



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Lectures on Spiritual
Journey To
Makkah and Madinah

By Mohamed Raza Dungersi

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LECTURES ON SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TO MAKKAH AND MADINAH

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

The European Hajj Mission of the Council of European Jamaats is a beacon of excellence in providing service and guidance to the hujjaj. This well-researched, meticulously set out book on Hajj will add to the overall value and become a must read.

I hope the use of this publication during Hajj will be very inspirational; I believe every user will find it very pertinent and easy to understand, especially those performing the pilgrimage for the first time. The European Hajj Mission has embarked on this project to bring about further awareness and understanding of Hajj, giving reality to the precious legacy left by the Messenger of Allah (swt).

Societies and civilizations are revived and renewed by Hajj; by reenacting ancient behaviour and reminding ourselves of pure Islamic teachings, the pilgrimage regenerates the dried up intellectual and barren spiritual landscape. It emphasises that our attention and focus must be for Allah (swt) and our actions performed with the goal of reaching Him alone.

I thank the European Hajj Mission for their efforts in producing this book and I pray it will be as enjoyable, inspirational and motivational to those who read it as it was to me.

Munawer Rattansey
President
The Council of European Jamaats

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PREFACE

Every pious Muslim has a dream to go at least once in his lifetime to Makkah on a pilgrimage to fulfil his religious obligation. When you get an opportunity to converse with those who have been blessed and who have managed to realise their dreams, you will hear a common lamentation from them: if only they could get just one more opportunity to re-visit the places of pilgrimage in Makkah and Madinah. At the heart of their desire to re-visit these blessed places is the fact that during their first visit, they had failed to appreciate the full spiritual impact of the places they had visited, and the acts of worship that they performed at those places. By further inquiry, you will find that this sense of incomplete 'inner satisfaction' arises owing to the fact that these pilgrims were not made aware of the historical, philosophical and metaphysical aspects of the divinely ordained journey, or of the places that they visited. Only after they have returned, and in the course of their exposure to the experiences of the 'educated pilgrims', do they realise their 'mistakes'. They then yearn to go back to Makkah and Madinah, to quench their renewed thirst from the fountain of spiritualism.

Of late, various organisers of Hajj groups have taken it upon themselves to provide educational services to pilgrims under their patronage. Such services are mostly in the form of written material and regular short lectures signifying the journey to the Holy places in Makkah and Madinah. These lectures dwell on a variety of topics, geared towards helping the pilgrims, especially the first timers, to be fully cognizant of the historic and spiritual dimensions of the places they visit, and of the acts of worship they perform at such places. The European Hajj Mission of The Council of European Jamaats is one such organisation that caters for the spiritual needs of pilgrims under their patronage. Besides organising Hajj seminars prior to the pilgrimage itself, regular daily lectures in English and Urdu are delivered throughout the journey.

For the past two consecutive Hajj years, I was honoured to be the English lecturer, under the patronage of the European Hajj Mission. In the course of this journey, first to Madinah and then to Makkah, I had the opportunity of giving short lectures in English, on a daily basis, based on the historical, social, and metaphysical background of the places we were to visit as pilgrims, and on how to focus on activities that constitute Islamic piety. At the end of our pilgrimage, it was felt that these lectures if put together in a written format, could be of some benefit to future pilgrims. It is in light of this suggestion that you have this booklet in your hands.

A word of caution: So as to facilitate ease of reading and to provide a reasonable structure both within and between the lectures, the said lectures have been 'methodised', meaning they are made to be formal in style and substance, which was not the case when they were delivered during the course of the pilgrimage. Nonetheless, the essence and the spirit of the original lectures have been preserved completely. This is stated for the benefit of the current pilgrims who would otherwise wonder as to the meagre number of the lectures given during a journey covering almost one full month. Also, without this caveat, those pilgrims who were present during this journey would wonder if they had ever heard the lectures as they appear in this booklet!

These lectures are by no means scholarly structured or styled. Nor do they cover the relevant subject matter at hand exhaustively. Rather, they are meant only to give a bird's eye view of the issues that are relevant to the pilgrims in their general understanding of the historical and religious significance of the places they visit and the various acts of worship they perform as pilgrims. Our prayers are that the objective behind our effort should prove beneficial to the pilgrims who will return home sufficiently 'educated' and spiritually uplifted.

All said and done, this endeavour would have been impossible without the encouragement, effort and above all, educative support of the European Hajj Commission Chairman, Ahmed Bhai Dungersi

and his colleague Murtaza Bhai Dato. I am equally indebted to Kamruddin Khaki (Kakaji), Naseen Valji, Nazir Virji and Raza Virji who actively participated in the lecture program and were the source of support and inspiration. Finally, my thanks go to Shabbar Dhalla for recording these lectures and helping me keep on to the time allocated for each talk.

May Allah (SWT) bless all those who listened to my lectures and gave useful feedback, suggestions and advice. Without them, these lectures would not have appeared as they do in this booklet. I have made all efforts to weed out any inaccuracies that were detected in these lectures. However, for any remaining shortcomings of which I am unaware, I accept full responsibility and beseech forgiveness from Allah (SWT).

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LECTURE 1

THE KABAHA : FIRST HOUSE OF GUIDANCE FOR MANKIND

INTRODUCTION

It has always been a dream of all pious Muslims to go to Makkah on pilgrimage, during the specified time, to fulfil one of their religious obligations, and thereby acquire the divinely promised benefits in this world and in the hereafter. This duty has been stated in various ways in the Quran, and most poignantly in the following verses:

“And proclaim among people the pilgrimage; they will come to you on foot and on lean camel, coming from every remote path...” (22:27)

“Verily, the first House set for Mankind is at Bakkah (Makkah), blessed and a guidance to the universe. In it are clear signs; the place where Ibrahim stood up. And whoever enters it is safe; and pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon mankind for Allah, for those who can afford to go there...” (3:96-97)

Interestingly enough, in both these verses the ‘invitation’ to Makkah is not restricted to believers only. Rather, all human beings are addressed and the House of Allah is stated as a source of guidance for the entire universe, not for the Muslims alone! If this is so then why is it today that only Muslims can go to Makkah and non-Muslims are strictly barred from approaching the precincts of Makkah? Again, this restriction is in compliance with divine injunctions, which read as follows:

“O ye who believe! Truly the polytheists (Mushriqun) are unclean. So do not let them, after this year of theirs, to approach the sacred Mosque...” (9:28)

The question that arises is why, in one instant, the invitation to the house of Allah (SWT) is for the entire humanity and the resulting guidance is ubiquitous, and in another, the believers are instructed to deny the non-believers access to the sacred House? The key to this question is contained in this 'restrictive verse' (9:28) itself and revolves around the 'restrictive phrase' - *aamihim hadha* - this year!

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PHRASE "STARTING THIS YEAR" (*AAMIHIM HADHA*)

The House of Allah (SWT), the Kabah, has been in existence from time immemorial. Many people have gone to their graves with the mistaken notion that the Kabah came into existence during the time of Nabi Ibrahim and his son, Nabi Ismail! In fact, the Kabah was in existence at the time when Nabi Adam came from Paradise to live on Earth. At that time, it was in the form of a dome made of pearls. It continued to be so until the time of Nabi Nuh's diluvium when the angel Jibrael transferred it to Heaven by Allah's instructions. Most likely, a semi-permanent structure might have stood on its place until the time of Nabi Ibrahim when Allah (SWT) instructed him to raise its foundations and construct a solid structure as related in the Quran in the following verse:

"And remember when Ibrahim raised the foundations of the House with Ismail..." (2:127)

As a matter of fact, the Kabah has been a source of guidance to humanity from time immemorial. Its historic past is considered as a symbol of divine power and as a source of guidance. All major religions considered it, at one time, as their spiritual centre. This is because the original religion brought by Nabi Adam was Al-Islam and all the divine messengers who came after him were to promote and build upon this original message. Despite diversions and divisions that developed down the road that split people into various religions, the essence of the message emanating from "Allah's House" kept these religions attached to the Kabah.

In his article “Short History of Kabah” appearing in the “Light” magazine (August, 1985) S.S.A. Rizvi describes how the Kabah had come to be revered by the major religions of the world. He states that the Hindus believed that the spirit of Shiva had entered the black stone (Hajar Aswad) when he and his wife had visited MaKkah. The Sabians of Persia and the Chaldeans of Mesopotamia counted the Kabah as one of their seven holy sanctuaries, believing that it was the house of Saturn. The Zoroastrians, too, respected the Kabah, believing that the spirit of Hurmus was present there at the times of pilgrimage. The Jews and Christians at one time associated themselves with the Kabah. This is substantiated by the existence in the Kabah of images and paintings depicting Jewish and Christian traditions when the Muslims recaptured Makkah in 7 A.H. Remember that prior to the proclamation of Islam, there were 360 idols inside the Kabah, representing the gods of the pagans of Arabia.

In a nutshell, when the verses of the Quran mention the Kabah as a source of universal guidance, it refers to this era. With the passage of time, the Kabah’s role as a divine guide was unfortunately severely compromised, to the extent that there arose a need for drastic action to put a stop to this erosive process. The Kabah’s environment had been polluted physically. The original rites and rituals associated with the pilgrimage were contorted to the extent that they were about to become extinct. An example of a ritual which had been corrupted was the tawaf (circumambulation) of the Kabah which was now being performed naked! To end this practise, to revive the purity of the rites, and to re-establish the respect for the sanctity of the precincts of Makkah and the Kabah, physical access to these places was restricted.

REASONING BEHIND THE RESERVATION FOR THE PHYSICAL VISIT TO MAKKAH AND THE KABAH FOR MUSLIMS ALONE

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) received divine instructions through the verses of the Quran mentioned earlier. There was a strong message in these verses. The divine Will was to reveal ‘the final word’ through

the last Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and to ensure that His house from then onwards was to remain pure, never to be polluted again.

Note should be taken of the fact that physical purity is a prerequisite for all Muslims intending to visit the precincts of Makkah and the surroundings of the 'House of Allah,' the Kabah. What constitutes physical purity is clearly specified and with minor differences, is accepted by all sects of Islam. The inability of non-Muslims to abide to these requirements automatically disqualifies them from visiting these holy places.

Many acts of worship incumbent upon those visiting Makkah and the Kabah are symbolic in nature and in substance. The performance of these acts is based on faith and obedience to the wish and will of Allah (SWT). To strictly observe them constitutes obedience to Allah (SWT); non-compliance to the last letter and details constitutes an act of violation. Non-Muslims would be in no position to adhere to these requirements; their presence is therefore not allowed.

