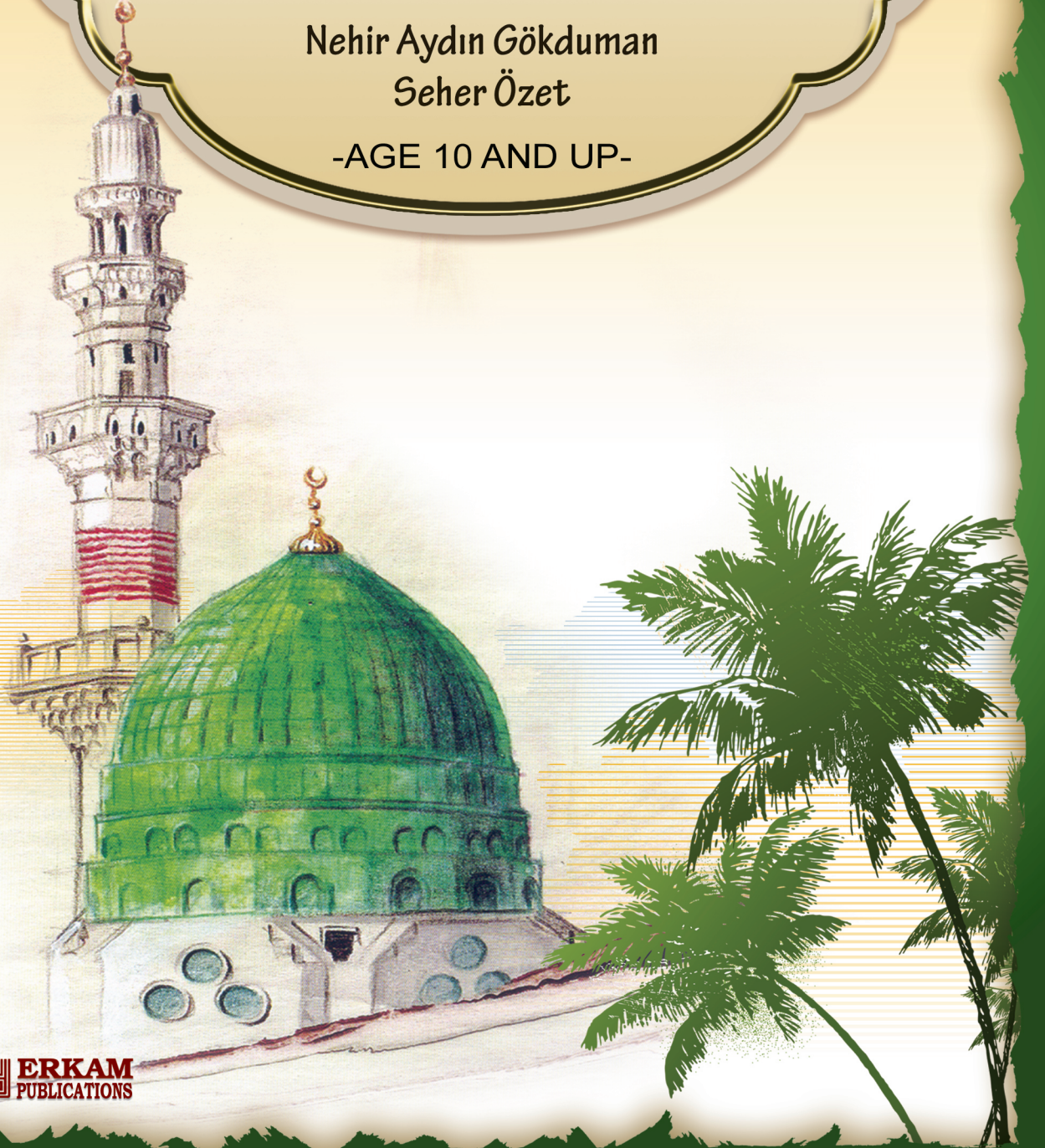


MY BELOVED PROPHET

Nehir Aydın Gökdoğan
Seher Özet

-AGE 10 AND UP-



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Nehir Aydın Gökdoğan

Seher Özet

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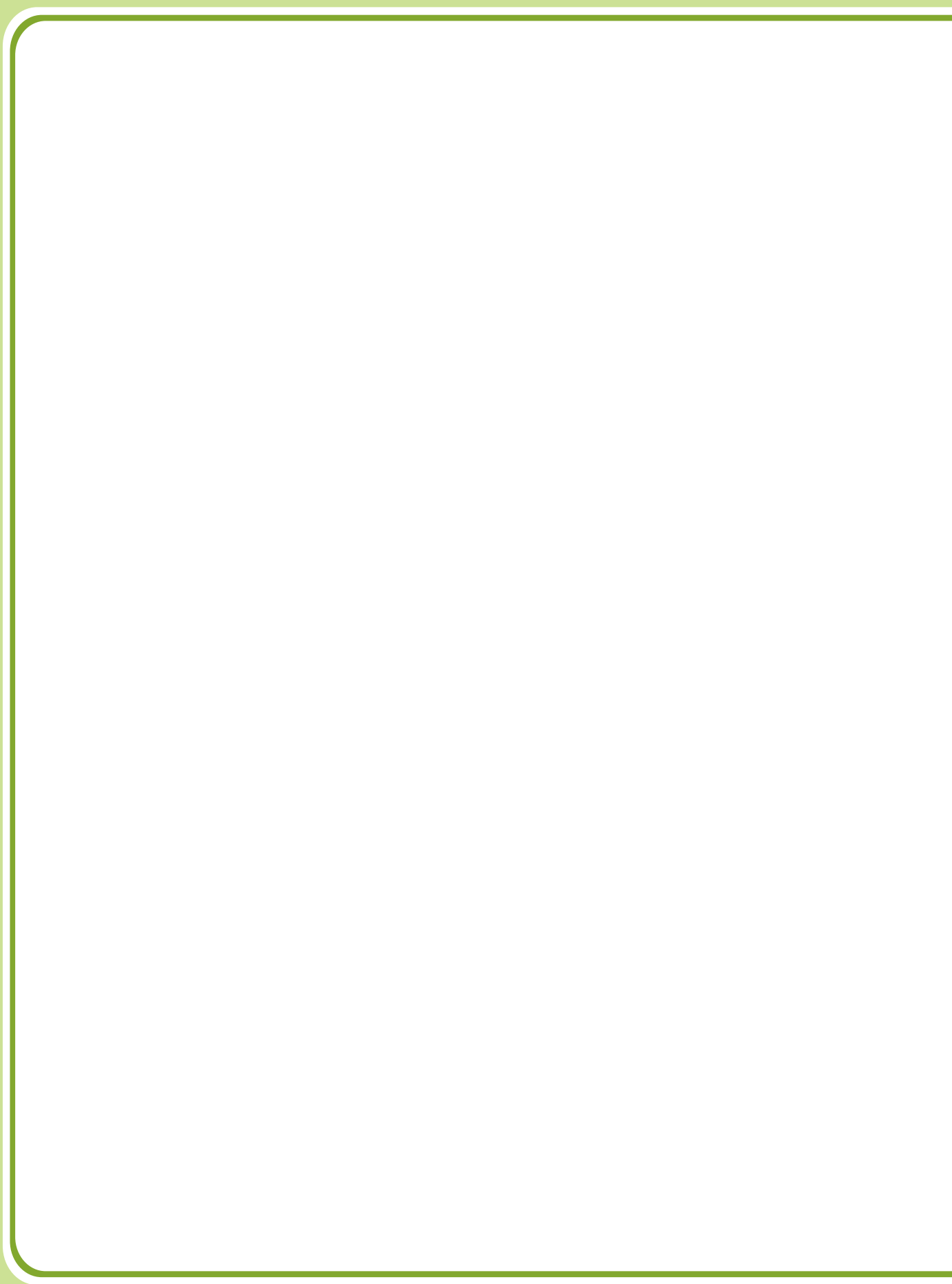


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FOREWORD

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) was the most beautiful one of the people.

His skin was soft, pinkish like a rose, and smelled very nice.

It was as if the rose got its fragrance from our beloved Prophet.

His beard was black and thick. He had full and crescent shape eyebrows.

His teeth were as white as pearls.

He had black eyes.

His eyelashes were long and curvy.

He was exceptionally elegant and beautiful.

It is said that all people carry traces from the soul of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). In everybody's body, there is a side from the beauties of our beloved Prophet's beautiful body. How nice, isn't it? Which characteristic of your body resembles to our Prophet? Think about it... Is it your eyes? Is it your skin? Or is it your teeth?

There is certainly a part in your body that resembles to him.

It is so nice to have something coming from our birth resembling to our Prophet (pbuh). However, to love him, to take him a role model for ourselves, and to try to be like him in our actions and behaviors are more beautiful. How honorable learning his life and trying to be as self-sacrificing as he was, as generous as he was, or as patient as he was is! Would you like to have our hearts also resemble him? Would you like to have our glances be as kind and merciful as his glances? Would you like to have our tongues utter the words that his tongue did? Would you like us to leave beautiful smiles and nice fragrances to everywhere we go as he did? Who would not like that?

Then, let's start to read his life and to learn about him! Let's turn the pages of our book and read the life of the Most Beautiful Man in universe and the Most Beloved Servant of Allah the Almighty...

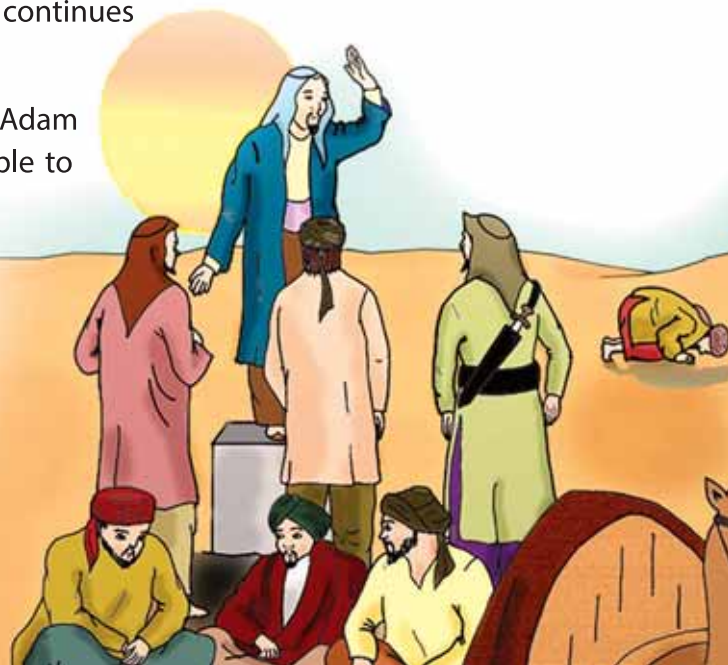
PROPHETS AND PEOPLE

*I*n the ancient times, Allah created our earth and the sky. Allah has the power to do everything. Then, He created the first human being. His name was Adam. Allah taught him the names of all things and gave him all knowledge in the world. Allah taught Adam the right and wrong. He also taught him love, helping, and sharing. Adam was a prophet and a teacher for the people who have come after him.

Allah sent him first to the Paradise. There, Allah created Hawwa as Adam's spouse. Adam and Hawwa became a family.

Afterwards, Allah sent them to the earth, and bestowed them with children. Because, Adam was a prophet at the same time, his mission had also began. He was to teach his children and grandchildren what was right and what was wrong. He was to show them all the blessing that Allah gave them. Thus, he told his children about Allah. He taught them about the actions and behaviors that Allah likes and that He does not like. His children also taught what they learned from their father to their own children. This transmission of knowledge continues since then.

