs before him make such a claim?

Abu Sufiyan: No.

Heraclius: Has there been a king among his forefathers?

Abu Sufiyan: No.

Heraclius: Are his followers rich and powerful or poor and humble?

Abu Sufiyan: Most of them are poor and humble.

Heraclius: Are their number increasing or decreasing?

Abu Sufiyan: They are increasing.

Heraclius: Has he ever broken a promise?

Abu Sufiyan: Not so far.

Heraclius: What does he teach?
Abu Sufiyan: That we should worship One God and set up no equal to Him. That we should speak the truth and give up vice, and all evil ways. That we should be good to one another and respect the promises we make to one another.

Heraclius said at the end:

"I first asked you about his family. You said he belonged to a noble family. Prophets always come of noble families. I then asked if any one before him had made a similar claim. You said no. I put this question because I thought if someone had done so he was merely following his example. I asked you if he had ever lied before. You said he did not. It was clear to me that a man who would not lie to men would never lie about God. I asked you if any of his forefathers was a ruler. You said, 'No'. I then understood that his claim was not made to recover an old kingdom. I next asked if his followers were powerful and rich or poor and humble. You said they were mostly poor and humble. So are generally the followers of prophets. I then asked if their numbers were increasing or decreasing. You said that they were increasing. The followers of prophets are always on increase. I asked you if he had ever played false. You said, 'No.' And this is the way of good men. It seems to me that he is a true prophet. I was half expecting that he would appear in our time but had no idea that he would be an Arab. If what you have told is true, then his kingdom will extend over these lands."

The Prophet feared and trusted God alone. He had full faith in his mission. He relied completely on Allah for its success. He kept Him, before his mind every day, every hour and every minute of his life. He prayed sitting, standing, walking, before going to sleep, on waking up, before and after eating and drinking, when entering or leaving his house or the mosque, meeting friends, parting with friends, hearing good news, wearing a new dress, before and after answering the call of nature. In short, he had for every movement and every moment a special prayer. He prayed long and regularly; often he was in prayers a whole night. In fact, his whole life was a single continuous prayer.

The Prophet feared none but God. When in battle with the Hawazin, the Muslim army dispersed, the Prophet was left alone with a few friends. The enemy was raining arrows from both sides. The Prophet told Abu Bakr to leave his mule alone. Then spurring the animal forward he said,

“I am a prophet. I am no liar. I am the son of Abdul Muttalib.”

Once in Medina Muslims were in great fear of attack. They would keep awake all night. Once there was an alarm late in the night. A group of them started out to investigate. Instantly they saw a rider coming. It was the Prophet. He said there was nothing to worry about. He had rushed out alone on the bare back of his horse at the first sign of trouble.

The Prophet had a very tender heart for the less fortunate. The rich too were never unwelcome. But he warned them that the poor had a share in their property. He even said that it was on

account of the poor that the rich were rich. He never took home any gold or silver or riches. Whatever came his way was given away to the poor right away.

Once a tribe came to Medina. They were in a very bad way. There were hunger lines on their faces. The Prophet was deeply moved. He at once summoned Muslims to the mosque. He called upon them to bring, "Coin, cloth, grain or even a date," whatever they could afford. Some brought clothes, some gave away their stored grains. One companion brought a heavy load of gold coins. When all this was piled up before him, his face lit up like the moon. Every bit was distributed.

The Prophet commanded Muslims to love one another. He said,

"What one likes for himself he should also like for his brother."

This was one of his directives:

"Beware, it is kufr (un-Islamic) to fight a Muslim; it is a sin to abuse him. It is not lawful for a Muslim to be angry with a brother for more than three days."

He advised Muslims to greet one another, to shake hands, to give presents, to invite one another to meals, to serve the sick, and to assist at funerals.

For goodwill among mankind, the Prophet commanded his followers to be just even to the enemy, to speak the truth even against the nearest of kin and "to spread peace and feed the poor."

He was never hard on any man except when he openly broke

the law. For the poor and the needy he had always a soft corner in his heart. Once one Ibad bin Sharjil plucked fruit from a garden. It was a time of famine. The owner caught hold of him, beat him up and took off his cloak from him. When both were brought before the Prophet, he said to the gardener,

“This man was ignorant. You should have taught him about good behaviour. He was hungry. You should have fed him..”

Then he got back the man’s cloak and gave the gardener a quantity of cereal in recompense.

The Prophet had no leniency for the rich criminal. Once a woman of a powerful tribe stole something. The Prophet decided to punish her under the law. Since she came of a noble family, he was requested to let her go. He was very angry and said,

“The Israelites were ruined because they would punish the poor offender and let off the rich.”