All said and done, it should be remembered that for one to be guided to the right path, one does not necessarily have to physically visit to Makkah and the sacred Mosque of the Kabah. It is only a small percentage of Muslims Who succeed in visiting these places, and yet they remain guided. Overall guidance comes from the message of Allah (SWT) as encompassed by the Kabah and expounded by the last Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The invitation to visit Makkah and the House of Allah (SWT) is universal and for humanity in this 'allegorical sense.' Invitation to all is toward Islam. Guidance of Makkah and the Kabah emanate from the last Messenger of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The role of the Messenger as a source of guidance to humanity is defined in the following verse:

“It is He who has sent forth among the unlettered an apostle of their own to recite to them His revelations, to purify them, and to instruct them in the Scriptures and wisdom...” (62:2)

CONCLUSION

The Quranic claim that the Kabah is the first divine source of guidance for mankind cannot be denied in the presence of overwhelming historical evidence. As a matter of fact, pilgrimage to this Holy site remained open to all, on the understanding that the visitors would strictly comply with divine requirements to acknowledge and maintain the purity and sanctity of these places.

Through the passage of time, these requirements were totally ignored. It became obvious that physical presence by all could be tolerated no more without 'supervision.' The last Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), was sent as the guide and supervisor. Divine guidance, therefore, for the Ummah of Muhammad (PBUH) will come from his teachings and, in his absence, the teachings of his pure progeny, the Ahlul Bayt (PBUT). The gist of the divine invitation to Makkah is: Be a Muslim first, and then visit my House.

LECTURE 2

THE PROPHET'S ANCESTORS, THE QURAYSH AND THE HOUSE OF ALLAH THE KABAH

INTRODUCTION

In pre-Islamic Arabia, there was no formal central political authority or government. Instead, law and order were maintained by clans at domestic level and by tribes at 'national' level. Social bond was thus based on tribal loyalty. The social life of an individual, therefore, revolved on a rigid tribal base. However, the strength and status of a tribe depended upon the nobility of its ancestors. A tribe, which had produced the most noble, or 'productive' ancestors, would assume leadership in society. Tribal leadership was therefore an 'inherited merit'. To continue enjoying this status, the tribe in question had to continue to perform noble deeds or else lose this privilege to those on the 'waiting list'. The role of the Prophet's tribe, the Quraysh and his clan, the Banu Hasham, as the citizens of Makkah and the guardians of the Kabah, should be evaluated in this framework.

THE PROPHET'S ANCESTORS' TRIBAL STATUS

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) belonged to the tribe of Quraysh, which was named after its founder, Qusay. According to historian Shibli Nomani, Qusay was also called Quraysh, which in Arabic means a 'gatherer'. He was thus named because he was instrumental in bringing together all the progeny of Nabi Ismail from across Hijaz, and making them settle around the Kabah. By doing so, he sowed the seeds of permanent settlement that were to mushroom in the course of time, to form the city of Makkah. His genuine concern to uplift the living condition of his people, his foresight and courage to undertake heavy tasks, earned him universal respect and undisputed leadership, not

only in Makkah but throughout Hijaz. His accomplishments include the following:

- Rebuilding of the Kabah.
- Establishing a ‘Town-Meeting House’ called Dar-ul-Nadwa which was a community centre for social, economic and political activities,
- Providing leadership in times of peace and war, and taking care of the needs of pilgrims.
- On his death in 480 A.D., his position as leader was inherited by his son, Abd Manaf, who, because of his general competence, generosity and fairness, was able to inherit through ancestry and maintain this leadership role until his death. After his death, this leadership passed on to his son Hashim, who in turn exceeded his father in his leadership qualities to the extent that his clan came to be known by his name, Banu Hashim.

Hashim’s real name was Amr but he was given the title Hashim, meaning the breaker of bread, because of his unparalleled generosity to his people, providing them with food from his personal store when they were once hit by a deadly famine. His other contribution was to secure trade treaties with the Romans and others so that trade caravans from Makkah could travel to the north as far as Syria in summer, and to the south as far as Yemen in winter, with the least physical and economic impediments.

Last but not least, Hashim ended the cruel social and economic tradition of *Ihtifad* whereby a poor family would retire in the desert to die from starvation. Instead, he replaced it with a system whereby the rich would employ the poor, and the resulting profit would be shared between them. This system brought communal unity and economic prosperity.

Hashim’s enlightened and benevolent leadership came to an abrupt end with his death at a prime age of 28 in 488 A.D. On his death, the leadership passed on to his brother Muttalib, who was ultimately succeeded by Hashim’s son, Shaibatul Hamd, popularly known as Abdul Muttalib.

Following the footsteps of his father and grandfather, he offered unique services to his people. His outstanding leadership qualities were at their best at the time of Abraha's invasion of Makkah. He stood firm against the aggression, and advised his people to seek refuge in the surrounding mountains, but he stayed behind in the face of danger, seeking Allah's help. His leadership status was recognised to the extent that a special carpet would be placed for him in front of the Kabah, and no one else would be allowed to sit or step on it.

Among his contributions were the banning of the use of intoxicants, the killing of daughters and performing of Tawaf naked. It was he who located the spring of Zamzam and provided water and food to pilgrims during the time of annual pilgrimage. Above all, Abdul Muttalib has earned a special place in Islamic history for his role in the upbringing of the Prophet (PBUH), and presenting him to his community and family as their future leader, and a unique person in the eyes of the Creator: *Rabbul Aalamin*.

After the death of Abdul Muttalib the mantle of leadership was passed on to his son, Imran, popularly known as Abu Talib, who continued to provide leadership to his community despite a gradual decline of his economic fortunes. However, his most significant contribution was the role he played as guardian, defender and protector of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). During the course of the Prophet's life, Abu Talib's significant role can be seen at three stages. First, he and his wife, Fatima bint Asad gave the Prophet (PBUH), when he was only eight years old and an orphan, complete parental care, giving him preference over their own children. Second, it was Abu Talib who put young Muhammad (PBUH) on a business track and facilitated his marriage with Khadija. But more importantly than these two contributions was Abu Talib's unequivocal support of the Prophet (PBUH), throughout his preaching mission of Islam in Makkah. Abu Talib risked his own life and the life of his family by refusing to withdraw his absolute support from the Prophet (PBUH), and thereby became a victim of the complete boycott imposed on him by the polytheists of Makkah. In recognition of the pivotal role played by Abu

Talib in service of Islam, the following verse was revealed:

“Did not Allah find you orphan and gave you shelter”(93:6)

Here shelter refers to the unique protection Abu Talib offered to the Prophet (PBUH) as a young boy, as a young adult and as a Messenger of Allah (SWT).

All said and done, the essential function of the ancestors of the Prophet (PBUH), the Banu Hashim, was to preserve the original and positive Islamic values and traditions associated with ‘the House of Allah’ in Makkah, as taught by Prophets of the past, culminating with Nabi Ibrahim. In this way, they remained firm on their faith, the faith that is described in the Quran as *Millatu Ibrahima Hanifa* (of the religion of Nabi Ibrahim, the steadfast one). They, therefore, protected, and preserved the pure spiritual environment in which the Prophet (PBUH) was to be born. However, their individual roles differed. Some of them from Qusay to Hashim assisted the Prophet (PBUH) as Allah’s final Messenger indirectly, whereas others such as Abdul Muttalib and more so Abu Talib, assisted him directly.

CONCLUSION

Despite the vital roles played by the ancestors of the Prophet (PBUH) in the services of Islam, there are some Muslims who consider the Prophet’s ancestors to have been non-believers. Imam Ali (AS) once said, “By Allah, neither my father nor his father Abdul Muttalib, nor his father Hashim, nor his father Abd Manaf ever worshipped idols... they followed the religion of Ibrahim.” To dub the Prophet’s ancestors as being non-believers is not only to humiliate the Prophet (PBUH), but also to invite the wrath of Allah(SWT), who considers the acts of such persons as Abu Talib as His own. In the words of S.A.A Razwy, “.the Banu Hashim were destined to be the bulwark of Islam. God himself chose them for this glorious destiny.”¹

¹ *The Restatement of the History of Islam and Muslims*, S.A.A Razwy.

LECTURE 3

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH) : HIS LIFE IN MAKKAH BEFORE AND AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS PROPHETIC MISSION

INTRODUCTION

Born in the year 570 AD, in Makkah, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) lived for 63 years, spending the first 50 years of his life in Makkah and the remaining 13 years in Madinah. His life was full of extraordinary and varied challenges, mostly in the form of adversities. For instance, his father passed away before he was born. His mother died when he was only six years old. His grandfather, who had taken it upon himself to raise this young orphan and who was the main source of the young boy's comfort and compassion, died too, when the Prophet (PBUH) was only eight years old. The loss of loving parents at such a tender age could, indeed, have had a traumatic effect on a young child. Moreover, above this test, the Prophet (PBUH), as we shall see in the course of this Lecture, was to face many more equally traumatic challenges from both his foes and apparent friends. Commenting on these potentially insurmountable trials and tribulations, Sayed Ali Asgher Razwy, argues that for the Prophet (PBUH) to be the exemplar (*Uswatun Hasana*) for mankind, it was imperative that he "...should undergo all the sufferings, pains and privations incidental to human life in order that he might learn to bear them with becoming fortitude, and raise his stature in human perfection". Only then could the *Ummah* (mankind) learn from him how to conduct itself in the face of the vicissitudes of life, and seek guidance from the experiences of this Messenger of Allah (SWT).

In dealing with these adversities, the Prophet (PBUH) showed the *Ummah* that behind every challenge there are several opportunities, which should enable the apparent victim to come out of the woods

successfully. The focus of this Lecture will be to briefly illustrate this theme, showing how the Prophet (PBUH) overcame severe obstacles in the course of his life through his conviction and complete submission to the will of Allah (SWT).

THE PROPHET'S LIFE BEFORE THE PROCLAMATION OF HIS PROPHETHOOD

Though deprived of parental care and love at a very young age, he found comfort and protection, first in the presence of his noble grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, and after his death, from Abu Talib and Fatima bint Asad, his uncle and aunt respectively. Not only did he obtain parental protection from his aunt and uncle, he also acquired trade opportunities, at a very young age, from his uncle's experiences. It was Abu Talib who linked him to Khadeeja, the princess of Makkah, and the main investor of the trade caravans of Syria.