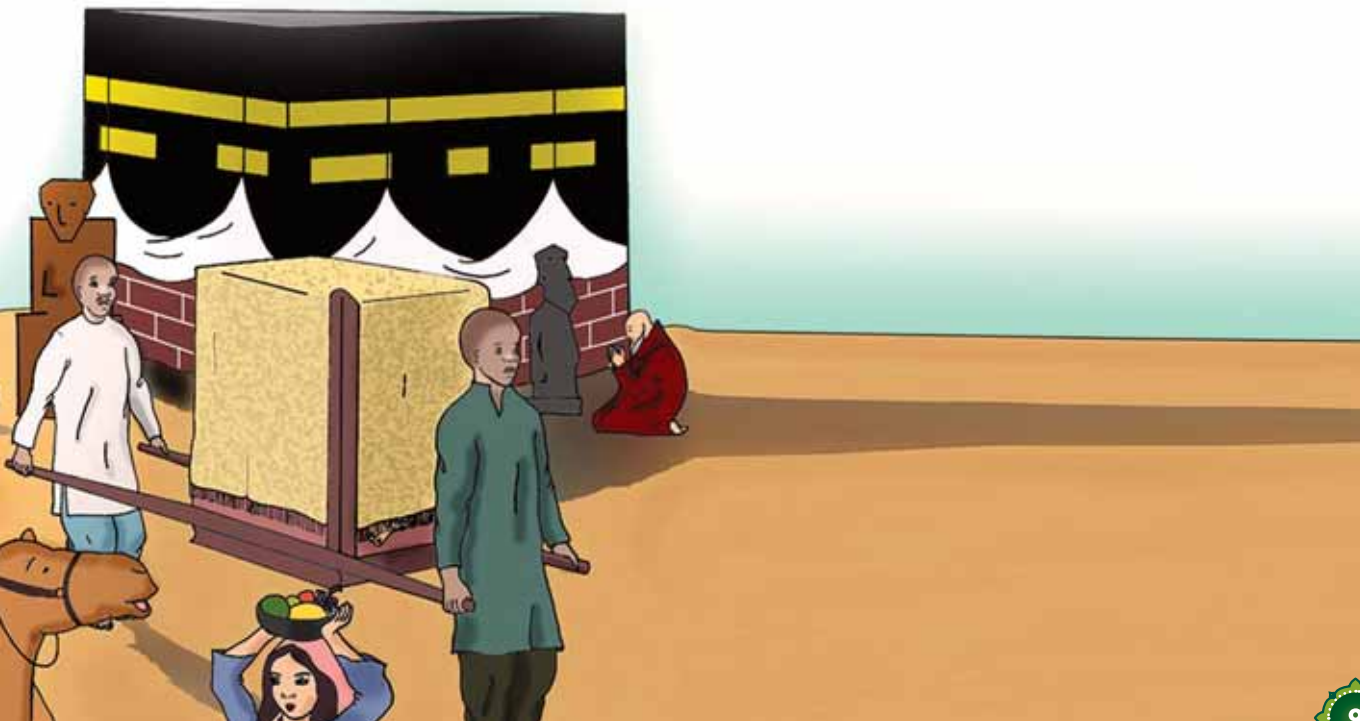
Many years had passed since the Prophet Adam and a time came that people were not able to



remember things properly. They forgot to be thankful to Allah. When such times came, Allah sent people His prophets again. He wanted His servants to remember what they had forgotten about. The prophets' mission was to teach people the right and wrong, and to call them back to Allah who is the One and Unique. Thus, people have been able remember how and why they come to this world. As to those who do the good and right things, they are rewarded with Paradise after death. Nuh, Ibrahim, Dawud, Musa, and Isa are some of these prophets.

However, people once again went astray from the straight path after the Prophet Isa. They forgot about Allah. They knew there was a Creator who created them. However, they did not know how to worship Him. Allah was clearly seeing and hearing them, whereas they thought that Allah could not see or hear them. Then they thought, "There must be some other mediators to make our voice heard by Allah." Thus, they put intermediaries between themselves and Allah. These intermediaries were sometimes one of the people and some other times inanimate beings. Then, they built sculptures of those mediators. They were calling these sculptures "their gods". Seeing their gods were making them happy. They were saying prayers to these sculptures and bowing down before them.

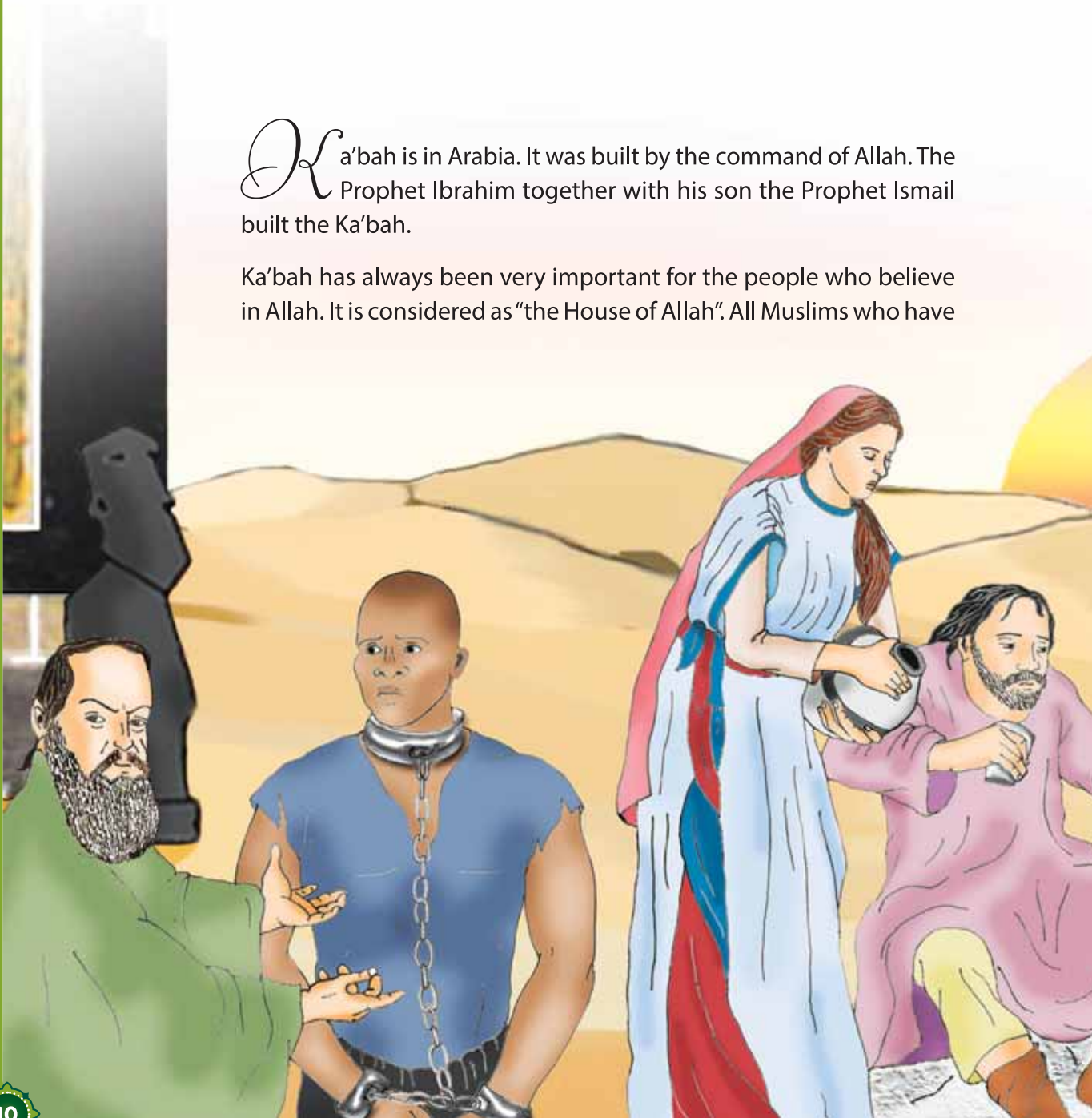
This was something that Allah does not like, because there is only Allah as the Creator. Making up gods was a mistake. In order to save people from such mistakes, Allah wanted to send people one last prophet, for Allah is all-Merciful to His servants.



ARABIA AND THE KA'BAH

*K*a'bah is in Arabia. It was built by the command of Allah. The Prophet Ibrahim together with his son the Prophet Ismail built the Ka'bah.

Ka'bah has always been very important for the people who believe in Allah. It is considered as "the House of Allah". All Muslims who have



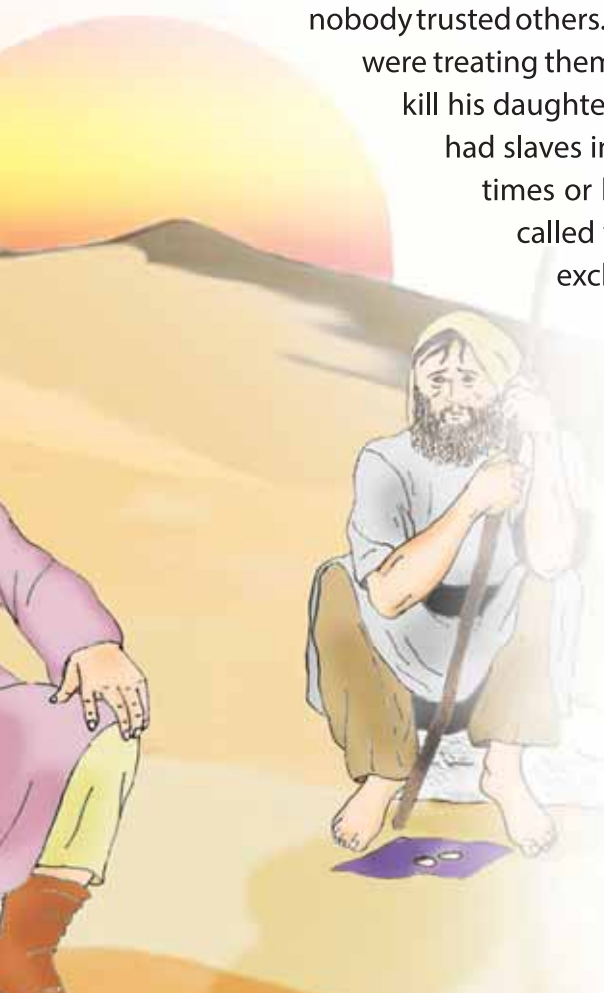
lived in every age and in every place around the world are called to visit this House. Those who visit it remember Allah and feel themselves closer to Him. Thus, they stay away from bad things and mistakes. The Ka'bah is at the same time a meeting place for Muslims in the world.

However, the time came and people in Arabia forgot about the religion of Allah. They made up other gods to get them closer to Allah. Then, they built the sculptures of those gods out of stone, marble, or wood and placed them inside the Ka'bah.

They called those sculptures "idols". The important ones of those idols were Lat, Manat, and Uzza. On the important days, people were gathering before these idols and worshipping them all together. They also used to keep duplicates of those idols in their houses and pray to them. Sometimes, they used to make those idols out of halva and bread, and eat them when they got hungry. How bizarre! How can one eat their gods?

