

Conquest of Makkah

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The Prophet Visits Mecca (629 A.D.)

Having returned to Medina from Khayber and the other Jewish strongholds victoriously, the Prophet spent four or five months in Medina. According to the terms of the treaty with the Meccans, the Muslims could now visit Mecca. In the month of Thul-Qi'da, towards the end of the seventh year of Hijra (March 629 A.D.), the Prophet, accompanied by about two thousand Muslims, proceeded to Mecca to make the lesser pilgrimage (the 'umra). Quraish left their houses and watched the Muslims from their tents pitched on the heights of the surrounding hills.

The Prophet ordered Bilal ibn Rabah, the Ethiopian caller to prayers, to ascend the holy place to call the believers to midday prayers. That was the very first time such call was ever made, and that was the very first time the Muslims congregated publicly in such a large number around the Ka'ba to perform the prayers led by the Messenger of Allah. Surely that was history making, a milestone.

The Prophet and his companions remained in Mecca for three days. After these three days' sojourn, the Muslims retired strictly in accordance with the terms of the treaty. During those days, Maimuna daughter of al-Harith al-Hilali (578 - 671 A.D.), a widow 51 years old, was married to the Prophet according to the suggestion of 'Abbas, the Prophet's uncle. She was living with her sister Umm al-Fadl, wife of 'Abbas. Another sister of hers, Asma daughter of 'Omays, was married to Ja'far ibn Abu Talib, Ali's brother. A third sister named Selma had already been married to Hamzah, another uncle of the Prophet, as the reader recalls. Three sisters were married into the same family!

On the fourth day, the Prophet left Mecca and halted at Sarif, about eight miles from Mecca, for the evening. It was there that the wedding actually took place

The Peace Treaty Violated (629 A.D.)

In the same year (8 A.H./629 A.D.), Banu Bakr, who had signed the Hudaibiya treaty, killed a man from the Khuza'ah tribe one night. The Khuza'ites sent a deputation of forty men to the Prophet asking him to punish the treacherous murderers, but he resented any infringement on the treaty, promising that he would take up their cause personally.

When Quraish knew of this deputation, they were very alarmed and sent Abu Sufyan to Medina to reconcile the Muslims. Upon reaching Medina, Abu Sufyan went straight to the house of his daughter Umm Habiba, wife of the Prophet. He was about to sit down when Umm Habiba pulled the rug from underneath him saying, "This is a bed of the Messenger of Allah and is too sacred to be polluted by an impure idolator." Abu Sufyan felt the humiliation and left the place cursing her. Appearing before the Prophet, he wanted to explain that he and Quraish wished to renew the peace pact, but the Prophet would not waste his time listening to him. He, therefore, sought the mediation of Ali and Abu Bakr, but both men declined to interfere. Then he sought the favour of Fatima daughter of the Prophet, begging her to let her oldest son be his protector. Fatima replied that Hasan was too young to take anyone under his protection, being only six years old, adding that no protection can avail anyone against the will of the Prophet which is also the will of the Almighty.

Seeing how all doors were closed in his face, Abu Sufyan went one more time to Ali and asked him what he suggested he should do. Ali suggested that Abu Sufyan should do nothing more than proclaiming on behalf of Quraish the friendly ties which they wished to maintain and the continuation of his own protection as the head of Quraish. Standing in the courtyard of the Prophet's mosque in Medina, Abu Sufyan announced what Ali had suggested, but he also noticed that nobody paid him any attention at all. He was ignored by everybody. When he reported what had happened to him in Medina to Quraish, the latter told him that all what he had done was simply to make a fool of himself. "I know that," said Abu Sufyan, "but what else 'could I have done

Preparations To Invade Mecca (630 A.D.)

Abu Sufyan's failure to safeguard the Hudaibiya treaty confirmed the apprehensions of the Khuza'ites who blamed it all on Quraish. You see, the Quraishites were allied of Banu Bakr, the culprits in this incident. Had they been sincere in their peaceful intentions, they should have taken up the issue with Banu Bakr themselves first and foremost, but they did not. Since the infringement on the peace treaty has been confirmed, the Prophet decided to take over Mecca by surprise. He immediately summoned all his allies from all quarters to meet him in Medina, his headquarters. He did not give them any hint regarding the meeting's agenda. One day, Abu Bakr happened to enter the house of his daughter 'Ayisha, wife of the Prophet, and he was somehow surprised to see her busy preparing the Prophet's war outfits and battle gear. He asked her about the reason, but she only said that a military expedition was soon to take place. She did not say where the army would be marching or even in any direction at all.