He attracted Khadeeja's attention through his trade skills, his extraordinary charisma, his hard work, and above all, his honesty and integrity. The marriage proposal from Khadeeja was his deserving and hard earned reward, not just a fluke coincidence. The Prophet's married life with Khadeeja is a shining example of what constitutes a perfect marriage. As such, it is one of the most befitting examples for the Ummah to follow in their pursuit of a successful marital life.

The Prophet (PBUH) put Khadeeja's wealth to best use, both in the pre-Prophethood proclamation and the post proclamation periods. For instance, in the former case, her wealth freed him from the struggle of earning a living and gave him an opportunity to serve his community full time. Not only was he an active participant in the civic activities that preserved law and order referred to as *Hilful Fudhul* (League of the Virtuous) but also through his sincere and honest dealings, he earned himself the titles of *Al-Amin* (The Trustworthy One) and *As-Sadiq* (The Truthful One)

By the time he was forty, he had achieved everything that a man of

his age would wish to possess in that society. He had a perfect wife, and he was a successful businessperson with the means to live a life of ease and comfort. Above all, he occupied a unique social position that brought him dignity and respect from all, those who agreed and had faith in him and even from those who did not. Then came the next most formidable challenge of his life: the call to Prophethood.

PROCLAMATION OF PROPHETHOOD

The message of Islam was introduced by the Prophet (PBUH) in stages. To begin with, the message was passed to the close members of his family and friends as stated in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

“And warn your near relatives” (26:214)

The first male to accept his Prophethood and his message in public was Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (A.S.). He was followed by Zaid and later on by Abu-Bakr. Khadeeja was the first female to accept this message. The message was then passed by word of mouth and after three years, there were already thirty converts.

The Prophet (PBUH) made an open proclamation when he was commanded to do so by Allah (SWT) through the following revelation:

“Disclose what has been ordained to you” (15:94)

The Quraysh reacted violently. In the words of Razwy, “Makkah was in a state of war”. The life of quietude, serenity and peace enjoyed by the Prophet (PBUH) was disrupted first with “violence of words”, and later by “violence of deeds”. To begin with, the Prophet (PBUH) and his followers were exposed to harassments in the form of jeers, jibes and insults. However, when the polytheists of Makkah became aware of the real magnitude of the challenge of Islam and its socio-economic and political implications, they upgraded their violence from violence of

words to violence of deeds; harassment culminated into persecution. The first victims were Sumayya and Yasir, wife and husband who were tortured to death merely because they had chosen to become Muslims. Many more were to fall victim to Quraysh persecution. Harith ibn Hala was killed when he intervened, trying to protect the Prophet (PBUH) from being molested by the polytheists of Makkah.

In the face of such adversities, the Prophet (PBUH) saw and sought recourse in the Mercy of Allah (SWT). His conviction and resolve to serve his Master, the Almighty, grew even stronger. He refused to be intimidated and to be swept away from his mission. His resolve “fired with zeal” his supporters and followers. He taught these early Muslims to explore and harness opportunities in the face of adversities. Haykal describes this process in the following words, “The souls of the Muslims became ennobled and their hearts were moved to seek communion with the noble spirit of Muhammad”.²

The effect of the Prophet’s complete faith in Allah (SWT) inspired his uncle, Abu Talib, to offer his complete support to him. This support was vital for the survival of the Prophet (PBUH) and his mission. Since Abu Talib was the chief of the Quraysh and as he had committed himself fully to the protection of the Prophet (PBUH), the Quraysh dared not kill the Prophet (PBUH) lest this should trigger a civil war. By the same token the followers, too, were impacted by the character of the Prophet (PBUH) to the extent that they acquired heroic and noble souls” ready to give their lives and not forsake their faith in Islam.

When threats, persuasions and persecutions seemed not to deter them from their cause, the polytheists of Makkah decided to strike at the heart of their problem: Abu Talib. A decision was reached to impose a complete boycott against Abu Talib and the clan of Banu Hashim. For their own safety, the clan of Banu Hashim had to leave Makkah and seek refuge in a ravine, Shayb Abu Talib. They were in a complete siege. Their suffering is described vividly by Haykal: “In their isolation, however, they suffered all kinds of privations; often they

² *The Life of Muhammad*, Haykal

could not find enough food to satisfy their hunger. It was not possible either for Muhammad or the Muslims to mix with other people or to talk with them...”

However, the Prophet (PBUH) converted this adversity into an opportunity and used it in his favour. In the months corresponding with the season of pilgrimage when Arabs would come to Makkah, all hostilities would cease as these were not permitted by traditions. The Prophet (PBUH) took advantage of this and would come out to preach the message of Islam. The Arabs were in this way made fully aware of this unjustified and unfair boycott, which was leading to the suffering of the Prophet (PBUH) and his supporters. His manner and his approach, in the words of Haykal, “stirred their sympathy and compassion for him as well as their sensitivity to his call. Indeed, this boycott imposed by Quraysh and Muhammad’s patient bearing of it for the sake of his cause won for him and his cause many hearts...”

BEGINNING OF THE END

The Prophet’s handling of the crisis at the siege was soon to open the eyes of some dwellers of Makkah. The boycott had totally failed. By the efforts of the following five people, the boycott was lifted: Mutim ibn Adiy, Hisham ibn Amr, Zuhayr ibn Ummaya, Abdul Bukhtary ibn Hisham, and Zamaa ibn Al Aswad.

The Prophet (PBUH) and his supporters, the Banu Hashim, returned to Makkah. Soon after that, Khadeeja and then Abu Talib passed away mainly because of the excessive physical and mental torture that they had to endure at Shayb Abu Talib. In his sorrow, the Prophet (PBUH) dubbed this year as *Aamul Huzn*, or the Year of Mourning.

CONCLUSION

The end of the boycott did not mean the end of the persecution. As a matter of fact, it opened up new venues for the polytheists of Makkah to persecute the Prophet (PBUH), now that the latter’s main supporter

and protector, Abu Talib. was gone. What followed next shall be discussed in Lecture 4. At this juncture, we need to ponder upon the lessons that can be drawn from the life of the Prophet (PBUH) in terms of how to seek rewards from adversities, and how to look for opportunities among obstacles. The key lesson that we learn from the life of our Prophet (PBUH) is to observe patience, cultivate faith, nurture hope and build conviction in Allah, the Almighty.

LECTURE 4

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH): HIS MIGRATION TO MADINAH AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ISLAMIC STATE IN MADINAH

INTRODUCTION

The death of Abu Talib deprived the Prophet (PBUH) of a staunch supporter and protector. Never before had the life of the Prophet (PBUH) been in danger the way it was now. In addition to that, the effect of his teaching in Makkah had been tremendously reduced and restricted. The Prophet (PBUH) therefore decided to go to the nearby town of Taif, as an alternative to Makkah, to spread the word of Allah (SWT). Unfortunately, he received a very hostile reception. He left Taif after being pelted with pebbles. S.S.A Rizvi reports: “Grief-stricken but never losing confidence in his mission, the Prophet (PBUH) returned to Makkah.”³ To Razwy, for the Prophet (PBUH): “it was one of the darkest and most dismal moments in his life”. However, his faith was unshaken. He was as determined as ever to continue with his mission. It was then that Allah (SWT) awarded him with *Isra* and *Meraj* as stated in the Quran in the following verse:

“Glory be to Allah who took His servant for a journey by night from the sacred Mosque to the furthest Mosque...” (17:1)

EVENTS LEADING TO THE PROPHET’S MIGRATION TO MADINAH: FIRST PLEDGE OF AQABA

When the Prophet (PBUH) was at the apex of the crisis of his life and when all doors seemed to have been closed on him, Allah (SWT) paved

³ *The Holy Prophet*, S.S.A Rizvi

ways of success and victory for him. Relief came from the nearby town of Yathrib, a town in an oasis about two hundred and fifty miles north of Makkah. Six people from Yathrib, visiting Makkah during the time of the annual pilgrimage, met the Prophet (PBUH), accepted Islam and promised to return the following year. True to their word, they paid the Prophet (PBUH) a visit in the following year together with twelve more people. The newcomers accepted Islam and gave the Prophet (PBUH) their pledge of loyalty, to be called the First Pledge of Aqaba.

THE SECOND PLEDGE OF AQABA

In the third year, seventy five more citizens of Yathrib accepted Islam. Together with the previous converts, they gave their pledge of loyalty to the Prophet (PBUH) and invited him to migrate to Yathrib, promising him full support and protection. This pledge is referred to as the Second Pledge of Aqaba. These new Muslims returned home and through their efforts Islam began to spread rapidly in Yathrib. The Prophet (PBUH) started to encourage Muslims of Makkah to migrate to Yathrib, in small groups, to escape the persecution of the polytheists of Makkah. Within a short time, most of the Muslims of Makkah had migrated to Yathrib.

PLAN TO KILL THE PROPHET (PBUH)

The warm reception given to the Muslims of Makkah and the gradual spread of Islam in Yathrib alarmed the polytheists of Makkah. They feared that if Muslims were to gain a strong footing in Yathrib, this would cause a serious threat to them, since Yathrib lay to the north of their trade route to Syria. To these polytheists of Makkah, the only solution to their problem was to kill the Prophet (PBUH) immediately, before he could move to Yathrib. Allah informed the Prophet (PBUH) of the impending danger through the Archangel Jibrael, and instructed him to leave immediately for Yathrib. Leaving Imam Ali (AS) behind in his bed to divert the attention of the enemies surrounding his house waiting to kill him, the Prophet (PBUH), in the darkness of night, left for Yathrib.

The Prophet (PBUH) waited for Imam Ali (AS) to join him at Quba, a place two miles south of Yathrib. Meanwhile, he laid down foundations of a mosque at Quba. When he was finally joined by Imam Ali, the Prophet (PBUH) and his small entourage rode to Yathrib. They entered Yathrib on the 12th of Rabiul Awal, which was to become the first Hijra month.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MUSLIM STATE

When the Prophet (PBUH) entered Yathrib, the social, political and economic position of this town was characterized as follows. Majority of the people of Yathrib were either farmers, or associated with farming activities. Then, there were merchants and small shopkeepers, providing services to the farming community, the merchant community of Makkah, and other tribes living in their neighbourhood. However, the ‘economy’ of Yathrib was in the hands of the Jews, who participated in such vital activities as farming and trading, but, more importantly, they were dominant in the money lending business. The challenge that the Prophet (PBUH) was to face in laying down the foundations of an Islamic State in Yathrib can be best understood in the context of the social grouping that prevailed there at that time.