People were now far away from the straight path. They were not able to turn to the good and nice. Evil had spread all around. People were cheating each other and nobody trusted others. Especially, women had no value in the society. People were treating them badly and the girls were never liked. A father would kill his daughter by his own hands and boast about it. Most people had slaves in those days. People who were captured during war times or kidnapped from their homes and hometowns were called "slaves". Slaves were bought and sold in markets in exchange for money. They had almost no rights. The most difficult duties were done by them. Anyone who like could beat or torture his slaves. No one would think that such actions were among the things prohibited by Allah. However, torturing someone and treating them unjustly are great sins in Islam.

In such a dark time in history, the world seemed to be waiting for its rescuer. And the arrival of the last prophet was close. When he came, he was going to fight with all evil and our world was going to be illuminated by his light.



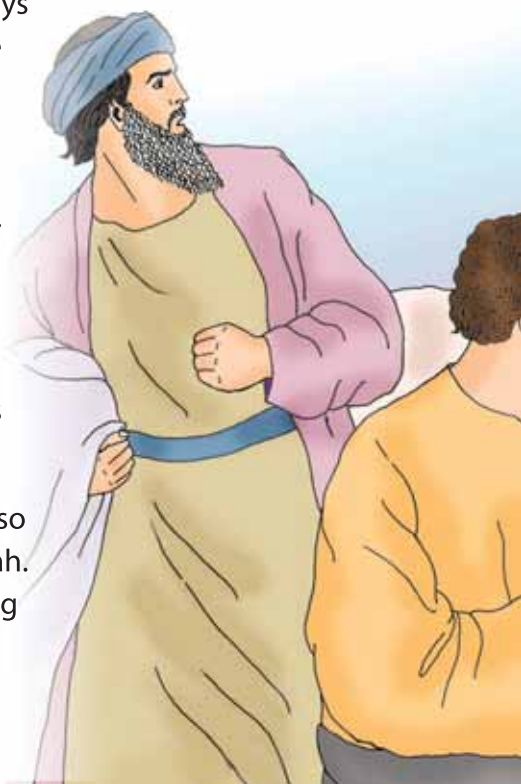
JEALOUS ABRAHA

The Ka'bah is in the city of Mecca in Arabia. There used to be a tribe called Quraish living around it. The members of this tribe had the responsibility of protecting and maintaining the Ka'bah. Because of this duty, they used to think themselves superior to others, because Ka'bah was sacred for people. It was a structure built by the command of Allah. This is why it was supposed to be carefully protected. However, unfortunately people of Quraish had filled the Ka'bah with idols.

Because it was the meeting place for people coming from all over the world, Ka'bah would never be empty. There were always visitors there. People would always come to Ka'bah before doing something important. They would turn around and circumambulate it, and then pray to their idols. In those days, there were also people who had not forgotten about the straight path of Allah. They did not believe in idols. When they visited the Ka'bah, they would pray only to Allah. However, they were so few in number.

At the time, in Yemen there was a governor called Abraha. He was a Christian. However, just like the others, he was also away from the straight path.

Abraha was so jealous about Ka'bah's being visited by so many people that he wanted people stop going to Ka'bah. For this purpose, he had a huge church built. The building where Christians worship is called "church". Abraha made his church decorated with gold and pearls. He thought



that people would come to see his adorned church instead of going to Ka'bah which did not even have a door and a window. Nevertheless, nobody came to his church. So he got very angry about it. There was only one thing to do, which was to demolish the Ka'bah. Thus, people would have no choice but to come the church he built. Abraha immediately prepared an enormous army. There were also giant elephants in his army. He was planning to demolish the Ka'bah with them.

After the completion of preparations, this enormous army immediately set out to its expedition. The soldiers in the army were as evil as Abraha. All were hostile towards the Ka'bah. They were destroying and plundering the places on their way to the Ka'bah. They were killing innocent people and taking their properties away. So much so that being taken with fear, people who saw this evil army were running away without even looking back. Was this cruel army able to destroy the Ka'bah? People began waiting in fear.





THE YEAR OF THE ELEPHANT

People of Quraish got anxious when they heard that Abraha was coming with his army. Abdulmuttalib was the chief of the Quraish tribe then. He ordered the people of Quraish immediately to climb up the mountain. Thus, everyone left their homes and went to the mountain. Because these poor people did not have the strength to fight against Abraha's huge army.

Soon there were nobody left in the city. There was no one around. Abraha's army reached the Ka'bah. People over the mountain were watching with curious eyes what was going to happen. Just then a man appeared. This man was Abdulmuttalib. He was approaching towards Abraha's army. People of Quraish were astonished. What was their chief going to do? Abraha was a cruel man. He could kill Abdulmuttalib. His soldiers immediately caught him. Abdulmuttalib said, "I'm the chief of Quraish. I want to meet Abraha." He was unarmed. Soldiers informed Abraha about the situation.

Soon Abraha met Abdulmuttalib. He sat proud on his mount. However, even though Abdulmuttalib was on the ground, he seemed much stronger than Abraha was.

Abdulmuttalib said:

- While passing by, your soldiers confiscated my camels. I want them back. Abraha was surprised:

- I have come to destroy Ka'bah and you are worried about your camels. Abdulmuttalib replied:

- The Ka'bah has an owner. He will protect it. Abraha got so angry that he shouted:

- Nobody can save the Ka'bah from me!

This conversation displeased Abraha. To send him away at once, he gave Abdulmuttalib's camels back.

The army moved to destroy the Ka'bah. However, for some reason, the elephants were not moving. Especially the elephant in the front of the army, called "Mamud," was not taking a step. Therefore, they began whipping the poor elephant. However, there was no use in doing so. At that moment, the sky was covered with hundreds of birds called "ababil". Each were carrying small hot pieces of brick. They began rapidly dropping these pieces of brick on the soldiers of Abraha. It was as if raining fire on the army. On whoever the bricks fell, they hit them like a bullet and the soldiers tumbled down and died.

What Abdulmuttalib said came true. The owner of the Ka'bah was Allah and He protected His house against the strong enemy with these tiny birds. For Allah is very Powerful. Whatever He wishes happens at once. If Allah had wished, He could have pounded the mountains on Abraha, but He tore those huge armies down with tiny birds.

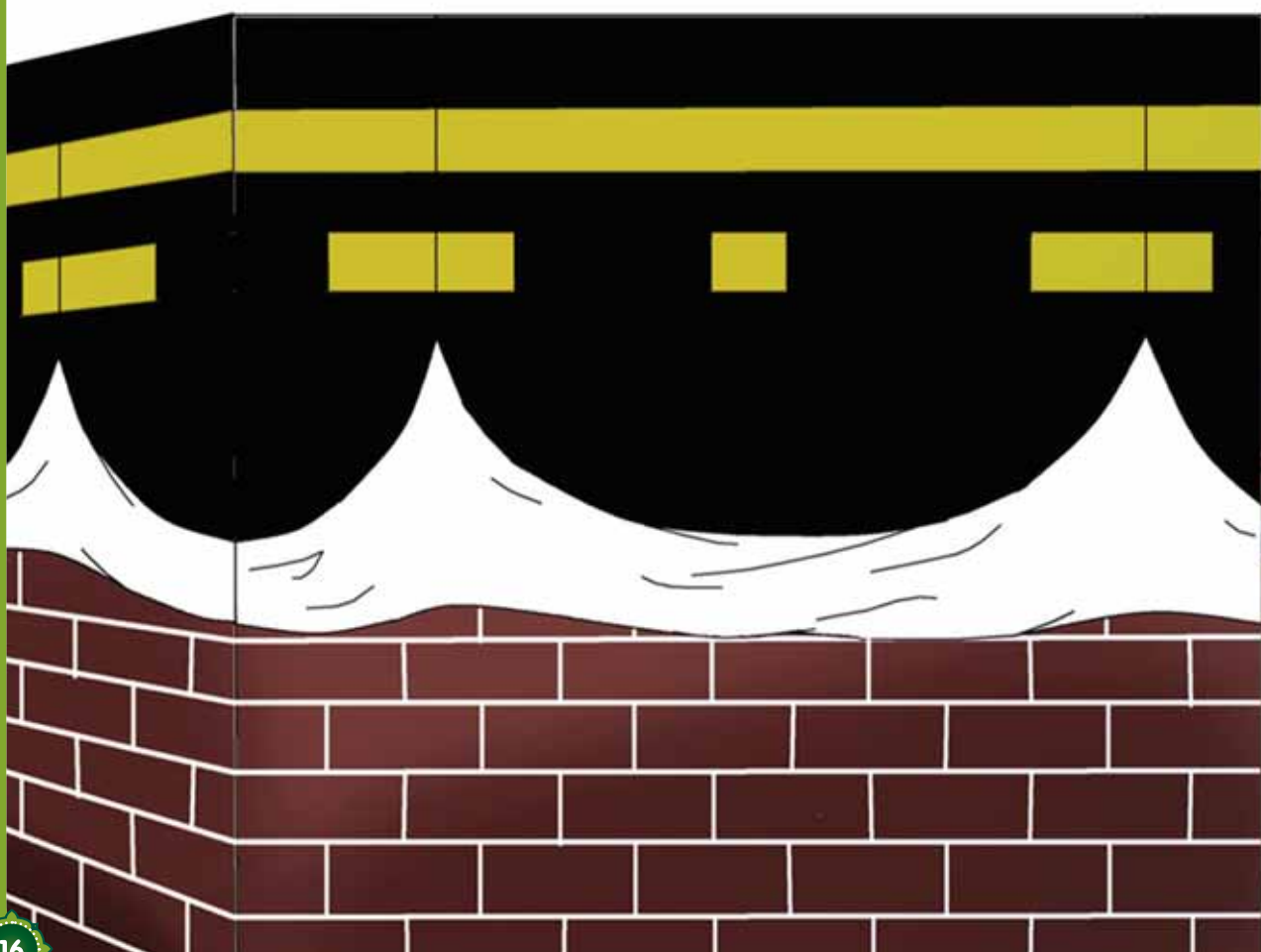
Abraha's body was torn into shreds. Seriously wounded, he returned to Yemen creepily. He was disgraced. Soon afterwards he died in Yemen.

Nobody forgot about this incident. That year was called "the year of the elephant". The story what happened to Abraha was transmitted from generation to generation.

ABDULLAH'S ORPHAN

What Abdulmuttalib said came true. Allah protected the Ka'bah. People were now respecting Abdulmuttalib much more. They were caring about him very much. Abdulmuttalib was not actually a wealthy person. He had never worshipped the idols. However, he came from a very important family. He was a fair person and treated everyone nicely. People caring about his words because he was talking about important matters.

Abdulmuttalib had ten sons. One of them was Abdullah. Abdulmuttalib loved his son Abdullah very much. When Abdullah became a mature young man, he married a girl named Amina, but this marriage did not last long, because Abdullah passed away shortly after they married. Amina was on her own now. Besides, she was expecting a baby. Abdulmuttalib was very sad for his son's death. He took his daughter-in-law in



his care. He was worried about his grandson who was going to be born soon. The poor child was not going to have the chance to know his father. However, Abdulmuttalib was determined. He was going to take care of his daughter-in-law and his grandson.

Months passed and the time of the birth of the baby had come. Abdulmuttalib was so excited for he was going to be a grandfather. He was at the same time a bit sorrowful. He thought about his son Abdullah. He thought, "I wish he could see his son."

The name of the baby had already been decided. It was going to be "Muhammad," because Abdullah had a dream about it. In his dream, a voice from the sky had told him, "Name him Muhammad, for he is a chosen person."