The Prophet had great regard for the man who would earn his own living. He once said if a man carries load of wood on his back to the market to sell and thus save his honour, it is better for him to do so than to beg.

The Prophet never for once believed that he was superior to others. In war and in peace, every time he was a comrade and an equal. There was no special seat for him to sit. He sat among his companions as one of them. A stranger would not know who the chief of the group was. Once during a journey, the companions divided among themselves their duties. The Prophet undertook

to collect fuel wood for cooking food. The companions would not let him. They said they would do all the work and serve him. He said, he would not like a special treatment “as God loves not one who wants to be above his companions.”

During the journey to Badr, Muslims had very few mounts. Three of them rode one camel by turns. The Prophet took his turn like others. The companions insisted that he should ride and they would walk. The Prophet said,

“You cannot walk faster than me and I am more anxious to win merit than you.”

He shared domestic work with his wives. Ayesha says,

“He engaged himself in household chores. He would patch his clothes with his own hands. He would sweep the floor, milk the goats, do his shopping, cobble his shoes and mend the bucket and tether the camel and give it fodder and join in kneading the dough.”

The slave-women of Medina freely called on him for help. He would respond to every distress call.

Hind Ibne Hala, who knew him intimately from childhood says,

“He was mild of temper not harsh; he would insult no one; was grateful for the smallest service, would not find fault with anything; would eat of whatever was placed before him and pass no remarks. He would be angry only when someone opposed the truth. In his personal affairs

he was never angry, nor did he ever take revenge.”

Ayesha says of him,

“The Prophet would never speak ill of anyone. He would never give evil return for evil. He would overlook and forgive. If he had a choice, he would choose the easier way, if it were not sinful. He would be far from it in that case. He never sought revenge from anyone in personal matters. Whoever broke the law, he was punished under God’s law. He never cursed any Muslim by name. He never hit a slave man or a slave girl, a woman, a serving man or an animal. He never turned down a request except when it was improper. He always entered the house smiling. He would never spread out his legs when sitting among friends. He spoke slowly so that if anyone wanted to do so, he could commit to memory what he said.”

Ali says of the Prophet:

“He had a smiling face, was mild of temper, kindly-disposed; neither hard nor narrow-minded. Would not shout, would not utter a harsh word, would not find fault and was not a hard task-master. If he did not like something, he would overlook it. But one who knew him well would understand by his silence. He disliked three things for himself, argument, vain talk, interest in things that did not concern him. In respect of others also he would not have three things: He would not speak ill of

the. He would not find fault and would not pry in their private affairs. He would talk only about things that were useful. When he talked, the companions heard silently, their heads bent down as if birds were perched on them. When he became silent, only then would they talk. When he was talked to he would listen quietly until the talker had finished. If people laughed over something he too would smile. If an outside talked rough, he was patient with him. He did not like to hear himself praised. But if anyone thanked him for whatever he received from him, he accepted his thanks. He would never interrupt anyone while he talked until he became silent. He was exceedingly generous, most truthful, very kind hearted and the best company.”

The Prophet had a number of children. All except Fatima died during his life. Most of them died early. Zainab, his eldest daughter, died in the eighth year of the Hijra. She was married to Abul As bin Rabi. She left behind a daughter and a son. The Prophet was very fond of the grand daughter. She was named Imama and was married to Ali after the death of Fatima.

Two daughters, Ruqiyya and Ume-kalsum, were married to Uthman, one after the other. Uthman had migrated to Abyssinia with Ruqiyya where both lived for some time.

Fatima was married to Ali in the second year of Hijra. She died six months after the Prophet's death. She left behind two sons, Hassan and Hussain, and two daughters Ume-kalsum and Zainab.

The Prophet treated members of his family with utmost

kindness. He never forgot his first wife, Khadija, who was also the first to accept him as prophet. He was a loving father and a loving husband. But above all, he was a servant of God. All his love was for Him. His entire household followed his example faithfully. Then denied themselves the pleasures of this world and shared all the hardships of the Prophet's life. All Arabia was under him when the Prophet passed away. He left behind for his family no property, no gold, no cash, no valuables, no stores.

He gave the world the Quran and his own example, two greatest gifts of God to mankind to regulate human life. He taught man truth, honesty, patience, self-denial, compassion, justice, good neighbourliness, peace, faith in God and hard work. He elevated man to the highest station when he said,

"I am but a man like you."

He found Arabs a wild and warlike people given to booze, burglary, voluptuous ways and oppression. He made them a nation of saints and martyrs, God fearing helpers of widows and orphans, given to prayer and fasting.

When he first called the Quresh of Mecca to God they jeered at him and later plotted to slay him. He was forced to seek refuge in distant Medina. May Allah bless him with His choicest blessings! Before he died he was the King of all Arabia, even of the Quresh.