THE MAIN SOCIAL GROUPS OF YATHRIB

- **The Arab tribes of Aus and Khazraj:** They were mostly pagans and earned their living through farming. According to Razwy, “the Arabs lived in poverty... one reason why they were chronically poor, was the high rates of interest they had to pay to the Jews on their loan”. Another reason for their poverty was that these two tribes were at war for many years. This left them, in the words of Razwy, “utterly exhausted and prostrate”.
- **Jews:** When the Prophet entered Yathrib there were three Jewish tribes namely Quinuqa, Nadhir and Qurayza. Whereas Quinuqa lived in the town itself, the other two tribes lived in the vicinity of

Yathrib. According to Razwy “the Jews were farmers, merchants, traders, moneylenders, landlords, and industrialists. They had grown rich through the practice of usury and they enjoyed a monopoly of the armament industry in Arabia”.

- **Christians:** In Yathrib itself, there were a few Christians, but in the Peninsula of Arabia there were Christian settlements such as the one in Najran. The tribe of Ghassan, too, had adopted Christianity.

THE PROPHET’S IMPACT ON THE SOCIAL GROUPINGS OF YATHRIB

Before the Prophet’s migration, Yathrib had all the resources needed for it to be prosperous. It had large fields, orchards and vineyards. However, as already observed, it remained a social unit fractured with disunity and poverty. The main tribes of Aus and Khazraj were at loggerheads with each other. There was no central authority to enforce law and order, which was a prerequisite to economic stability. With all its fecundity, Yathrib remained sterile! However, things were to change dramatically with the advent of Islam and the presence of the Prophet (PBUH). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) became the driving and dynamic force that changed Yathrib from being sterile, poor and weak into becoming fecund, prosperous and strong in a short period of thirteen years. How did he do that?

YATHRIB BECOMES MADINAH TU NABI: THE CITY OF THE PROPHET (PBUH) AND ISLAMIC STATE PAR EXCELLENCE

No sooner had the Prophet (PBUH) set his foot in Madinah, he exerted himself in establishing a socio-economic-political infrastructure, which was essential for the physical and spiritual survival of the *Muhajeer* (immigrants from Makkah) and the *Ansar* (the Muslims of Madinah.)

The first step that the Prophet (PBUH) took towards laying down the

foundation for Islamic State was to build a mosque, *Masjidun Nabi*, the Mosque of the Prophet (PBUH).

THE MOSQUE OF THE PROPHET (PBUH)

In the process of the construction of the mosque of Madinah, the Prophet (PBUH) illustrated in practical terms the main teachings of Islam: brotherhood and unity. He involved all in the construction of this mosque. Ammar, Salman and Bilal, who were considered to be low on the social order of the Arab society, worked shoulder to shoulder with Uthman bin Afan and Abdul Rahman bin Auf, the one time ‘fat cats’ of Makkah. The Khazraj and the Aus, who had been at each other’s throats for decades, were united, working together to put up this unique structure, the Prophet’s Mosque. This Mosque became the nucleus around which the citizens of Madinah, the new name of what was once Yathrib, were to carry out their religious, social, economic, educational and political functions. In a nutshell, the Mosque of the Prophet, despite its simplicity of conception and ‘sign’, became the focal point around which the citizens of Madinah were to structure their strategy of survival in the face of challenges from within and from outside.

Standard prayer practices, the Adhan and five times daily prayer, were implemented so as to gear the Muslims of Madinah towards piety and virtue for the pleasure of Allah, the Almighty.

THE CONCEPT OF BROTHERHOOD

By migrating to Madinah, the Muhajeer faced a serious problem: economic displacement. Haykal describes this predicament in the following words: “For when they (Muhajeer) emigrated from Makkah, they had left behind all their property, wealth and goods and entered Madinah devoid of the means with which to tend their food...”⁴ For the survival of these Muslims, the Prophet (PBUH) introduced the concept of brotherhood by joining each Ansar with a Muhajeer in a tie

⁴ *The Life of Muhammad*, Haykal

of 'Brotherhood', for the sake of Allah. The basis of this tie was mutual assistance. The Ansar volunteered and entered into a contract to share equality with their brothers every thing they earned or possessed. This concept of brotherhood is described in the Quran in the following verse:

“Those who believe and migrated and strived in the cause of Allah with their persons and belongings, and those who sheltered and helped them! They are indeed brothers to one another.” (8:72)

Those Muhajeer who had business experience were quickly to establish themselves with the help of the capital availed by their Ansar brothers. Haykal described them in these words, “Indeed, they were so expert at it that it was said of them that they could by trade change the sand of the deserts into gold”.

Those who were not traders engaged themselves farming on the lands owned by the Ansar under the system of sharecropping. Then, there were others who took menial jobs. Those who were incapable of finding any job were accommodated in the mosque; they were called *Ahl al Suffa* and were taken care of from the wealth of the wealthy Ansar and Muhajeer. The outcome of this strategy is described by Razwy in the following words: “Islam, uprooted in Makkah, struck new roots in Madinah, burgeoned and soon became viable”.

EXTENSION OF THE CONCEPT OF BROTHERHOOD TO INCORPORATE NON-MUSLIM CITIZENS OF MADINAH

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) took yet another bold step: He entered into a contract with the Jews, “granting equality of status and right and full freedom of religion and conscience to the Jews...” (Rizvi) This pact was later extended to include Jewish tribes of Nadhir and Qurayza, living outside Madinah.

CONCLUSION

The change of name Yathrib to Madinah was not just a symbolic gesture; it had substantive implications. The presence of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Yathrib manifested the unique Mercy of Allah (SWT). The Messenger of Allah became a cohesive force, uniting the citizens of Madinah, giving them a solid economic, social, political and, above all, spiritual base, a base on which the Islamic State was built. Moreover, he freed the Ansar and Muhajeer from social and cultural bondage. So this freedom would not be snatched away from them, he taught them how to defend themselves against internal and external aggressions. This will be examined in Lecture 5.

LECTURE 5

THE PROPHET (PBUH) AND LESSONS IN SELF-DEFENCE

INTRODUCTION

In the process of establishing an Islamic State in Madinah, the Prophet (PBUH) was to face two daunting tasks: to ensure its economic survival, and to guarantee its overall security from internal and external quarters. He knew too well that though every citizen of Madinah had given him a warm reception, some of them would show hostility towards him down the road. He also knew that the Quraysh of Makkah would not accept defeat and let this Islamic State thrive. An attack from them was imminent. There were internal and external threats to the newly born state of Islam in Madinah. Provision of a sound economic structure had therefore to be accompanied by a strategy of self-defence in the face of impending aggression.

THE INTERNAL OPPOSITION AND THREAT TO ISLAM

As the Islamic State in Madinah started to unfold, and as it began to implement social and economic reforms to attain freedom based on equity and equality, some of those who had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo became upset. This issue was accentuated when large numbers of citizens of Madinah began to adopt Islam and the impact of Islam began to be felt far and wide. Haykal describes this situation in these words: “Muhammad’s teachings, example, and leadership had the deepest effect upon people... It was at this stage that the Jews began to rethink their position vis-a-vis Muhammad and his companions...It was at this time that the Jews asked themselves whether they should let his call, spiritual power, and authority continue to spread... Perhaps they would have done so had they felt

certain that his religion was not going to spread in their midst and their own men would not... convert to Islam. A great number of their priesthood and a learned rabbi, Abdullah Ibn Salam, approached the Prophet and announced to him his conversion as well as that of his household...This was the event which triggered their suspicion of Muhammad and their denial of Muhammad's prophethood".

You will recall that prior to the Prophet's migration, the Aus and the Khazraj were at each other's throats and that the Jews were benefiting from this disunity. There were some chiefs of the Aus and the Khazraj, too, whose tribal hegemony depended on this hostility between the two main tribes of Madinah. These chiefs and their henchman outwardly welcomed the Prophet (PBUH) but in their hearts, they were burning with the desire to obstruct his message and his growing influence. Their leader was Abdullah bin Ubay. These people are referred to as *Munafiqin* (the Hypocrites). Their efforts to undermine Islam were given a boost by the Jews of Madinah. These two groups joined hands to challenge the growing authority of Muslims in Madinah.

THE EXTERNAL OPPOSITION

The ever-growing strength of Muslims in Madinah alarmed the Polytheists of Makkah beyond imagination. The popularity of Islam accompanied by its power and authority would overshadow the economic, political and social supremacy of the 'fat cats' of Makkah. Secondly, Makkah depended on Madinah for the safe passage of their annual trade caravans to Syria. The Polytheists of Makkah feared that, to take their revenge, the Muhajeer would sabotage the trade activity originating from Makkah. Then there was the issue of personal pride: ego. The Quraysh of Makkah could not stomach the fact that despite all their efforts they had totally failed to wipe out Islam from existence. Instead, Islam had found a fertile land in their neighbourhood and was thriving exuberantly. This was a speck in the eyes of the Quraysh. They had to do all that it took to end this trend.

REACTION OF THE QURAYSH

To destroy Islam, the Quraysh of Makkah adopted a multi-faceted strategy.

1. To form a pact with the Jews and the Hypocrites of Madinah. Since there was a business connection between the Jews and the Quraysh prior to the Prophet's migration, this made it easy for them to connect and then connive against Islam and, of course, the Hypocrites, too, joined hands with them.
2. To incite the Christians and the Pagans living on the outskirts of Madinah against the Muslims of Madinah.

Using the above two techniques, the Quraysh of Makkah planned to drain the people of Madinah of their energy, and having weakened them, then invade Madinah and end Islam forever.

SUBVERSIONS AGAINST MADINAH

The first signs of hostility surfaced when a pagan by the name of Karz bin Jabir Fahri, and his gang, instigated by the Jews, the Hypocrites and Quraysh, marauded Muslim settlements in the outskirts of Madinah, destroying orchards and stealing livestock. Their intention was to spread fear in the hearts of the Ansar and discourage them from harbouring the Muhajeer.

Then a message was sent addressed to Abdullah bin Ubay, urging him to kill or to hand over the Prophet (PBUH) to the Quraysh of Makkah, or prepare to face the wrath of the people of Makkah.

Such actions, indeed, unleashed fear in Madinah, to the extent that the Muslims of Madinah used to sleep fully armed, ready to defend themselves if and when attacked by surprise.

PROPHET (PBUH) PREPARES FOR SELF-DEFENCE

In the light of these immediate and imminent threats to the security

of the lives and livelihood of the citizens of Madinah, the Prophet (PBUH) took several measures.