Finally the long awaited baby was born. It was as if the sky was illuminated with his light. His innocent face was taintless. He was so cute. His name in the heavens was "Ahmad," which means "the one who was grateful."

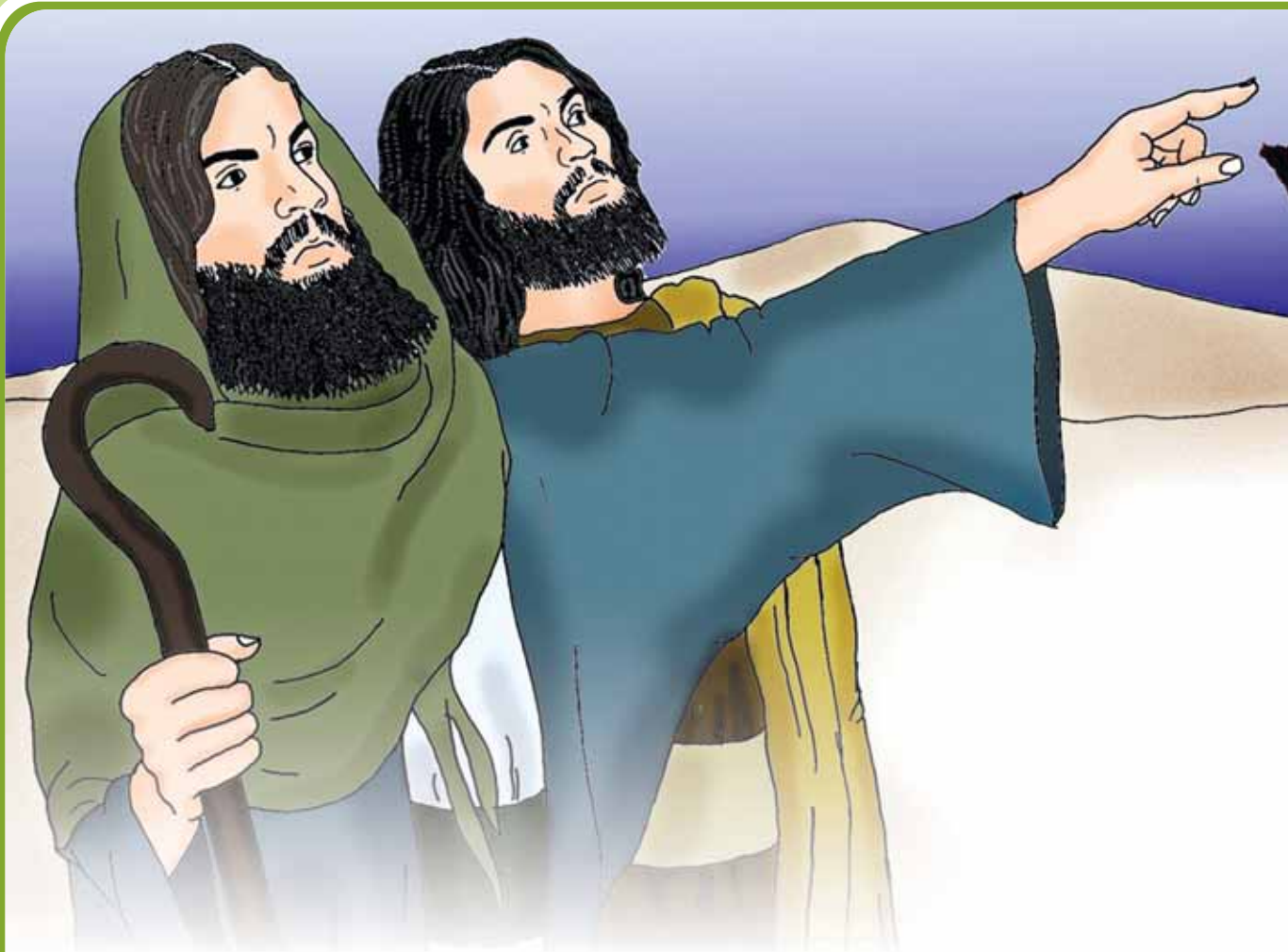
Abdulmuttalib took the world's sweetest baby on his lap. He hugged him firmly. He recalled Abdullah, kissed him on his forehead and whispered, "O Abdullah's orphan, welcome."

Welcome, oh Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Welcome, oh blessed Messenger!

The world was waiting for you to call people to Allah... to disperse the darkness. Welcome, welcome...





THE FEARFUL NIGHT OF TYRANTS

*I*t had been narrated since the Prophet Musa that a beautiful star was going to come out when the last Prophet came to the world. This star was going to be different from others. It was going to shine sparkingly. Like everybody else, the soothsayers also were waiting for that star to come out.

In the old days, some people believed in the soothsayers. The soothsayers claimed that they could see the future, which they were doing by looking at the stars. However, no one except Allah can know the future and whoever claims otherwise says a lie.

The night when our Prophet was born, a soothsayer was looking at the sky. Suddenly



something happened. A shining gleam rose in the sky. The soothsayer began to watch this gleam with confused eyes. Could this be the long-awaited star? He went in a hurry to wake up his friend. They ran out to the garden. In that night, they watched this magnificent star until the morning.

In that night, another fear gripped the hearts of the people of the Sasanid Empire. Sasanids were in fact a powerful community. However, their ruling king was a cruel man. He had forgotten that he got his ruling power from Allah. He thought that his power was coming from himself. He was saying, "No one can beat me!" The king also had a very strong castle. Nobody was able to pass it. However, on that night, the fourteen columns of the huge palace fell down in an instant. The columns were the towers of the bailey. Without them, the palace was nothing but a pile ruins. What did it mean that all the columns were razed down to the ground without any attack? The hearts of the king and the people in his palace were filled with fear.

That night was hard for Iranians as well. They had a fire that had been burning for the last one thousand years. They believed in that fire as their god. They were worshipping it and asking help from it. However, in that night, this fire also died down. How could a god die? Iranians were in confusion.

The lake of Save which was considered as sacred by some people at the time... It ran dry in one night. All of its water shrank in that night. Each of the false gods that people considered as sacred were vanishing one by one. Because there is no god to worship other than Allah, which was the reason why the last Prophet was coming for. With his arrival, the world was going to gain peace. He was the last messenger of Allah. He was going to remind people of Allah and call them to embrace Islam, our blessed religion.

Thus, the goodness began to appear in the very same day of his birth.

A BLESSED CHILD AND THE FOSTER MOTHER

Mecca is a very hot city. It rarely rains there. Few plants grow on its soil. Even animals cannot eat their fill. Especially in summer, life is very hard there. Children get sick because of the heat. Especially babies cannot endure the heat.

This is why there was a tradition in Mecca. In order to protect the newborn babies from heat, they were sent to tribes living in cooler places. In those cooler and rainy places, babies grew and strengthened more quickly. Every year, women living in those cooler places would come to Mecca to take the newborns and wet nurse them. They would feed and raise those babies in return for the money they were paid by their families. When the children were four or five years old, they were returned to their parents.

Our Prophet was a newborn born. He was a beautiful and blessed baby. Mecca was very hot. Beside heat, there was a severe drought in that year. During the year, not even a drop did it rain. The food and drink were very scarce. Amina and Abdulmuttalib were very anxious. The blessed child could get sick. There was no solution. He also was to be given to a foster mother. They began to wait.

Eventually, one day women from Bani Sa'd tribe came to Quraish. They were going to take little babies with them. However, they wanted to take the babies of wealthy families. Because they were doing this to earn their sustenance. Abdulmuttalib told them about his grandson. He asked them to take him. However, Abdulmuttalib was not a wealthy man. The baby was an orphan. He had lost his father before. Who was going to pay money to the foster mother? This was why none of the women wanted to accept the baby.

Abdulmuttalib did not give up. While searching for a foster mother for his grandson, he stopped by another woman. He asked her:

- Who are you? From which tribe are you? Why are you here in Mecca?

- My name is Halima. I am from Bani Sa'd tribe. My husband was sick. This is why I was late. All babies have been taken and I could not find any, the woman responded.

Abdulmuttalib said:

- I am a poor man. I have an orphan in my house. I am looking for a foster mother for him. However, I cannot afford to give much money.

Halima became delighted. She did not want to return her tribe empty handed. She accepted to care for the baby. She went home together with Abdulmuttalib. They met Amina. The moment that Halima saw the blessed baby, she loved him. She hugged him warmly.

Other foster mothers had already departed. Halima stayed behind. However, while returning, something happened. Halima's sick donkey got suddenly better. It got ahead of others. Oh, what on earth was that! Halima and the blessed baby were, as if, sailing to happiness. They were ahead of everybody, as if they were running.



SEND US SOME RAIN

*I*n that year, there was drought in the place where Bani Sa'd tribe lived. They were having hardship in finding food. Even the grass had dried, but a blessing and abundance came to Halima's house. The vegetables she planted with his husband Harith were growing and turning green. Day by day, their animals were getting bigger and producing more milk. Nobody could understand how these things happened. However, Halima was aware that this abundance was because of the blessed baby she was nursing. Since he came to their house, everything had started to go well.

Months passed. Other people from the Bani Sa'd tribe started to say, "Since that child from Quraish came, no hardship is left in Harith's house." When there was no rain, people of the Bani Sa'd would pray for rain and beg to Allah the Exalted. Soon they



were to pray for rain. This time, they planned to bring the blessed child with them. Coming to the door of Harith, they said:

- Oh Harith, since the Meccan child came to your house, your house is filled with blessings and abundance. Perhaps, if we bring him with us to pray Allah for rain, Allah would accept our prayers and send us rain and we too reach abundance.

The kindhearted family accepted this offer. Halima prepared the blessed baby. Taking the baby on his lap, he took him to the place where the pray was going to be held.

The man who took Muhammad on his lap opened his hands and said:

- Oh Lord of the worlds! Accept our prayers. For the sake of our little children, send us some rain. People there joined the prayer.

Everybody set their sights on the sky and watched it with curious eyes. Soon a light breeze blew. Dark clouds were seen from far away. They were getting closer. Shortly after, they covered the sky. Just then, it began to rain. Lord of the Heavens did not leave their prayers unanswered.

That year, the blessed child was brought to all rain prayers. Thus, the tribe of Bani Sa'd was saved from the drought. All gardens and fields turned into green. Their animals started to produce milk. The houses were filled with peace and abundance. Everybody was so happy. They were now respecting Harith and his wife Halima. Because they were the ones who cared for the blessing child. Everyone was happy to host this blessed child in their tribe.



FAREWELL TO MOTHER

The blessed child stayed for four years in his foster mother's house. He had grown and become an infant. Halima returned him to his mother. When they were about to be parted, Halima and the blessed child hugged each other. It was too hard for her to be parted from this blessed child.

The blessed child was now with his mother. There were also his grandfather Abdulmuttalib and his nanny Umm Ayman with him. He loved them all very much. He was five years old but had never seen his father. Yet, he was not complaining about his life. He was growing up with the love of his dear mother and grandfather.

A year passed this way. One day his mother wanted to go to Medina. She had relatives in Medina. Besides, the grave of Muhammad's (pbuh) father was there. She wanted to visit her husband's grave too. Preparations for the journey were begun. The blessed child, his mother and his nanny set off for Medina.

After a long journey, they finally arrived in Medina. They stayed in the house of the son of Amina's uncle. Abdullah's grave was in the garden of this house. The blessed child was by his father's grave. His mother was crying there. The blessed child felt grieved. For his father that he had never seen, tears came down from his eyes.