All the roads leading to Mecca were blockaded in order to prevent any intelligence from reaching the Meccans.

Just while all the arrangements were being made for the campaign, the Prophet ordered his followers in Medina to be ready and to take utmost secrecy so that no hint of any kind should leak out to Mecca. In spite of all these precautions, the secret preparations almost succeeded in reaching the Meccans. Hatib ibn Balta'ah, one of the Muhajirun and a trusted companion of the Prophet, wrote his family in Mecca saying, "From Hatib ibn Balta'ah to the Meccans. Health! The Messenger of Allah is preparing to attack you while you are unaware of it. To arms!" The carrier of the letter was a woman named Sara.

The Prophet was informed of it by revelation, so he immediately dispatched Ali and al-Zubayr with other men on horseback to intercept the woman. The Muslims found her and carefully searched her, finding no letter with her. They almost gave up when Ali decided to make a last ditch effort, knowing that the Messenger of Allah could not have been mistaken.

Drawing his sword, Ali brandished it before her eyes as he demanded that she should either produce the letter or be killed. The woman trembled as she drew out a letter from the long tresses of her hair where she had hidden it. When the letter was brought to the Prophet, he ordered its writer to be brought to him. Hatib was brought before the Prophet to whom he pleaded for clemency, saying that he was a true believer, that he was concerned about his unprotected family in Mecca, and that he wrote the letter in order to save his family. The Prophet contemplated on Hatib's previous services of the creed, accepted his plea and pardoned him. The first nine verses of Surat al-Mumtahana (Chapter 60 of the Holy Qur'an) were revealed in reference to this incident; they were:

In the Name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful

O you who believe! Do not take My enemy and yours as friends: would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth, driving out the Messenger and yourselves because you believe in Allah, your Lord? If you go forth struggling hard in My path and seeking My pleasure, would you manifest love for them? And I know what you conceal and what you manifest, and whoever of you does this, he indeed has gone astray from the straight path. If they find you, they will be your enemies, and they will assault you with their hands and tongues in an evil manner, and they ardently desire that you will disbelieve. Your relationship would not benefit you, nor your children, on the Day of Resurrection; He will decide between you, and Allah sees what you do. Indeed, there is for you a good example in Abraham and those with him when they said to their people: Surely we are clear of you and of what you worship besides Allah; we declare ourselves clear of you, and enmity and hatred have appeared between us and

you forever until you believe in Allah alone, but not in what Ibrahim said to his father: I would certainly ask forgiveness for you, and I do not control for you aught from Allah. Lord! On Thee do we rely, and to Thee do we turn, and to Thee is the eventual resort. Lord! Do not make us a trial for those who disbelieve, and forgive us, Lord! Surely You are the Mighty, the Wise. Certainly there is for you in them a good example for him who fears Allah and the Last Day, and whoever turns back, surely Allah is the Self-sufficient, the Praised One. It may be that Allah will bring about friendship between you and those whom you hold to be your enemies from among them, and Allah is Powerful, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. Allah does not forbid you regarding those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allah loves the doers of justice. Allah only forbids you regarding those who fought you on account of (your) religion and drove you out of your homes and supported (others) in your expulsion that you make friends with them, and whoever makes (friends with them, these are the unjust. (Qur'an, 60:1-9

Conquest of Mecca (630 A.D.)

One of the conditions of the Treaty of Hudaibiya was that Quraish would not fight against any ally of the Muslims, nor should the Muslims fight against any ally of Quraish. In simple language, the clause of 10-years' cease-fire included the allies as well as the principals. During the month of Ramadan of 8 A.H./December 629/January 630 A.D., following the incident of Banu Khuza'ah being attacked by Banu Bakr and their allies, the Quraishites, as explained above, the Prophet sent an emissary to Quraish to persuade them to accept any of the following terms:

- (1) Reparations should be paid for those killed of Banu Khuza'ah, or
- (2) Quraish should break their alliance with Banu Bakr, or
- (3) The Hudaibiya treaty should be abrogated.