Firstly, through the concept of 'Brotherhood', he ended tension and enmity between the citizens of Madinah and nurtured a strong sense of fraternity and solidarity, qualities essential for building a team, ready to face aggression.

Secondly, he created an economic base providing a means to the Muslims of Madinah to acquire material resources needed for defence.

Thirdly, he started to enter into pacts with the neighbouring tribes to cultivate a peaceful environment and a source of support against his enemies. For example, he sent out missions of peace to forge alliances with the tribes of Banu Zamra and Banu Madlaj.

Fourthly, the Prophet (PBUH) sent out small scouting teams to various places so as to carry out the following functions:
To find out, and gain intelligence about his enemies' manoeuvres and then devise his defensive strategy, in case of a sudden attack.

To send a message that Muslims of Madinah were vigilant and ready to defend themselves. For example, thirty Muslims, under the command of Hamza, were sent to the coast of the Red Sea to meet a trade caravan of the Quraysh. The mission returned to Madinah without any incident.

To prevent the Quraysh of Makkah from instigating and participating in manoeuvres against Madinah, letting them know that the people of Madinah could interrupt the Makkan trade routes to the north if provoked. For instance, fifteen months after the migration from Makkah, the Prophet (PBUH) sent a seventeen men expedition to the south of Madinah to meet the caravan of the Quraysh. The Muslims were engaged in a battle with the members of the caravan whom they defeated and whose merchandise they confiscated as their booty.

Haykal labels these actions as “consolidation of the defence of Madinah.”

THE INVASION OF MADINAH

As noted earlier, the Quraysh strategy to destroy Islam was such that they should first weaken the Islamic State of Madinah through a ‘hit and run’ approach. In the meanwhile, they could build a strong force, which would then be able to attack Madinah and strike Islam a mortal blow. The latter part of this strategy was translated into action in the 2nd Year of Hijra. The Quraysh of Makkah invested their entire savings in a caravan headed for Syria under Abu Sufyan’s leadership. It was also decided that all profits resulting from this trip would be used to buy arms, horses and other items of a military nature. This was done with the sole intention of overrunning Madinah.

Abu Sufyan, loaded with military equipment but fearful of the scouting activities of the Muslims who would surely interrupt his passage, sent a message to Makkah of this impending threat. On receiving this message, under the command of Abu Jahl, 1,000 well-equipped warriors from Makkah marched towards Madinah from the south. They halted at Badr, about 200 miles from Makkah.

The truth of the matter is that the Muslims of Madinah, in self-defence, had to prevent the caravan from the north from reaching the south and equipping the southern army. When Abu Sufyan avoided the regular trade route traversing Madinah and instead took the alternative route via the Red Sea, the Muslims were faced with two options. One was to pursue Abu Sufyan’s caravan and, by confiscating his wealth and armoury, weaken the impending threat from the south. In the words of Rizvi this would “save themselves from being overwhelmed by the Makkan Quraysh with all their resources...”. The other option “which was actually adopted...was to leave the booty alone and march out boldly against the well-armed and well-equipped Quraysh army of 1,000 men from Makkah”. The battle fought at Badr, therefore, was that of self-defence by the Muslims of Madinah, in the face of an

aggression from the Quraysh of Makkah, as stipulated in the Quran in the following verse:

“And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight you. But do not be aggressive. For Allah does not love aggressors.” (2:190)

THE BATTLE OF BADR

This battle took place in the 2nd year of Hijra, on the 17th day of the month of Ramadhan. The Muslim army was ill equipped and outnumbered by their opponents. In all, there were only 313 men (80 Muhajeer and 233 Ansars), with two horses and 70 camels. “Some of them had swords but no shields and others had shields but no swords” (Razwy). As for the Quraysh of Makkah, they were 1,000 warriors with 100 horses and 700 camels, loaded with military equipment and supplies.

Despite the odds against them, the Muslims fought courageously, winning the battle decisively. Several Quraysh generals and warriors lost their lives. The champion of this battle was Imam Ali (AS). He alone killed 22 Quraysh warriors while the rest of the Muslims engaged in this battle together killed 27 polytheists. As for the Muslims, 14 of them became martyrs.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE BATTLE OF BADR

First and foremost, the decisive victory at Badr gave Muslims a very powerful sense of confidence in their ability to defend themselves. It hardened their determination to stand firm to defend their religion and all its benefits even at the cost of their lives.

Second, the Muslims of Madinah proved to themselves that trust in Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH) was a source of their inexhaustible strength that enabled them to defeat their well-equipped and well-manned enemies while they themselves had scanty material support.

Third, the Quraysh of Makkah were humbled and humiliated throughout Hejaz. Their age-old pride, that they were supreme in Hejaz and its surrounding territories, was categorically diminished. They felt disgraced, as despite all their military might, they had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the ‘weaklings’ of Madinah.

Fifth the Jews in Madinah, Khaybar and Fadak were alarmed. It was now a fact and reality that Islam would survive despite their tacit and implicit efforts to undermine its growth.

Unfortunately, according to Razwy, there was also “one lamentable” outcome of the Battle of Badr. This was “...that Islam’s victory kindled new and fiercer fires of hatred and hostility in the breasts of Banu Ummaya against Muhammad Mustafa and Ali ibn Abi Talib. Their hatred and jealousy of Banu Hashim had spanned many generations. But after the battle of Badr, their hostility was focused on Ali and on the children of Muhammad Mustafa.

“If to the Muslims, Ali was the symbol of triumph of Islam, to the Banu Umayya, he was the symbol of destruction of their polytheism and their privileges. Therefore, they, their generations to come and their friends and their supporters, never forgave Ali for the role he played before, during and after the battle of Badr. Their hatred is understandable. It was Ali, and Ali alone who had struck, not only at Badr but in every encounter at the massive, coordinated and concentrated power of heathendom, and had destroyed it.”

CONCLUSION

In the course of one year, the Prophet (PBUH) had changed Madinah’s social, economic and political landscape from being barren to being fecund, for the benefit of the Ansar and Muhajeer. He freed the Ansars from all sorts of bondage. He ended the age-old feud between the Aus and Khazraj and replaced it with love, respect and solidarity. As for the Muhajeer, he saved them from persecution, and helped

them integrate into the economic system in Madinah through the process of 'Brotherhood' with the Ansar. Most importantly, under the umbrella of Islam, the Prophet (PBUH) taught the Muslims of Madinah to acquire freedom from the evils of this world and the calamities of the Hereafter, and to safeguard their freedom through *Jihad*: self-exertion for self-defence.

The Battle of Badr was not the last battle to be fought by Muslims in self-defence. Further down the road, Muslims were forced into several more dangerous battles than Badr, like Ohad, Khayber, Khandak and Hunain, all fought in self-defence. However, under the leadership of the Prophet (PBUH) and because of the courage and conviction of such commanding officers as Imam Ali (AS), Muslims came out victorious, despite initial setbacks such as in the Battle of Khayber and Hunain. All said and done, within a short period of 13 years, the Islamic State of Madinah came to be recognised as a power to be reckoned with. Makkah had already been recaptured by the Prophet (PBUH) and the Muslims. As a matter of fact, by the year 10 A.H. the Prophet (PBUH) had fully established the pristine State of Islam. At that juncture, through divine guidance, he came to know that his mission on this earth was coming to an end. The only task left for him was to undertake the farewell pilgrimage so as to finalise his demonstration on every aspect of the Hajj rituals and, more importantly, to formally install his successor.

LECTURE 6

THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE: THEN AND NOW

INTRODUCTION

One of the physical highlights marking the Prophet's migration from Makkah to Madinah is the Mosque of Quba, which is about two miles south of the present-day city of Madinah. It is at Quba that the Prophet (PBUH) decided on his way to Yathrib to 'rest', waiting for Imam Ali (AS), accompanied by some ladies from the Banu Hashim family, to join him. During his stay here, the Prophet (PBUH) ordered a mosque to be built, the Mosque of Quba. After a brief stay here, the Prophet (PBUH) left for Yathrib. On his arrival at Yathrib, the nobles of the city offered to accommodate him in their sumptuous and secured abodes. The Prophet (PBUH), however, insisted that he would stay temporarily in the house of that person at whose house the camel that the Prophet (PBUH) was riding would stop on its own accord. As fate would have it, the camel stopped at the house of one resident of Madinah, by the name of Abu Ayub, and the Prophet (PBUH) decided to stay as his guest until his apartment was ready.

THE CONTRUCTION OF THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE

Once settled in his new home in Yathrib which was renamed *Madinah tu Nabi* or City of the Prophet, the Prophet's next move was to locate a spot to house a Mosque. It turned out that there was a vacant land not far from Abu Ayub's residence suitable for this purpose. This land belonged to two orphan youths: Sahl and Suhayl. Their guardians offered the land to the Prophet (PBUH) gratis, but the Prophet (PBUH) paid for the land. A mosque was built; there came the existence of the Prophet's Mosque: *Masjidun Nabi*.

This Mosque in its original form was extraordinarily simple, made of walls of un-backed bricks. The four walls of the mosque enclosed a large compound, part of which was covered by a roof of palm leaves supported on trunks of palm tree, to be used for prayers, and part of it was devoted for the poor and the homeless. Except for the evening prayers when straw would be burnt to give light, the mosque was otherwise never lit. This continued for nine years after which lamps were then hung on the pillars. The Prophet's living quarters were attached to the Mosque. These quarters were as unostentatious as the Mosque except that they were more closed to provide privacy to the dwellers.

THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE: THEN AND NOW

During the Prophet's lifetime, his Mosque and its environs were very simple. The architectural beauty and the sumptuous surroundings that the Mosque encompasses today are the products of the times following the Prophet's death.

The original interior features of the Mosque were the *Mimber* (the pulpit), the *Mihrab* (niche), the pillars that supported the roof, and the *Suffa* (the raised platform). In the early days, even the *Mimber* was not there. The Prophet (PBUH) would deliver his sermons leaning against a natural pillar - a palm tree. Subsequently, a two step *Mimber*, made of palm wood, was put in place to enable the Prophet (PBUH) to give his public address sitting on it. It is recorded that when the Prophet (PBUH) abandoned leaning against the palm wood pillar now that there was a pulpit for him, the pillar began to lament audibly, having lost the privilege of the Prophet (PBUH) leaning against it. The Prophet (PBUH) consoled it, assuring it that it would be with him in Paradise. It then became quiet. After a while it dried up. It was removed and buried. However, a pillar was raised in its place, to be called the "Pillar of Hannana" (in Arabic, *Hannana* means the cry of a baby camel when separated from its mother). Today, the *Mimber* is made of marble and stands where the Prophet's original wooden *mimber* used to be.