They stayed in Medina for a month. The blessed child had a good time with his mother in Medina. He affiliated with his relatives there and loved them. It was time to go back to Mecca. They set off again. However, sometimes happiness does not last long. That was what happened. When they were just half of their way, Amina got sick. Because she could not bear the journey, they stopped at a village called Abwa. The blessed



child understood that her mother was very ill. He was crying for her at the bedside. Amina held his dear son's hands tight. She did not want to leave him. Even in her last breath, she was thinking of her son. Nevertheless, her strength dwindled less and less and passed away there.

The blessed child was fatherless when he was born, now he became motherless. He was alone in this big world. His tears flew and flew...

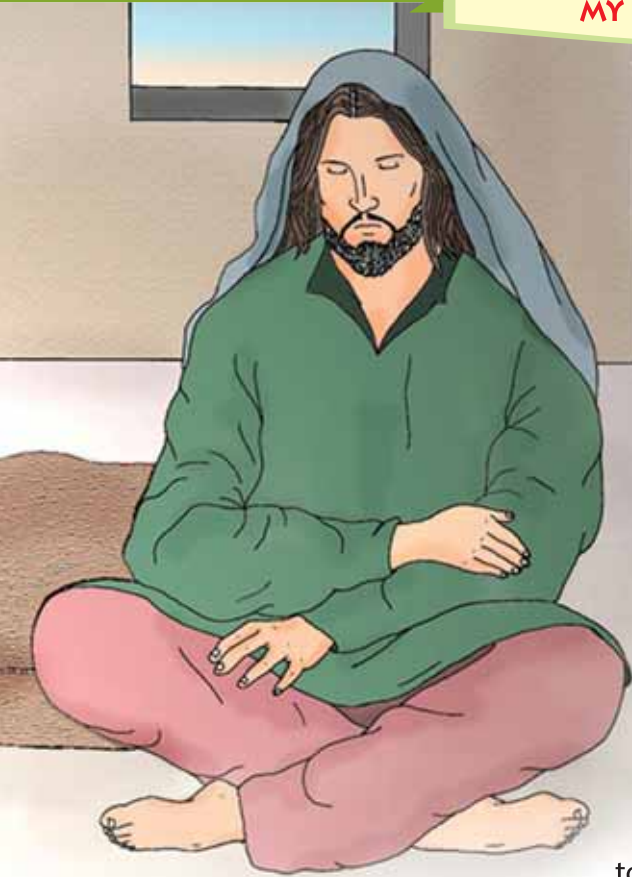
Hearing what had happened, Abdulmuttalib became very sad. He immediately brought his grandson back home and hugged him with affection and compassion. Abdulmuttalib was in fact a quick-tempered man. He used to get angry to almost everything. Nobody would dare to upset him. On the other hand, he was the chief of Quraish. No one could sit in his place in meetings. There was only one person in the world he would not get angry at. He actually could not. It was his grandson Muhammad (pbuh). The blessed child was very important for him. Because he was Abdulmuttalib's dear grandson. He was Abdullah's orphan and was so cute.



O BLESSED CHILD! DON'T BE SAD

*A*bdulmuttalib was eighty years old now. He also was going to leave this world and he was worried about his grandson. Who was going to look after him when he died? He needed to entrust his grandson to a reliable person. He had three sons. Among them, the most suitable one was Abu Talib. He could care for Muhammad (pbuh) the best. However, Abdulmuttalib wanted to ask his grandson's opinion as well.

Abdulmuttalib gathered all his sons. Muhammad (pbuh) was to choose one of them. The blessed child had no difficulty in doing that. He went and hugged his favorite uncle Abu Talib's legs. Abdulmuttalib was pleased to see this. In fact, Abu Lahab was the wealthiest one among them. He could raise Muhammad (pbuh) under much better conditions. However, love and affection was far more important and the blessed child revealed that he loved his uncle Abu Talib very much. Abdulmuttalib said to his son, "O



Abu Talib, Muhammad is your late brother's son. So, I am entrusting him to you. Take care of him." Abu Talib gave his word to his father. He was going to look after Muhammad (pbuh) very well because he loved his nephew.

Time passed by. Abdulmuttalib got very old. He could hardly walk. He got weak and sick. His sickness was getting worse. One day he passed away. The blessed child was sad again. He was fatherless, then he became motherless and now his grandfather was not there either. He was eight years old but had already lost all his family members. Who was going to caress his head? Who was going to play with him? Who was going to kiss his eyes? Who was going to call him as "my grandson"? He missed his grandfather already.

Abu Talib had not forgotten about his promise to his father. He was the one who could understand Muhammad's (pbuh) grief the best. He hugged him with affection. He hold his hand and brought him to his wife Fatima. "We have got one more child now" he said, "Our home is small, our family is crowded, but my nephew has a special place."

From that day on, blessed child had a new family. His uncle's wife Fatima also embraced the blessed child. She did not want him to feel lonely. Abu Talib and Fatima had fifteen children. However, they gave Muhammad a special place among their own children. They cared and fed him first even before their own children. To keep him warm, clothed him first even before their own kids. They loved him very much.

DO NOT LET THE JEWS SEE HIM!

The blessed child was under his uncle Abu Talib's care. He was ten years old now. He liked to look after the sheep and camels. In this way, he was helping his uncle. Abu Talib was in fact occupied with trade. Muhammad (pbuh) also wanted to do trade, because, in this way, he could spend more time with his uncle. Whenever his uncle was about to set for a journey with his caravan, he asked from him, "please take me with you." However, because Muhammad (pbuh) was still too young, his uncle did not accept it. He would not be able to bear to the road and might get sick.

Time passed by. The blessed child was now twelve years old. He was becoming a youngster.

One day Abu Talib started to make preparations. He was going to set for a commercial journey. The blessed child again asked his uncle to take him to the journey. He was not expecting him to accept. However, this time, his uncle accepted his request. They set out of the journey. The blessed child was very happy.

The caravan stopped over in Busra, a town near Damascus. In those times, tradesmen would travel together. They would also carry their goods together. They would cross the deserts on camels. They called it "Trade Caravan". On the path of Abu Talib's caravan, there was a Christian school. The name of the religious functionary of this school was monk Bahira. Bahira was a good man believing in the Prophet Isa. He was one of those who were waiting for the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) about whom the Prophet Isa had foretold.

Bahira saw the caravan coming from Mecca. A cloud above the caravan caught his eye. The cloud was moving along with the caravan. Bahira began to follow carefully those

who were coming. Having shadow casted by a cloud above this caravan attracted Bahira's attention. He made an abundant meal prepared for those who were coming. He invited the ones in the Meccan caravan. The blessed child and those who were with him sat down to have meal. Bahira loved the blessed child the moment he saw him. He felt that he was a different child. He wanted to ask him some questions so they had the following conversation:

- Would you swear on the name of Lat and Uzza? Would you answer my questions?

- I do not swear on the name of Lat and Uzza, for I hate them.

Bahira smiled.

- Well then, would you answer my questions on the name of Allah?

- Then you can ask whatever you want to.

Bahira asked all question in his mind and Muhammad (pbuh) responded. Bahira was amazed by his answers despite his young age. He bent toward Abu Talib in private and said,

- This child can become an important person in future. If you ask me, take him back. Do not go to Damascus. Jews are very jealous people. If they notice him, they may harm him.

Abu Talib was worried about his nephew. He would not want anything to happen to him. He took Bahira's advice. He sold all his goods to those in the caravan. Taking his nephew with him, he returned to Mecca.



AN END TO INJUSTICE

*T*he world's most endearing child was growing. The blessed child was getting closer to the age of puberty. The older he got, the more beautiful he became. He was tall but not overly so. He had big black eyes and his eyebrows were nearly coarse and straight. He was white-skinned. He always smelled good. He had long eyelashes. His jet-black hair was wavy. His forehead was wide. He had an always-smiling face.



His manners were comparable to no one. He was upright and truthful. He never believed in false gods or pray to the idols. He hated them. He did not cheat anyone, nor make a promise he would not keep. He liked doing favor. He never caused any harm to anyone. This was why people respected him and cared about his words. They trusted him. Despite his young age, he was admitted to enter the committee of Hilf al-Fudul (the League of the Virtuous).

Hilf al-Fudul was an assembly founded by people who wanted to prevent the injustice. Wherever these people saw injustice and iniquity, they would try to correct it.

Foundation of Hilf al-Fudul took place as follows: There used to be a merchant named As ibn Wail living in Mecca. He did another merchant who had came to Mecca an injustice. He took the merchant's goods and did not pay for it. The poor man looked for someone to help him but could not find anyone. Thereupon he went up to the mountain of Abu Qubays. He told the story to people of Quraish. Some of the significant people who heard of him felt ashamed of this. They decided to put an end to this kind of injustice. Firstly, they went to As ibn Wail. They took the money he seized from the merchant and gave it back to its owner.

"We are honorable people. We should be known by our favors. Let us do no oppress to those coming to Quraish and prevent those who do so", they said. This was how the fellowship of Hilf al-Fudul founded. It was a fellowship of the people who did not like injustice. Muhammad (pbuh) also took his place among these honest and merciful people. He was too young. However, he already was doing his best to prevent the oppressors. In this way people's love for him increased day by day.



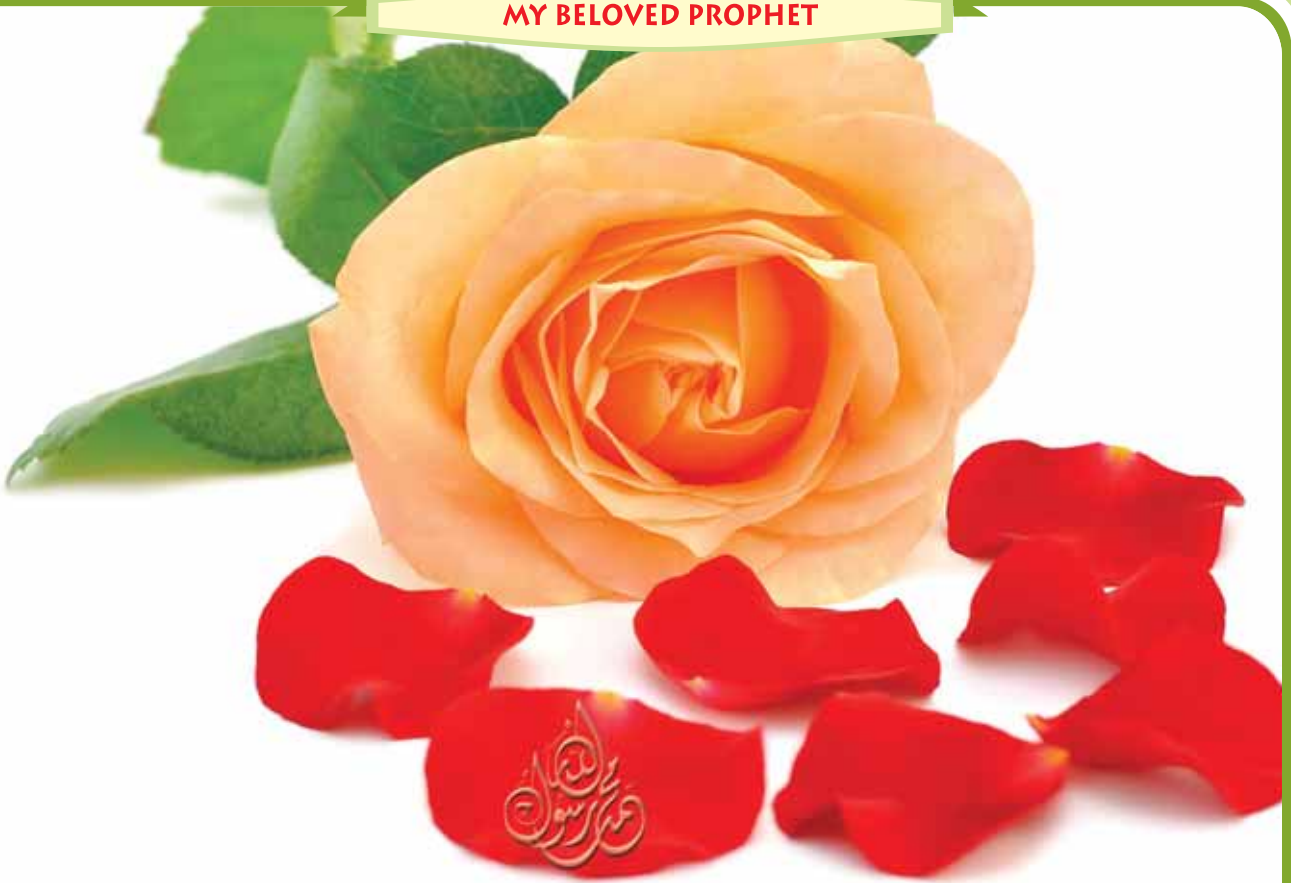
A YOUNG MAN WITH BEAUTIFUL MANNERS

*M*uhammad (pbuh) was now a young man. He was both good looking and in his manners. People would trust him and entrust their goods to him.