Quraish accepted the last alternative. The time had come to free the citadel of Islam from idolatry and to end the reign of oppression in Mecca. The Prophet marched with ten thousand men on the 10th of the month of Ramadan, 8 A.H., corresponding to January 4, 630 A.D. and camped a short distance from Mecca. The Meccans sent a few scouts, including Abu Sufyan, Hakim ibn Hizam, a nephew of Khadija, and a chief from Khuza'ah named Budayl ibn Warqa' (who is mentioned earlier in this book), to assess the strength of the Muslim army. Abu Sufyan was seen by 'Abbas, uncle of the Prophet, who took him to the Prophet. In honour of the recommendation made by his uncle, the Prophet offered protection to Abu

Sufyan. Then the Prophet said, "Isn't it time for you to know the creed: La Ilaha illa-Allah?!" Abu Sufyan replied, "Why not?" Then the Prophet further asked him, "And is it not the time for you to confirm that I am the Messenger of Allah?!" Abu Sufyan said, "I have still some doubt about it." At this response, 'Abbas rebuked Abu Sufyan thus: "Fie upon you, fellow! Confirm his prophethood or you will be killed!" So Abu Sufyan recited both declarations of the creeds of confirmation, and with him Hakim ibn Hizam and Budayl ibn Warqa' also accepted the Islamic creed. Later conduct of Abu Sufyan proved that he had accepted Islam only by tongue, never by heart. The same can be said about his son Mu'awiyah and grandson Yazid. They were both

Muslims only by name, and there are many Muslims like them.

Abu al-Fida' writes the following in his Tarikh: "Then the Prophet asked 'Abbas to take Abu Sufyan on a tour around the valley of Mazeeq and to show him the army of Islam. 'Abbas said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Abu Sufyan is a boaster! Perhaps you should give him a distinctive order of some sort so that he may have a chance to boast about it among Quraish.' The Prophet said, 'Well, then, whoever seeks refuge in Abu Sufyan's house shall be given protection. And also he who seeks refuge in the Sacred Mosque and in the house of Hakim ibn

Hizam or shuts the door of his house shall be given protection'.

'Abbas further says, 'Then I took Abu Sufyan for a review of the Islamic army. At Abu Sufyan's request, I pointed out to the eminent people from every clan who were present in the Islamic regiments. In the meantime, the Prophet passed by his army which was clad in green uniforms. Abu Sufyan cried out, 'O 'Abbas! Verily your nephew has acquired quite a kingdom!' 'Abbas said to him, 'Woe unto thee! This is no kingship! It is prophethood!'"

Asides from a slight resistance offered by 'Ikrimah and Safwan, Muhammad entered Mecca almost unopposed. It took place on a Friday, the 20th of the month of Ramadan, 8 A.H., corresponding to January 14, 630 A.D.

The city which had scoffed and jeered at Muhammad's prophetic mission, ruthlessly persecuted him and his disciples and ultimately driven his disciples away, had created all types of obstacles in the way of the propagation of the faith and had waged war after war on the Muslims, this same city now lay at his feet. At this moment of triumph, he could have done anything he wished with the city and its citizens, but he had not come to the world to cause misery or bloodshed but as a benefactor of mankind, to proclaim the message of God and to guide erring humanity to the righteous course: to the worship of the One and Only God.

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud says: "Entering Al-Masjid al-Haram, the Prophet started breaking and demolishing the idols. There were three hundred and sixty idols fixed in the walls and on the roof of the Ka'ba with lead or tin. Any idol near which the Prophet went and towards which he

pointed his cane as he said: 'Right has come and falsehood has vanished; verily falsehood is destined to vanish' (Qur'an, 17:81) fell headlong on the ground without anyone touching it. Lastly, there remained Hubal, an idol of Banu Khuza'ah on the rooftop of the Ka'ba. It was a huge one made of polished brass. The Prophet ordered Ali to climb on his shoulders, which Ali did, throwing that last idol down which shattered into pieces on impact.'

Then he ordered Bilal, the Ethiopian, to climb on the rooftop of the Ka'ba to call the athan. The wordings of the athan, coupled with the fact that it was called by a freed black slave, caused much heartache among the Quraishites. After clearing the Ka'ba, the first House of God, the sanctuary rebuilt by Abraham and Ishmael, of all the symbols of idolatry, he assembled Quraish and delivered the following sermon to them: There is no god but Allah. He has no partners. He has fulfilled His promise and helped His slave and defeated all coalitions (allied) against him. All authority, revenge and blood reparations are under my feet. The guardianship of the Ka'ba and the arrangements for the supply of water to pilgrims are exempt. O! You Quraish! The arrogance of the heathen days and all pride of ancestry God has wiped out. All mankind descended from Adam, and Adam was made of clay.