The second prominent feature of the Mosque is the Mihrab. It is from here that the Prophet (PBUH) used to lead the daily congregational prayers. After the passing away of the Prophet (PBUH), at different times, two additional Mihrabs were added in the Mosque. Today, therefore, there are two more Mihrabs in the Prophet's Mosque. In his *Safarnameh*, Farahani describes the Mihrabs as they were in 1885-1886, and since they have remained more or less as they were then, I will quote him verbatim to describe the scenario as it is today: "There are three Mihrabs on this side of the Mosque. One is known as the Mihrab of the Messenger. It is in the old Mosque. Another Mihrab is one of the contributions of Uthman, which is in the new Mosque and is situated in such a way that anyone who stands at the Mihrab turns his back to the tomb of the Prophet. Another is the Mihrab of Soltan Solyman which is set up behind the other Mihrab..."

This narrator makes a distinction between the old Mosque and the new Mosque; the new Mosque is the extension of the original Mosque, carried out after the passing away of the Prophet (PBUH). As a matter of fact, the third Caliph, Uthman bin Affan, demolished the entire Mosque and re-built it with major extensions; these extensions are referred to as the new Mosque.

Another notable feature of the Mosque is the pillars. As noted earlier, the roof of the old Mosque was supported by several palm tree pillars. Apart from these pillars, some more were erected after the Prophet's demise. The wooden pillars that were standing during the Prophet's lifetime were subsequently replaced with marble ones that stand on the original sites. They are:

- **Pillar of Sareer:** This pillar is to the west of the Prophet's Mihrab. It is named thus because Sareer in Arabic means a bed and the Prophet (PBUH) used to rest at this pillar whenever he stayed in the Mosque for special prayers in the days and nights of the Month of Ramadhan.
- **Pillar of Tawba:** To the east of the Pillar of Haras is the Pillar of Tawba or the Pillar of Abu Lubaba. Abu Lubaba was a prominent

companion of the Prophet (PBUH). Unfortunately, he betrayed the Muslims by divulging some vital information to the renegade Jews. He realised that he had made a mistake. To seek forgiveness from Allah (SWT) the Almighty, he tied himself to this pillar. He remained in this state for seven days, only being untied by his daughter when he wanted to feed himself, to pray or to go to the bathroom. Ultimately, verses of the Quran registering acceptance of his repentance were revealed to the Prophet (PBUH). Then only did Abu Lubaba agree to come out of his self-imposed 'imprisonment'. It is highly recommended for pilgrims to pray at least two rakaats of prayers at this Pillar.

- **Pillar of Jibrael:** This pillar is not accessible to the pilgrims today because it is part of the Prophet's enclosed cenotaph - the zarih. It is behind the tomb of Abu Bakr. At this pillar, the Angel Jibrael used to relate to the Prophet (PBUH) secrets of the universe.
- **Pillar of Tahajjud:** This pillar too is today inaccessible to the pilgrims as it is in a corner of Hazrat Fatima (AS)'s room that is part of the enclosed cenotaph. At this pillar, the Prophet (PBUH) used to offer his nocturnal prayers, the Tahajjud Prayers.
- **Pillar of Wufud:** This pillar is to the south of the Pillar of Haras. The Prophet (PBUH) would meet delegations from outside Madinah at this point. By some accounts, the Christians of Najran were received at this place and the decision to go for Mubahila was reached here. Most likely during the time of the Prophet (PBUH), this spot was outside the Mosque and was part of the Sahan.
- **Pillar Of Haras:** This pillar is to the south of the Pillar of Sareer. Whenever the Prophet (PBUH) was resting at this pillar, Imam Ali (AS) would stand there to guard him. Haras in Arabic means to guard. This pillar has been named accordingly.

Last but not least is the Suffa or the raised platform built specifically for those Muslims who had no place to live. Temporarily, they were

accommodated here until they could be integrated into the socio-economic fabric of Madinah. They were known as Ahlu Sufa. The Prophet (PBUH) regularly visited them and ensured that their daily needs were met.

After the passing away of the Prophet (PBUH), at various times and by various rulers of those times, several changes were initiated to change the face of the Mosque as it was during his time. First, the area and the perimeter of the Mosque were extended considerably. For example, during the Prophet's time, the size of the mosque was about 54 by 50 meters only. In 17 A.H. (638 A.D.) Umar, the second Caliph, extended the area of the mosque 5 meters on the northern side. A few years later, in 29 A.H. (649 A.D.), Uthman, the third Caliph, demolished the Mosque and reconstructed it, adding another Mihrab, as mentioned earlier. The next significant renovation was in 87 A.H. (706 A.D.), ordered by the Ummayyad caliph, Walid bin Abdul Malik. The Mosque was rebuilt having its walls extended on all sides, incorporating within it what once used to be the living abodes of the Prophet's wives. The Prophet's tomb, too, became part of the Mosque. Further significant repair works and extensions were carried out by the Abbaside Caliphs Mahdi and Mamoon. Recent additional constructions were carried out by the Ottoman Caliphs and more so by the Saudis.

THE PROPHET'S CENOTAPH

The cenotaph encloses the Prophet's mausoleum, Hazrat Fatima (AS)'s room and the area once occupied by the apartments of the Prophet's wives. Omar is buried on the left side of the Prophet's grave and Abu Bakr is buried behind the Prophet's grave. Under the famous Green Dome is the Prophet's grave. This famous dome was built on the orders of the Ottoman Caliph Sultan Mammud (1808-1839).

The strip of area that stretches from the Prophet's Mimbar to the Prophet's grave which is referred to as *Riyadul Jannah* or the garden of paradise, was thus named by the Prophet (PBUH) himself, who is

reported to have said, “One of the Gardens of Paradise lies between where my grave will be and my Mimber.” It is highly recommended to pray at least two rakaat prayers (salat) somewhere along this band of land. It is also strongly believed that Hazrat Fatima (AS) is buried somewhere along this band of land.

The description of the Prophet’s Mosque will remain incomplete if we do not mention the famous doors leading to the Mosque. The most famous doors are:

- **Bab Jibrael (The Gate of Jibrael):** It is recommended that pilgrims enter the Mosque through this door. This gate is named after the archangel Jibrael.
- **Bab As Salam (The Gate of Peace):** By some accounts, it is recommended to enter the Mosque through this gate.
- **Bab Ar Rahman (The Gate of Merciful or Mercy):** When the Prophet (PBUH) used to return from his campaigns, he would enter the Mosque through this door.
- **Bab Un Nisa (The Gate of the Women):** The Prophet’s wives and other women would enter the mosque through this door.

Subsequently, many doors were added to the Mosque due to the extensions made to it.

CONCLUSION

Masjidun Nabi or the Prophet’s Mosque in Madinah is second in importance only to *Masjidul Haram*, the Grand Mosque of Makkah. Indeed, it is the dream of every Muslim to have the honour of visiting and praying in the Prophet’s Mosque. This is particularly so because the Prophet (PBUH) has strongly urged Muslims to visit his Mausoleum. He is reported by very reliable sources to have said: “Whoever will send salutations to me alive or after my death, I shall be cognizant of it and shall reply them”. Those Muslims who are lucky

enough to have the opportunity of visiting the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah must observe certain decorum. Before visiting the Mosque, they must perform ghusl, dress in clothes worthy of the place they are visiting and enter the Mosque only after seeking permission by reciting *Izne Du Khul*. All along they must remember that the Prophet (PBUH) is alive in his grave and fully aware of the pilgrim's presence.

LECTURE 7

PHILOSOPHY OF HAJJ

“...And pilgrimage to the house is incumbent upon man for the sake of Allah, upon every one who is able to undertake the journey to it; and whoever disbelieves, then surely Allah is self-sufficient, above any need of the universe...” (3:97)

INTRODUCTION

The pilgrimage to Makkah during the prescribed period, Hajj, is one of the obligations for all male and female Muslims, who fulfil certain conditions and thus become *Mustati*. Those who have become but avoid fulfilling this obligation are committing a great sin as outlined in the following *Ahadeeth*:

The Prophet (PBUH) has said “O Ali, anyone who delays Hajj until he dies, Allah will raise him as a Jew or a Christian on the Day of Judgement.”⁵

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (AS) said: “Do not neglect pilgrimage to the house of the Lord, or you will perish.”⁶

Imam Jaffer Sadiq (AS) has said, “If people quit Hajj, they will be given no respite from punishment.”⁷

On the other hand, fulfilment of this obligation brings substantial benefits as promised by Allah (SWT) in the following verse of the Quran:

“And proclaim among men the pilgrimage...that they may witness advantages for them.” (22:28)

⁵ *Hajj*, Abadi, p.37

⁶ *Code of Practice*, Al Hakim, p.92

⁷ *Hajj*, Abadi, p.41

Consider also some of the following *Ahadeeth*:

The Prophet (PBUH) has said: “Hajj wipes away sins as fire burns away rust from iron.”

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (AS) has said: “Hajj and Umrah remove poverty and cleanse sins.”⁸

Imam Sadiq (AS) has said: “One dirham spent on Hajj is better than two million dirhams given in the cause of Allah.”⁹

ACTS OF WORSHIP ASSOCIATED WITH HAJJ

The majority of the acts of worship associated with pilgrimage to Makkah for Hajj are rituals that entail physical labour and deprivation, substantial expense and long distance travel. Superficially, to some people this does not make sense. This scepticism is brilliantly portrayed by Sayyid Mohammad Zia Abadi in his book in these words “Alms giving, being far away from ones family, having no ease and comfort of one’s home, ones business and job, tolerating the suffering of a trip, having to put up with short-tempered co-travellers, sunburn, insufficient sleep, performing rather unfamiliar acts are not pleasant by the norms of the superficial intellect.”¹⁰ He adds, “Nevertheless, Hajj has...the quality of purification.” In a nutshell, this act of worship, if looked at carefully, has a deep and profound philosophic meaning, and if preformed with proper understanding, results in benefits in this world and the Hereafter. To have a dear picture of the significance of Hajj, we have to view it from three different vantages: faith, ritual and metaphysical.