He was engaged in trade. He was travelling from country to country, buying and selling goods. In trade, trustworthiness is crucial. However, some merchants are not mindful about this. They cheat people thinking the money they will get. There were many of such people in those days. No one would observe the rights of others rather think of only themselves. On the other hand, Muhammad (pbuh) considered his work very important. He acted fairly while trading and cheated no one. In order to get more money, he would never practice a deceit. He would not try to make his goods look like they are better. He never cheated people when measuring the goods and was attentive to the rights of everyone. That was the reason why he gained people's trust. They were pleased to have dealings with him.

He was now known by everyone. In a period when friendship, reliance, and brotherhood were gradually decreasing, Muhammad (pbuh) was like a sparkling sun. With his beautiful manners, he was a model to people. Those who would come to see him were finding peace. There were also many young girls who wanted to marry him. However, Muhammad (pbuh) was not thinking of getting married at the time. Besides, he was not in the financial condition to get married. He would give the most of the money he gained to his uncle and the rest he would spend on his own expenses. He did not like wasting his money and showing off.

MY BELOVED PROPHET

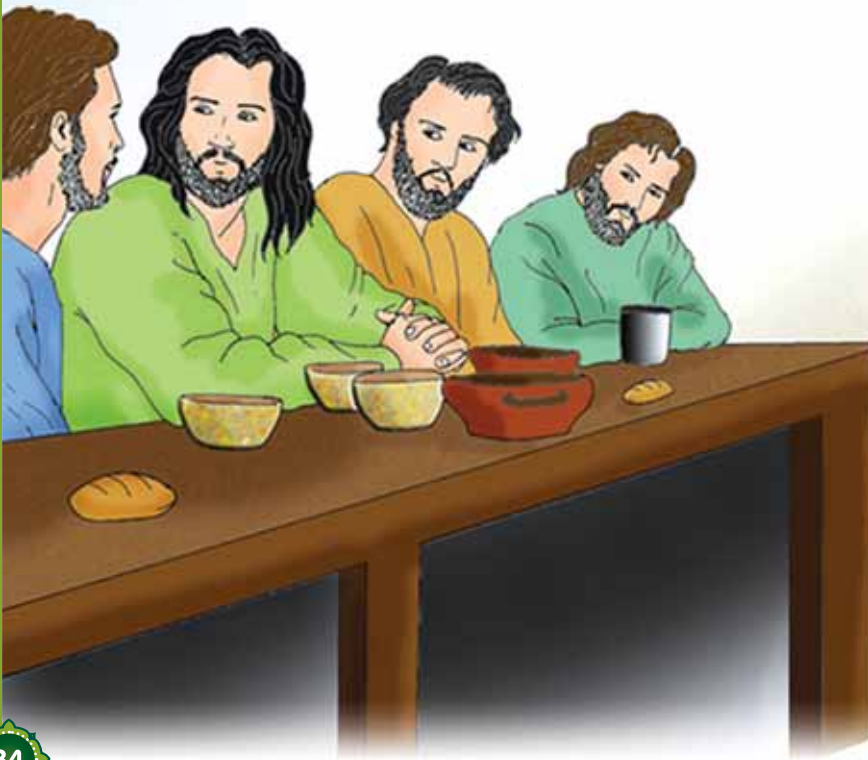


Muhammad (pbuh) was a popular person among his friends. He would never hurt or offend anyone, talk behind people's back or tell their fault to their face. When he saw a false step, he would gently advise people. He never lied and did not become friends with liars. When he made a promise, he would do his best to keep it.

Even before he became a prophet, he had won everyone's heart. Mothers in Mecca would narrate his beautiful manners as an example to their children.

HAPPY HOME

There was a woman called Khadija in Quraish. She was the daughter of an important family. She was a very rich and beautiful woman. Her husband had died and therefore, she had bad days. Many men in Mecca wanted to marry her. However, she did not accept anyone.



One day, Khadija prepared a trade caravan. It was supposed to go somewhere called Busra. Khadija was looking for a reliable man to lead the caravan. She had heard the fame of Muhammad's (pbuh) reliability many times. So she made a deal with him. Khadija's slave Maysara was also to accompany Muhammad (pbuh) and help him during trade.

The caravan set off. Maysara was along with Muhammad (pbuh). In the caravan, there were others too. They had a long and exhausting journey together. Meanwhile, Muhammad (pbuh) did not hurt or distress anyone. He treated everybody gently. Maysara was watching him in admiration.

This situation did not change when they arrived at Busra. Muhammad (pbuh) was cheating no one in his trade and did not tell any lies. He was taking care of all his affairs kindly. All these facts increased Maysara's respect for him.

In the end, they finished their job and the caravan returned to Mecca. Muhammad (pbuh) had sold all goods and delivered the money to Khadija. On the other hand, Maysara related to Khadija about all the beautiful manners that Muhammad (pbuh) had shown during their journey one by one. Khadija was influenced by what she just heard. Inside her, she started to love Muhammad (pbuh). Mentioning her love one of her relatives, she told that she wanted to marry him. Would Muhammad (pbuh) accept this?

After that, everything developed very quickly. Intermediary people went to Abu Talib and told him that Khadija wanted to marry Muhammad (pbuh). Abu Talib thought about it. Khadija was a noble, honest and wealthy woman. He approved Muhammad's (pbuh) marrying her and decided to ask about this matter to him.

Muhammad (pbuh) leaned towards the offer that his uncle had already approved. He accepted to marry Khadija.

Thus, they got married. Khadija was forty and Muhammad (pbuh) was twenty-five years old. Khadija loved her husband from the first day she saw him. Muhammad (pbuh) too loved her. The home they set up was filled with love and peace.





A TRUSTWORTHY PERSON

Years passed by... Muhammad (pbuh) was at the age of thirty-five. In those years, the Ka'bah was damaged by flooding. Its walls were worn off and were about to collapse. Meccans went into action to restore the House of Allah. First, they gathered and agreed upon what to do. Then, cooperatively, they carried stones and blended mortar. They carefully built the damaged walls of Ka'bah again. Muhammad (pbuh) himself worked on the restoration. He too endeavored just as the others.



Finally, restoration of Ka'bah was completed. The new Ka'bah became much more beautiful than it had been before and was ready to welcome its visitors coming from all over the world. People of Quraish were proud of themselves. It was a great pleasure to live in the city where Ka'bah was situated.

Now, it was the time to place the Hajar al-Aswad into its place. This stone, protected since the time of the Prophet Ibrahim, was quite important for the people of Quraish. This was why each one of the prominent tribes of Mecca was claiming that they should have the honor to put it in its proper place. However, in no way or another could they come to a agreement about who was to do it. Eventually, because of this, a dispute arose among them. At last, they decided to find an arbitrator to solve the problem. They said:

- Let the first person to enter from the door of Ka'bah today be an arbitrator among us.

The eyes were fixed on the door. Everyone started to wait impatiently. Who was going to step in the door first? After a while, Muhammad (pbuh) appeared in the door. With his smiling face, he stepped in. He greeted everyone. When Meccans saw him, they joyfully shouted:

- Al-Amin, al-Amin! This word means the trustworthy person.

Soon the situation was explained to him. Listening to them, Muhammad (pbuh) asked them to bring a wide piece of cloth. The cloth was found and brought to him. He put the black stone over the cloth laid down on the ground. Then, he made each leader of the tribes to hold one side of the cloth. The stone was carried with great care and attention. Muhammad (pbuh), then, took the stone from inside the cloth and placed it to its corner. Thus, a significant matter that caused a big debate was solved by Muhammad's (pbuh) clever and fair thinking before it turned into bigger fight.

READ!

Muhammad (pbuh) was now forty years old. After he married Khadija, they had four daughters: Zainab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatima.

They were very happy. There was no room for evil in this family. Everyone was attached to one another with affection and respect. However, many in Mecca were living their aimless lives. Their cruelty had no end. They were still cheating each other, despised girls, and mistreating women. On the other hand, Muhammad (pbuh) was very upset to see these all. This was why he would climb to the mountain of Light. There was a cave called Hira on the Mountain of Light. To sit in this cave, to think and to be away from people's evil were giving him peace. Sometimes he used to stay there overnight. He was spending his time praying to Allah who is the One.

One day Muhammad (pbuh) was in the cave of Hira. He was in deep thoughts. He had an odd feeling. It was as if he was in a day different from others. He also felt a difference in the cave. He smelled something beautiful. Just at that moment, suddenly the cave was illuminated by a light. It was as if a beam of light spread everywhere. Muhammad (pbuh) could not understand what was going on. He got anxious. Suddenly, out of the light someone came out. It was Gabriel who came with command of Allah. He was going to give Muhammad (pbuh) the good news that he was chosen a prophet of Allah. Delivering him the first command of Allah, Gabriel said:

Read! Muhammad (pbuh) responded:

I do not know how to read. Gabriel said again:

Read! Muhammad (pbuh) replied:

I do not know how to read. Gabriel again said:

Read! Muhammad (pbuh) said:

What should I read? This time Gabriel said:

Read! In the name of your Lord who created things. Your lord who created man out of clot. Read. Your Lord is the most Gracious. He is the One who taught man to write with a pen.

These are the first verses of the Qur'an. They are the first orders of Allah to people. Messages that are sent by Allah to our Prophet is called "Wahy or revelation". Gabriel is the Angel of Revelation. Muhammad (pbuh) was now a prophet.

The darkness in the world was going to come to an end with his effort. He was the prophet of the poor, the weak and the helpless. He was merciful and compassionate. He would never hurt anyone. He did not like injustice. He would rule with justice in anytime and anywhere. He was the model that Allah chose among humans. Now, the oppression of tyrants was going to come to an end and the world was going to have peace under the guidance of the new Prophet.



GLORIFY YOUR LORD!

Our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was under the influence of the first message that came from Allah. He was trembling like an aspen leaf. Who would understand him if he told them what he just saw? Or who would believe him?