He then recited the following verse of the Qur'an: O people! Surely We have created you of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you who is most pious; surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.(Qur'an, 49:13)

Having dwelt upon the equality and brotherhood of mankind and preached the Unity and the Omnipotence of God, he inquired from Quraish: "Descendants of Quraish! How do you think I should act towards you?" "With kindness and pity, gracious brother and nephew," beseeched they. The Prophet magnanimously declared: "I shall speak to you as Joseph (Yousuf) spoke unto his brothers: 'There is no reproach against you today; God will forgive you. He is the most Merciful and the most Compassionate (Qur'an, 12:31)."

Then he added: "Go; you are free!"

Mecca lay conquered but not a single house was plundered, nor any woman insulted. Cruelties, insults and oppression perpetrated during a long period of twenty-one years were now forgiven. The Muhajirun were asked even to forego their houses and properties which on their migration to Medina had been occupied by the Meccans. The Prophet did the same, living in a tent for few days before going back to Mecca. His house in Mecca was seized by a squatter.

Through all the annals of history, there has never been a conquest like this. The result of this magnanimity and compassion was that those very die-hards who had relentlessly opposed the Prophet and refused to listen to the Divine message converged

around him in their multitudes and accepted Islam. The glad tidings given by God about the peace of Hudaibiyah came true and His injunction had been obeyed:

In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

When there comes assistance from Allah and victory, and when you see men entering the religion of Allah in groups, then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and implore His forgiveness; surely He is oft-returning (to mercy). (Qur'an, 110:1-3)

Once the Meccans submitted to the faith, disciples were sent out to all neighbouring tribes to invite them, with peace and good will, to embrace Islam. Many tribes responded positively to the call. However, there was one tragic incident which must be mentioned. Khalid ibn al-Walid (who had accepted Islam a few months before the fall of Mecca) was sent to Banu Khuzaimah who had already accepted Islam. When they learned of Khalid's arrival, they came out cautiously armed. Khalid asked them who they were and in reply he was informed: "They are Muslims following the teaching of Muhammad; they pray in the recognized form of prayer, have built a mosque, recite the athan and the iqamah and gather together on Fridays for prayers.'

Khalid then asked them why they had come out to meet him armed. They said that they were on hostile terms with a fellow Arab clan and mistook Khalid's men for their enemies. But Khalid did not accept their explanation and asked them to surrender their arms. They at once surrendered. Khalid then ordered his companions to tie their hands behind their shoulders, then he placed them in the custody of his comrades. Early next morning, he ordered that the custodian of each of the prisoners should himself kill that prisoner. Thus, these innocent Muslims were all killed.

Another version of this incident says that when Banu Khuzaimah submitted their arms at Khalid's orders, he himself unsheathed his sword and killed one hundred men of that clan. Someone from Banu Khuzaimah informed the Prophet about this tyranny. The Prophet was angered and in dismay thrice repeated, "O Lord! I deplore Khalid's action!' In order to repair the damage thus caused by Khalid, the Prophet, who was very grieved at what had happened at the hands of Khalid, sent Ali on a mission to do damage control by distributing a sum of money which he gave him to compensate the families of those wrongfully killed. Ali paid each and every person who was affected by that massacre more than what he had demanded, as the Prophet had instructed him, thus pleasing everyone. When all the blood money was paid, and there was still some money left, he distributed the remnant to the poor there and then.

But the memory of that massacre lingered in people's minds. Arab tribes who had not yet accepted Islam, such as those of Banu Hawazin, Banu Thaqif, Banu Sa'd and many others had

been for some time contemplating to oppose the growing power of Islam. This massacre now fueled their desire to take the offensive rather than wait to be attacked and massacred. Under the leadership of Malik bin 'Awf, Banu Thaqif and Banu Hawazin, together with other tribes, assembled four thousand fighting men at the Awtas valley between Mecca and Taif. These men would check any movement of the Muslim forces that wanted to march in their direction. They even brought with them their families and herds. Duraid, an elderly wise man, protested against that measure, but youthful Malik did not heed his words, thinking that in the presence of their families, these men would never turn their backs to their enemy but would risk their own life fighting like men till victory.

The news of this newly assembled army in the Awtas valley caused the Prophet to cut his stay in Mecca short and return to Medina on Shawwal 6, 8 A.H./January 30, 630 A.D. with his ten thousand followers in addition to two thousand more from Mecca who accepted Islam during those few days. When the sight of 12,000 troops led by Ali paraded before the Prophet before leaving Medina, Abu Bakr was very impressed and said, "We shall not this day be harmed on 'account of our numbers