THE FAITH POINT OF VIEW

It is human tendency to want to know the reason and logic behind

8 *Hajj*, Abadi, p.40

9 *Hajj*, Abadi, p.43

10 *Hajj*, Translation Ansariyan Publication, p. 21

acts one is called upon to perform. Ordinarily, in day-to-day mundane matters this is acceptable, to some extent. However, in matters of faith, one has to tread on this path carefully. Whereas there is logic behind acts of worship, such logic may not be comprehensible to the worshippers at a given point in time, owing to their mental constraints. As a matter of fact, at times the logic behind an act of worship is kept obscure for a purpose: to test a believer, and to see how devoted he is; whether he Will perform such an act purely for the sake of Allah's pleasure. When one does so, then the following words from the Quran apply to him:

“Say surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the universe.” (6:162)

It behoves a believer, therefore, to undertake this obligation of going for Hajj, in this spirit of purely acquiring nearness to Allah (SWT) (*Qurbatan ilallah*), regardless of its extrinsic and intrinsic justifications.

This approach does not condone blind faith. The truth of the matter is “Religious obedience is not blind following devoid of logic, rather it is submission of human being with limited knowledge to an all-encompassing authority”¹¹ When Muhammad Ibn Sinan raised an ssue of this nature with Imam Reza (AS), stating that some Muslims believed that there is no reason behind the Laws of Islam except obedience and devotion to Allah (SWT), the Imam responded saying: “Whosoever has such impression of the religious precepts is in gross error, for we realize that what Allah has forbidden is not only unnecessary for human life but also it is a source of corruption pushing man to perdition”.¹²

THE RITUAL POINT OF VIEW

The most important step towards grasping the true meaning of Hajj

11 *Hajj*, Abadi, p.75

12 *Hajj*, Abadi, p.74

is to regard this obligation as a gift from Allah (SWT) and to accept it with thanks and humility. This does not however, mean that one should not ponder upon the values encompassed by this divine gift. With this view in mind, one may search for the deeper implications of the rituals of Hajj.

For instance, consider the fact that the rituals of Hajj, the third branch of Islam, embrace all the other nine branches (*Furu*) of Islam. The first branch of Islam is Salah, prayers five times a day. A very significant part of Hajj is Salah prayers: two units of prayers at *Makame Ibrahim*, performed after the completion of *tawaf* of Kaaba in Umra and Hajjatul Islam (and *Tawaffunnisa*). The Quranic injunctions to this effect are:

“Make the station of Ibrahim a place of prayers.” (2:125)

The second branch of Islam is fasting. Under this obligation, among other restrictions, one is required to abstain from certain basic human requirements such as water, food and conjugal relations for a prescribed time. With Hajj, too, for a specified time (when in the state of *Ihram* for Umra and Hajjatul Islam) the pilgrims are to abstain from 25 acts which are normally part of daily life.

The fourth and fifth branches of Islam are *Zakat* and *Khums* respectively. These two acts are directly associated with a Muslim's material and monetary possessions. They are taxes on that part of material and monetary possessions regarded as excess, in accordance with the Laws of Allah (SWT). Those who do not have excess material and money are exempt from this obligation. By the same token, pilgrimage to the House of Allah, among other conditions, revolves around a Muslim's material and financial position. This obligation falls on the shoulders of those who can afford it; those who cannot are exempt. As in the case of *Zakat* and *Khums*, in Hajj, too, a Muslim is called upon to spend a considerable part of his excess monetary possessions for the sake of Allah (SWT).

The sixth branch of Islam is *Jihad* physical exertion for the defence

of the religion of Allah (SWT), by the permission of the Imam of the time. With Hajj, there is *Jihad* of the soul, *Jihad Bin Nafs*, or the struggle with ego. There are strict ordinances that discipline one and guide him towards humiliation and self-effacement. Violation of these dictates invite penalties, hitting hard where it hurts most: one's purse!

The seventh and eighth *Furus* are: *Amr Bil Maroof* (enjoining the good) and *Nahiy Anil Munkar* (forbidding the evil). These two actions form the under-girdling of the pilgrimage to Hajj. Throughout the journey the pilgrims are repeatedly reminded of what they have to do, and what they have to abstain from: these are the essence of *Amr Bil Maroof* and *Nahiy Anil Munkar*.

The last two branches of Islam are *Tawalla* (to love and follow the 14 Masoomeen) and *Tabarra* (to remain aloof from the enemies of the 14 Masoomeen). The believers throughout their entire pilgrimage follow the teachings of the 14 Masoomeen in conducting the acts of worship of general nature, and those pertaining particularly to Hajj, and they keep away from those actions abhorred by the Masoomeen.

To sum up, the acts of worship encompassed by Hajj are not only an integral part of the overall system of Islamic piety, they are an intricate product of the other Islamic rituals, dramatically expressing how these branches - the *Furu* - are interlinked.

THE METAPHYSICAL POINT OF VIEW

By comparing Hajj rituals with those of the other acts of worship, the *Furu*, we raise one fundamental question: Are all these rituals per se 'flat' and two dimensional, having no underlying meaning except that their performance indicates full and unquestioned submission to the Will of Allah (SWT)? Or, are there other dimensions that need to be grasped in appreciating the full meaning of these deeds of worship?

To initially accept various acts of *Furu* as Allah's gifts that should be observed obediently, knowing that there is nothing else but goodness

in them, and that their performance brings one closer to Allah (SWT), does not mean one must not try to explore some elements of this 'goodness'. In the light of the traditions (*ahadeeth*) from the Prophet (PBUH) and the Ahlul Bayt (PBUT), it is possible to pursue this objective of searching for the values of inner meanings underlying each ritual constituting the *Furu* or branches of Islam. Such a pursuit leads us to some profound metaphysical values that underline these acts of worship.

One of the most dominant aspects of Hajj is travelling. To undertake a journey of this nature requires much preparation. This journey to a foreign land is supposed to make the traveller become aware of another journey that he will be forced to undertake: the journey towards the Hereafter. This imminent journey will be initiated by death. To hammer home this idea, the prospective pilgrim is recommended to do the following, just as one does in preparation of his death:

To get all his business and other affairs in order.

To liquidate debts, or to provide for their liquidation.

To dispense all pending religious obligations, including seeking forgiveness from those whom the traveller might have wronged.

To make a will.

From this point onwards, every single act, as we shall see, should be a reminder of the transience of this life and the permanence of the Hereafter. For example, the instant the pilgrim leaves his house, he should remember the day he shall leave his house, towards his grave. The physical and emotional pangs that he experiences at this moment should be linked to the pains to be caused by *Sakaratul Maut* or the commencement of the process of death. The various people, be they strangers or acquaintances that he meets, and the experiences that he is exposed to before arriving in Makkah, are to raise the awareness of the traveller regarding similar encounters with spirits and souls in the state of *Barzagh*.

With this awareness, when the pilgrim is at *Miqat* (the place to get into the state of Ihram in Umra or Hajjatul Islam), having *ghusl* to wear Ihram, it reminds him of the *ghusl* that he will be given before his burial. By the same token, the Ihram will serve as a reminder of the shroud, *kafan*, that this traveller will have as his only dress in which to undertake his long and arduous journey to meet his Creator. At this point in time, only a completely spiritually blind person will not see himself symbolising a dead person in his unstitched shroud! Reciting of *Talbiya*, ‘LABBAYK, ALLAHUMMA LABBAYK..’ is like accepting the reality of death, and replying to the call from Allah (SWT) to return to Him. The fact that now he has to keep away from 25 acts which were all legal up to this point, should make the pilgrim see his position in the state of *Barzagh*, having to live a life of deprivation.

To be able to resume his ‘normal’ life and enjoy the bounties of Allah (SWT) once more, the pilgrim has to perform the following acts:

- Do Tawaf (7 rounds circumambulation) of the House of Allah (the Kaaba).
- Pray 2 units of prayers at Makame Ibrahim (Ibrahim’s Station).
- Do Sai - walk 7 times between the Hillocks of Safa and Marwa.
- Do Taksir - clipping of hair or nails

When these four acts are completed with full compliance of their specific requirements, the *Umra Tamattu* is over and one can get out of the Ihram, and with a few exceptions, the rest of the restrictions are waived. The pilgrim can now ‘rest’, waiting for the appropriate time to perform the same acts and more, to fulfil the second part of the pilgrimage: HAJJATUL ISLAM.

All these acts have symbolic overtures. Tawaf of the House of Allah symbolizes the first awareness of the presence of Allah (SWT) in the real sense. In the words of Abadi: “This act shows the utmost degree of love to the extent that a lover wishes to sacrifice himself for the

beloved... by going around the house of the beloved, he wishes to prove that he desires nothing but God..”¹³ In return for this love, the pilgrim asks for forgiveness from Allah (SWT) and seeks to get closer to Him.

After completing the *Tawaf* and the *Tawaf* Prayer, the pilgrim then performs *Sai*, that is, he walks between the Hillocks of Safa and Marwa seven times, starting at Safa and ending at Marwa. While engaged in this act, the pilgrim is reminded that he is replicating the actions of Lady Hajra in search of water for her thirsty child Ismael, supplicating to Allah (SWT) until her wishes were granted. By engaging in this act, the pilgrim, too, is humbly and repeatedly asking for forgiveness, wishing to acquire nearness to Allah (SWT), and hoping that like Lady Hajra, they, too, shall have their wishes granted.

After *Sai*, the pilgrims clip their hair or nails; this is *Taqsir*. This act symbolizes the shedding of one’s impurities, meaning Allah (SWT) has accepted the pilgrim’s prayers and has purified him from impurities and sins. The pilgrim can now get out of the *Ihram* and most of its restrictions.

If we think about it, the whole event from wearing of *Ihram* to its removal, symbolizes our lives during the time of *Barzagh*. The events of *Qiyama* or the Day of Judgment are enacted from the beginning of the 8th day of *Dhilhijj* and ending with the final departure from *Mina*.