Going out of the cave, he immediately went to his house. His wife Khadija was at home. There was something different about Muhammad (pbuh). Khadija had never saw him this way. He looked pale and very weary.

It took some time for our prophet to compose himself. After a while, he told what had happened to his wife who was watching with worried eyes. Khadija had never witnessed Muhammad (pbuh) telling any lie. Her trust to him was endless. Looking at her husband affectionately, she said:

- I believe in you. For you always speak the truth and preserve what is trusted to you. You always care for your relatives and get along with your neighbors. You protect the orphans and help the poor. What you saw is an angel and you are the Messenger of Allah.

Then she took our Prophet to his cousin Waraqa. Waraqa was a good person who knew Allah. He was quite old. When he listened to our Prophet, he said:

- Glad tidings to you, oh Muhammad! I swear to Allah, you are the last prophet about whom Prophet Isa had informed people. As to the angel that you saw, it was Gabriel.

Our prophet was a bit calmed down now.

A short time had passed since the first revelation. One day, while returning from the cave of Hira, our Prophet heard a noise. When he rose his head up and looked at the sky, he saw Gabriel. He again got very excited. He went home at once and told his wife:

- Cover me, cover me.

Khadija covered him. Soon Gabriel delivered him the following verses:

- O prophet who covers himself!

Arise and warn people with the name of Allah.

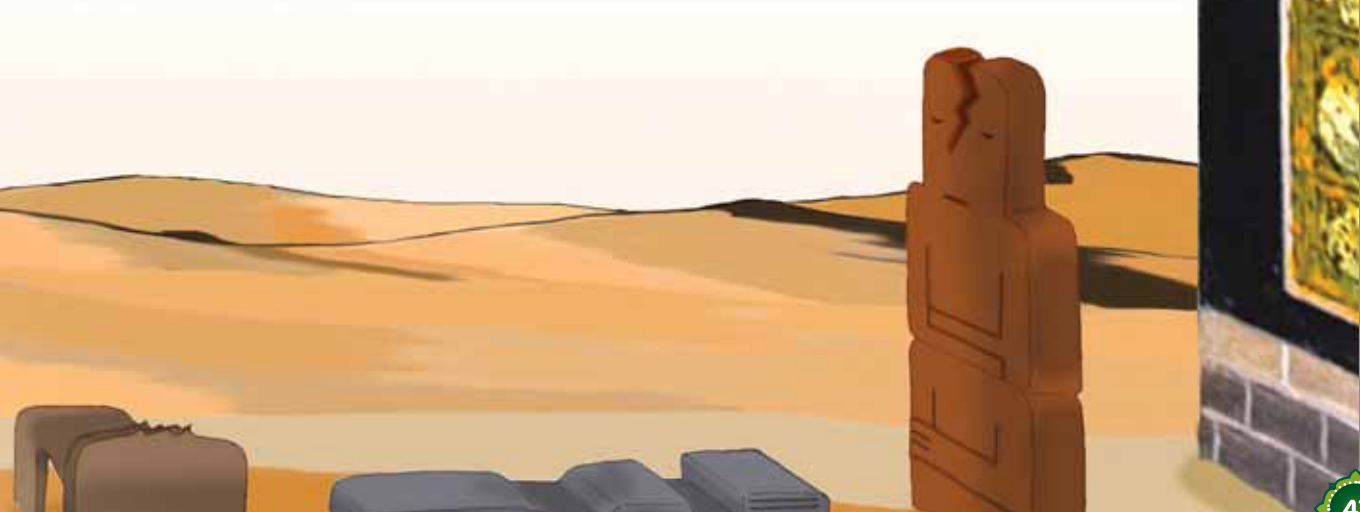
Glorify your Lord.

Purify your clothes,

Stay away all evil things,

And do not confer favor to acquire more.

The verses continued and the Exalted Creator guided his beloved messenger. Muhammad (pbuh) now knew what he was supposed to do. Allah's blessed Messenger was going to deliver the verses of Qur'an and teach. Thus, the humanity that was in darkness was going to be illuminated. However, it was not quite easy to tell these commands to people who were accustomed with evil. Our Prophet had hard and arduous days waiting ahead. However, he was not alone. He was with the support of his Lord. Allah would never leave his servants who trust Him and ask His help alone.



IN SECRET

Muhammad (pbuh) was a prophet now. However, how were people going to believe this? Khadija and his beloved daughters were on his side. They believed in him. The youngest son of Abu Talib was fond of his uncle Muhammad (pbuh) and often visited his uncle and his family. One day he again came to their house. At that time, our Prophet and his wife were performing prayer. Ali was only ten years old, he asked:

- Uncle, what are you doing here?

Our prophet took Ali on his lap and hugged him. Then he said:

- O Ali! We are carrying out the command of Allah. For we do not believe in useless idols. I am both the slave and the Messenger of Allah. Join us!

Ali thought for a while, and then he said:

- Uncle I cannot decide yet. I need to ask this to my father first.

The prophethood had just come. So not everybody knew about it. Our Prophet told Ali:

- Oh Ali! You should either accept it at this moment or if you do not, do not tell anybody what you just saw here.

Ali thought for a short time,

- Allah did not ask to my father when he created me! Why should I ask him when I become Muslim, and became the first child who believed in Muhammad (pbuh).

The notables of Mecca learned about Muhammad's (pbuh) preaching Islam in secret and became quite furious. They had someone called Abu Jahl in charge. He went to

Abu Bakr at once. Abu Bakr was the Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) best friend. He was with him since his childhood.

Abu Jahl told Abu Bakr:

-What is your friend talking about? We heard that he denies the religion of our fathers. Go and do something about it!

Abu Bakr came to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). He listened to what Abu Jahl had told him once more from Muhammad (pbuh) and recited the shahadah without hesitation. Thus, he was honored with Islam. Kalimat Shahadah is the statement, "*Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah wa ashhadu anna muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluhu*". It means, "I bear witness that there is no god other than Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is his servant and his Messenger. To bear witness means to accept. In other words, *Kalimah Shahadah* is a statement of acceptance.

Our Prophet was very delighted to see that Abu Bakr embraced Islam. His best friend was now his brother in religion as well.

In the early days of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was preaching Islam not openly but in secret, only to those whom he trusted. The religion of Allah had slowly begun to be heard in Mecca.





ADDRESSING PEOPLE ON SAFA HILL

After some time, Allah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) following verse: "Warn your close relatives. Call them to Islam!" Allah the Exalted wanted now his Messenger to call people to Islam openly. The time of inviting people to Islam in secret had passed. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also wanted to call people to Allah's religion with no fear however the verse of "Warn your relatives" made him somehow worried. For there were those among his relatives who treated him with hostility. Most important one of them was Abu Lahab.

Nevertheless, Allah's command was far more important than anything else and couldn't be postponed. Our Prophet took action at once. He thought of gathering his relatives to warn them. Then he climbed up the Hill of Safa and addressed people:

- O people of Quraish! Gather!

Those who heard the call of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) came closer one by one. When their number increased, he asked them:

- If I were to tell you that there was an army behind this hill, would you believe me?

People of Quraish said:

- Yes, of course we would. For we have never heard you lying.

Thereupon Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) spoke in a strong voice:

- Then know that I am the Messenger of Allah. I have come to invite you to the religion of Allah. Embrace Islam and become Muslims. If you do not, I cannot protect you from the wrath of Allah. I do not want any worldly good from you. Say that there is no god other than Allah and be saved.

People listened to our Prophet carefully. They gazed at each other in curiosity. Some of them were astonished, some were worried and some were excited. It was obvious that they were impressed a lot by the words of Muhammad (pbuh) who was telling that he was Messenger of Allah. However, Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) uncle Abu Lahab was not pleased with the situation. He rushed forward angrily and shouted:

- Shame on you! Did you gather us in such a day just for this?

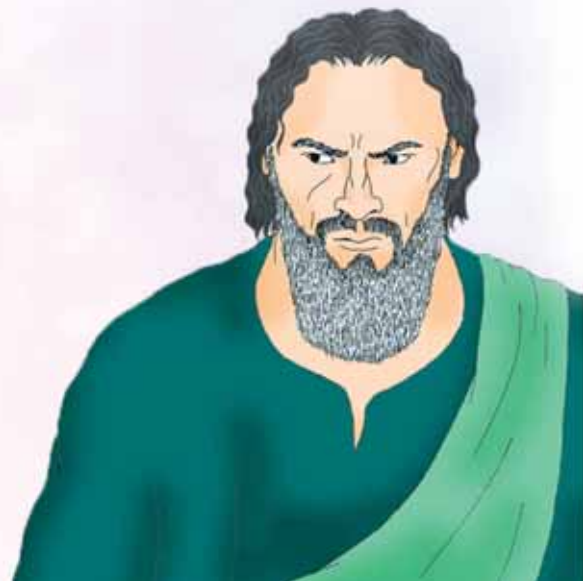
Upon Abu Lahab's this behavior, Allah revealed the verses that begin as follows: "May the hands of Abu Lahab be ruined, and it is ruined..."

How pitiful is the end of those who do not believe in Allah's Messenger. It was informed while Abu Lahab was still alive that he was going to go to the Hell.

HE DID NOT ABANDON HIS RELIGION

The people who did not accept Islam and worship idols Among Quraish were called "*mushrik*". They believed in Allah but they did not accept that He is the only God. They were saying, "Our idols are intermediaries that make us closer to Allah. Thanks to them we can make our voice heard by Allah." However, Allah sees and hears his servants anytime and anywhere. When someone prays to Allah, He hears it and He responds all prays. To put something or someone between oneself and Allah and associate partners with Allah is called "*shirk*" (polytheism). And those who do this become *mushrik*.

Against all preventions and obstacles of *mushriks*, our Prophet carried on preaching Islam. Islam was spreading day by day. Even the slaves started to accept Islam, because



everybody is equal in Islam. No one had superiority over anyone else. All had the right to live humanly and freely. However, notables of Mecca did not accept this and insisted about their superiority by saying: "We are superior. We do not accept being in the same status with slaves."

Bilal was the slave of Umayya. He was one of the first Muslims. Nevertheless, his master Umayya hated Muslims. He tortured them whenever he saw one. One day he learned that Bilal had become a Muslim. He got very angry. He went to Bilal and said:

- Is what I heard true? Did you become a Muslim?

Bilal was very calm and brave.

- Yes, I have embraced Islam, he said.

Umayya was astonished. How could a slave treat his master this way? From where did he get this courage? What kind of a religion was that? How could a slave speak this way? Umayya turned red out of anger. He caught Bilal and threw him down. He wrathfully dragged him on the ground.

The desert sand in Mecca was very hot as if it was an oven. Bilal's back was burning on the sand but Umayya did not stop. He tied Bilal's hands and feet. To top it all, he put huge hot rocks on his chest. However, none of these could make Bilal give up and abandon his religion. He was only saying: "Allah is One, Muhammad (pbuh) is his Messenger". As he spoke as such, Umayya went madder. Bilal had no strength left to bear the tortures, but he continued to say, "Allah is One".

Abu Bakr could not stand to see the state of his friend Bilal. Bilal had become a Muslim by means of Abu Bakr. Now he needed to save him. Thus, he went to Umayya and told him that he wanted to buy Bilal. Umayya was first baffled, but when he heard the amount of money that Abu Bakr offered him, his anger calmed down immediately. He sold Bilal for a good deal of money. When Abu Bakr bought Bilal, he set him free. Bilal was no more a slave. Allah turned his pain into joy in an instant.