On the 8th day of *Dhilhijj*, the pilgrims have to put on their *Ihram* once more and move to spend the following day from dawn to dusk at the Plain of *Arafat*. Pilgrims from all walks of life and from all corners of the world are gathered together, at one place, all dressed alike in their *Ihram*. Nothing is expected of them except to spend this day as guests of Allah (SWT), seeking His Infinite Mercy. All their possessions are elsewhere. All they have is the scanty *Ihram* and perhaps a few worldly possessions needed for survival, for a day that they have to be here, and the following three days at *Mina*. Indeed, the Plain of *Arafat* resembles the Plain of the Day of Judgement, ‘*QIYAMA*.’ The scenario of *Arafat*

13 *Hajj*, Abadi, p.92

will be re-enacted on the Day of Justice when all humans will be present at one point, each displaying paucity, despair, complete helplessness and weakness in the presence of the Creator, awaiting their destiny. With this awareness, the pilgrims can try their best to admit their sins, and genuinely plead for Divine Forgiveness and Mercy. The period of stay at Arafat is short, but innumerable Divine Blessings can be obtained only if the pilgrims are genuinely repentant of their sins, and wholly submit themselves to their Creator. On this day at Arafat, Imam Ali Ibn Husain (AS), hearing a beggar begging from humans, told him: “Woe to you! Are you asking people for help in this place while Allah’s mercy today is so comprehensive that what is in mountains is hoped to receive, is granted and the seeker become prosperous.”¹⁴

Having spent the day in Arafat, the pilgrims move to Muzdsilifa which is also called MASHAR AL HARAM:

“So when you hasten on from Arafat, then remember Allah near the ‘Mashar Al Haram’ (The Holy Monument)...” (2:198)

REMEMBER: This is the night of *Eid-ul-Adha*, The Festival of Sacrifice. In what way is this a festival for the pilgrims? At Muzdalifa the pilgrims are surrounded by “transient heavenly hours during which they are God’s guests and he has declared his readiness to fulfil the requests of his guests.”¹⁵ The mindful pilgrim should relate this night with moments of the Day of Judgement, having an opportunity to beg for mercy and wait for his fate, to be known on the following day, the 10th of Dhilhijj.

The day of *Eid-ul-Adha* is the Day of Festival, in the sense that Allah (SWT) has answered the pilgrims’ plights and has forgiven them and their sins, as per His promise:

“And your Lord says: Call me, I will answer you.” (40:60)

¹⁴ *Hajj*, Abadi, p.98

¹⁵ *Hajj*, Abadi, p.117

It is therefore a day of festivity! The pilgrims' hearts are filled with joy and love for Allah. For now, they can go back to their world, remembering that they will have to keep their promise to maintain this state of spiritual purity, and that when they actually do die, they die the death of an obedient servant not a rebellious and sinful renegade. The town of Mina, therefore, has two symbolic values. First, it stands for 'A New World' for the pilgrims; the world in which they have been re-born, free from sins. To guard their state of newly acquired purity, they have to do two fundamental things: to fight against the evils of *Shaitan*, the Devil, and to be always thankful and obedient to Allah (SWT). Two rituals at Mina demonstrate these two requirements: Stoning of *Jamarat* ("Ramy") and sacrificing an animal. Explaining the historical significance of throwing pebbles at three *Jamarat* (Uola, Wusta, and Aqaba), Imam Musa Kazim (AS) is reported to have said: "Since the cursed Satan appeared to Prophet Ibrahim in the site of jamarat, and Ibrahim threw stones at him, this act became tradition."¹⁶ Throwing of these pebbles therefore symbolizes the demolishing of carnal temptations that are instigated by *Shaitan*, the Devil, that lead to the committing of sinful acts. "Pebbles can be symbols of worldly riches thrown away for the sake of God."¹⁷

Sacrificing an animal has been interpreted by some to mean "devotion and offering ones life in the way of the beloved and the maximum degree of submission to God..."¹⁸ But this act could also mean the killing of one's ego, the way an animal is slaughtered.

Second, Mina stands for the day of the Hereafter when the obedient believers will be let into their permanent adobe: PARADISE.

After offering Qurbani. sacrificing an animal, the pilgrim's next duty is *Halaq* (shaving of hair for men) or *Taqsir* (clipping of hair by women, and men who have chosen not to do *Halaq*). Imam Jaffer Sadiq (AS) explains the deeper meaning of this ritual in these words: "by shaving

16 *Hajj*, Abadi, p.123

17 *Hajj*, Abadi, p.123

18 *Hajj*, Abadi, p.123

your head, you remove all inward and outward flaws.”¹⁹ Imam Ali Ibn Husain’s question posed to one Haji focuses on this matter. Imam said: “Did you have the intention to cleanse yourself from all pollutions and violations of rights of people and do without wrongdoings, as if you were born of your mother when shaving your head in Mina?”²⁰ Shaving the head or clipping the hair and/or nails is tantamount to ridding oneself of sins, and evil tendencies to commit sins.

To celebrate their newly acquired freedom, the pilgrims are required to stay for three days in Mina, enjoying the bounties of Allah (SWT). They may now remove Ihram and enjoy most of the otherwise restricted pleasures of this life. On completion of the stay of three days, the pilgrims once more go to Makkah to perform *Tawaf*, pray the prayers of *Tawaf* at *Makame Ibrahim*, do *Sai*, and do *Tawafun nisa* and its prayers. The obligations of Hajj are then over. These last obligations are physically the same as those done when one first enters Makkah. However, their spiritual meanings differ, in the sense that the acts performed at the beginning were those of a person loaded with sins, while the latter are those of a person cleansed of sins. The initial acts were those of a beggar, the latter are those of one provided with his/her needs.

CONCLUSION

The pilgrimage to Hajj has a very significant role to play in the believer’s physical and metaphysical existence. How much a particular pilgrim benefits from these acts of worship depends upon how he reacts to the various rituals he is required to perform. Imam Jaffer Sadiq’s hadith demonstrates this poignantly. The Imam says: “The Hajj pilgrims who return are of three groups; one are rescued from the fire (of hell), another are cleansed from their sins as if they have just been born, and the third group return home with their wealth and family secured. This is the least reward the Hajj pilgrims can obtain...”²¹

19 *Hajj*, Abadi, p.134

20 *Hajj*, Abadi, p.134

21 *Hajj*, Abadi, p.33

In other words, for those whose sole aim for going on Hajj is to please Allah (SWT) and seek His protection against the mischief of *Shaitan*, there is rescue from the fire of hell. On the other hand, those who perform Hajj without necessarily understanding its true meaning, but do so to fulfil an obligation, are cleansed of their sins, but may be trapped by the mischief of *Shaitan* once they return. Those who go on pilgrimage for sake of it or for business, will only receive material and worldly gains.

To sum up, how much a pilgrim has benefited from this journey will be reflected in his behaviour and deeds. The benefits of Hajj can be measured by the extent to which a person has improved, nothing less than that.

CONCLUSION

Those who manage to successfully fulfil their religious obligation by going for pilgrimage during the prescribed Hajj season are rewarded in this world and in the Hereafter. This is stated both in the Quran and in the traditions of Masumeen. In Chapter 22 of the Quran, verse 27, Allah (SWT) records His instructions to Prophet Ibrahim to invite people to go for Hajj, and in verse 28 Allah (SWT) states the reason:

“That they may witness the benefits provided for them, and celebrate the name of Allah, through the specified days...” (2:28)

These benefits of Hajj are, in the words of Imam Ali (AS): “Hajj and Umra remove poverty and cleanse sin.” Elaborating on this theme, Imam Sadiq (AS) is reported to have said; “The performers of Hajj and Umrah are Allah’s guests. If they ask, they will be given, if they pray, they will be answered, if they intercede their intercession will be accepted. If they keep silent, they will be blessed; they will be given a million dirhams for each one they have spent.”

However, it must be remembered that all pilgrims are not rewarded equally. Though Allah’s bounties for the pilgrims are limitless and inexhaustible, His Justice requires that the distribution of such bounties depend on the quality of the performance of the individual pilgrim. To this effect Imam Sadiq (AS) says:

“The Hajj pilgrims who return home are of three groups. First, there are those who will be protected from Hell fire on the Day of Justice. Second, are those who have been cleansed of their past sins and are as pure from sin as a newly born child. Third are those who have been rewarded with the least reward: protection of their wealth and family.”

In a nutshell, those who go for pilgrimage reluctantly, either to fulfil their obligations or to impress others Of their piety, are rewarded differently from those who go on this journey with the pure intention

of pleasing Allah (SWT). Moreover, how successful a pilgrim has been in his Hajj can be determined by the behaviour of the pilgrim during his journey, and more importantly, after he has returned from Hajj. As a matter of fact, the pilgrim can himself measure his degree of success from his Hajj. If he notices a significant change in his life in terms of achieving *Taqwa* or God-consciousness, then he has indeed benefited. If not, then he has to take measures to correct his character accordingly before it is too late to do so.

To measure the degree of God-consciousness that one has acquired from one's Hajj, it is suggested that one goes through a checklist enumerating the character traits of a God-conscious person, as provided by our Fourth Imam Ali Zainul Abideen (AS) in his famous supplication: Makarimul Akhlaq. In this Supplication the Imam mentions 19 traits that make the "Embellishments of the Pious" (Zeenatal Muttaqeen). These traits are:

Spreading justice;

Controlling anger;

Putting down the flame of hatred;

Bringing together those who have been kept apart.

Ending misunderstanding between people;

Establishing good behaviour;

Covering peoples' faults;

Maintaining mild temper;

Displaying humility;

Showing good conduct;

Presenting calm disposition;

Forming pleasant relationship with others;

Being on the forefront towards excellence;

Adopting graciousness;

Avoiding condemning others;

Dealing graciously with the undeserving;

Speaking the truth though with difficulty;

Treating ones own act of virtue as insignificant however great it may actually be;

Treating ones own act of vice as very grievous, however insignificant it may actually be.

A perfect score for a successful pilgrim is one that encompasses all these 19 characteristics. The process of self-analysis in light of this checklist can serve a pilgrim in two ways. It can help him identify his potential ‘inner’ strength and weakness; and more importantly, it can act as a guide to help him take necessary corrective action to make him deserving of the best reward from Allah (SWT).

Let us end this discourse on Hajj with extracts from the supplication of Makarimul Akhlaq :

“O Allah bless Muhammad and his family, adorn me with the adornment of the righteous and clothe me with the adornments of the pious.”

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About the Book

To all first time Hujjaj, the experience of the Hajj is enriched by an understanding of its rituals when placed in context of the action and/or the place. It is with this primary purpose that the English lectures are facilitated by the EHM, aimed at English speaking Hujjaj. The book is an evolvement of two years of such lectures.

The book gives an introduction to the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, from its original construction to the present layout. Explanations are given to the various events and places connected to the Prophet's times in Madinah.

The origins of the Kabah in Makkah are traced, and its connection and significance to the Prophet's mission are explained. This is tied in briefly with the events in and around the Kabah which are connected to the life of the Prophet.

Finally, the rituals of Hajj are explained in terms of its spiritual significance and in context of our daily lives.

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