Our Prophet was very happy to learn that Bilal was saved. He prayed to Allah for Abu Bakr.

I DO NOT GIVE UP MY CAUSE

*M*ushriks could not prevent Islam's spread even though they did their best. They were torturing every Muslims they saw. Without pity, they were killing some of them. However, contrary to all they did, Islam was spreading rapidly.

Then, another way came to minds of *mushriks*. They decided to complain about Muhammad (pbuh) to his uncle. One day, they went to Abu Talib and said, "You are our elder. We have always respected you, but your nephew does not believe in our idols. He speaks ill of them. You are the only one to make dissuade from doing so. Do what is necessary. Or we will bring him into line."

Abu Talib was afraid of his nephew's getting into trouble. He calmed *mushriks* down and send them back. In order not to upset Muhammad (pbuh), he kept the case a secret from him. However, after some time, *mushriks* gathered and came to Abu Talib again. They pressed him to warn his nephew.

Abu Talib did not want his beloved nephew to get upset. But there was no way left other than telling the situation to him. He came to our Prophet and spoke, "Oh my beloved nephew. Please have pity for yourself and for me. Give up preaching this religion."

Our Prophet loved his uncle. He had been raised in his uncle's home. But no matter who was against him, no one could discourage him from preaching Islam. With his soft voice, he responded:

- Oh my dear uncle! I swear to Allah, even if they were to place the sun in my one hand and the moon in the other, I would not give up my cause.



Abu Talib understood him. His nephew had really an important duty. He also wanted to become Muslim. However, he could not leave his previous religion. Even so, he was going keep protecting his nephew.

- Oh my beloved nephew, he said, keep doing your duty. Do whatever you like. I swear to Allah, as long as I am alive, I will keep protecting you.

All the happenings annoyed the infidels. They were to find another way. They thought of casting aspersions on Muhammad (pbuh). They tried to tell that he was a magician fooling people. But who would listen to them? Everyone knew that Muhammad (pbuh) would not tell any lie or hurt anyone. He would never do injustice or think evil. Neither could he be a magician who fool people or a poet with beautiful words... He was solely the Messenger of Allah who call people to religion of Allah. To Islam, the straight path...

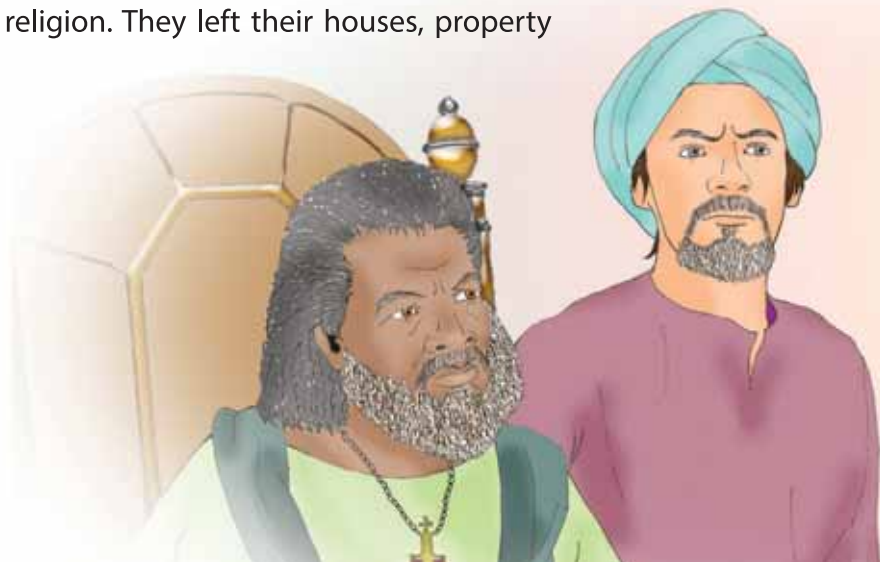
CALL THE MUSLIMS

It became very hard for Muslims to stay in Mecca after what Meccan *mushriks* done to them. Muslim's lives and property were in danger. Our Prophet was very sad to see this. He wanted to save them from it. He kept praying for them and asking help from Allah.

Finally, he made a decision: those who want could migrate to Ethiopia and could live there for a while. Because Ethiopia was ruled by a just *najashi*. People in Ethiopia called their rulers *najashi*. A just ruler cares for his people and works for their well being.

Najashi was a good person. He was a Christian who believed in Jesus. He treated people with mercy and welcomed those who came to his land.

Thus, with the permission of Allah's Messenger, ninety of the Muslims in Mecca set off towards Ethiopia. They did *hijrah* to there. *Hijrah* means to migrate another place to be able to live freely Allah's religion. Thus, Muslims departed from their lands so that they could live their religion. They left their houses, property



and relatives behind. Above all, they were sad for parting from our Prophet. Were they going to be able to see him again?

Meccan polytheists on the other hand, got more furious upon Muslims' migration. They learned that people to whom they were torturing everyday had left Mecca in secret. Maybe they were going to strive to spread Islam in the land where they migrated and then come back after gaining strength. It was necessary for *mushriks* to do something without wasting time, so they too set off. They were thinking of doing their best to bring the Muslims back from Ethiopia. However, the Najashi had welcomed Muslims readily into his land. Muslims were living in Ethiopia safely. Mushriks came to presence of the Najashi and asked him to return the Muslims to them. However, Najashi declined this request by saying: "I can't give any of my guests who take refuge in my land."

When *mushriks* understood that Najashi was determined, they did their best to change his mind. They said, "These Muslims do not like anyone other than themselves or bow respectfully before anybody. Call them. They won't even bow before you." Back then, it was a major offense not to bow before a king. Najashi was bewildered to hear this. Mushriks kept talking, "They also don't believe in your Prophet Jesus the way you do." Thereupon Najashi burst with anger and said, "Call the Muslims to me!"

Mushriks at last succeeded to influence the Najashi. This was why they were secretly rejoicing.



THE JUST RULING

With Najashi's order, Muslims were hastily brought to his presence. They could not understand what was going on, but when they saw the polytheists who came from Mecca beside the najashi, everything became clear.

Najashi was carefully following the Muslims brought to his presence. None of them bowed before him. In fact, this was not out of their disrespect. They of course considered him as a king and felt gratitude to him. However, they would not bow before anything or anyone created by Allah. They could bow only in the presence of Allah. For instance while performing prayer, they bow down and prostrate before Allah. This is an indication of respect they feel to Allah. This is an act of worship done only to Allah.

Najashi turned to the Muslims and said:

- These people came from Mecca in order to take you back there.

Muslims' speaker was Jafar. He was the Prophet's nephew. He spoke:

- Sir, I have three questions. If you allow me, I want Meccans to respond them.

Upon the permission of Najashi, following dialogue took place:



- How can they demand us? Are we their slaves?
- No, they are not.
- Did we kill one of them, so they want one of us to punish?
- No, they did not kill anybody.
- Are we in debt to them so they want us back?
- No, they are not.
- This time Najashi asked Muslims:
 - Now you respond me. You are now in my presence. When you come before a king, you have to greet him by bowing. Why didn't you do so?
 - Sir, we bow only before Allah.

Well I have one more question. What does your religion tell about Jesus?

Jafar responded this question with verses from Qur'an. In these verses, Allah is telling the life of Prophet Isa. Hearing these, Najashi got excited and stood up saying:

- I swear to Allah, what you just said and what Jesus said are the words of the same Allah. What Musa had said is also the same.

Then he turned to Meccans:

- Don't you wait in vain, he said, I saw nothing wrong about these Muslims. I do not give them to you. As to you, walk out of my land.

Meccans were not able to find what they expected to. They returned to their land in anger. From that day on, Najashi kindly hosted and harbored the Muslims in his land. He once more demonstrated how a just king he was.

PROPHET'S POLITENESS

In Mecca, life was not easy for Muslims at all. Mushriks increased the oppression and torture to the ones who remained there. However, despite this fact, the number of converts to Islam was increasing day by day. Mushriks filled with anger. "There is only one option left," they were saying, "Which is to kill Muhammad (pbuh)..." However, there had been no one dare to attempt this yet.

One day, one of the chiefs of the Meccan mushriks, Abu Jahl encountered the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the street while he was alone. He began shouting at our Prophet. He insulted and humiliated him. Soon, hearing Abu Jahl's voice, people gathered there. And some of them went immediately to Hamza, our Prophet's uncle and informed him about what was going on. Among Meccans, the family bonds were really strong. The members of the family were to protect each other.

Hamza got very angry to hear this. Who could insult one of his relatives? He just came back from hunting and was still on his horse. He did not wait and went directly to the place where people gathered. The moment he saw Abu Jahl, he walked up to him.



"How dare you insult my nephew," he shouted. He had his bow and arrow in his hand. In anger, he hit Abu Jahl with the bow. Abu Jahl got injured and his head started to bleed.

When people saw Abu Jahl in this way, they felt frightened. Then, they reproached Hamza for his conduct. However, Abu Jahl was so clever. He knew the fact that if people do so, Hamza could get angrier and could convert to Islam out of anger. His conversion to Islam would affect many people in their society. For he was a very strong and brave person. People were respecting him. In fear of the possibility that Hamza would become a Muslim, Abu Jahl said:

- No, no. Hamza is right. I insulted his nephew. Therefore, he has the right to hit me. I deserved it.

As to Hamza, he immediately went to our Prophet. He loved him so much. Trying to solace to him, he spoke:

- Oh my nephew, do not worry. Never mind what Abu Jahl did. See, I put him into his place. He cannot defame you once again.

However, our Prophet did not pay attention to this. However, he was still sad. He said:

- O my uncle! I am not worried about myself. If you believe in Allah and His Messenger, you will be saved. I will be happy only if you are saved.

Hamza was surprised. If it had been someone else, he would thank to Hamza for rescuing him. However, the Prophet Muhammad was worried only for his uncle. These words could only belong to a prophet. Therefore, his nephew was a real prophet. Hamza then understood everything. His nephew was telling the truth. Believing in Allah and His Messenger, on the very spot, he embraced Islam.



UMAR THE SON OF KHATTAB

While Muslims increased in number and power, *mushriks* lost their temper. It could not go on like this. They were to find a way to kill Muhammad, but who could dare it? Who?

Just then, one of them shouted:

- I'll do it! I can kill him!

These words were of Umar's. Umar the son of Khattab. He stood up wrathfully and fastened his sword to his back. He had made his mind up to kill Muhammad (pbuh).

He set off at once. He was walking quickly. Then he met Nuaym who also was one of the Muslims. However, no one knew this. Nuaym got suspicious of Umar's walk. It was obvious from his behavior that he was going to do something bad. Nuaym wanted to know about his intention, so he asked:

- What is the matter, Umar? Why are you so angry? Where are you going, having your sword fastened on your back?

- I am going to kill Muhammad, said Umar. Keep out of my way!

Even though he was frightened, Nuaym tried to remain composed. He thought that he should do something to divert his attention. It was possible for him to go and inform the Prophet about the matter, but in order to gain time he said:

- O Umar! Go and look at your own family first. Your sister Fatima became Muslim, don't you know about it?

Hearing this Umar turned red with anger. How could such a thing happen? Did someone from his own family, his full sister, change her religion? So she did not like

the idols either, then. In anger, he went to his sister's house. When he arrived, he stopped in front of the door. A voice was coming from inside of the house. Someone was reading the Qur'an. Umar found out that Nuaym had said the truth.

Umar knocked at the door violently but there was no answer. Fatima was seized in fear. She and her husband concealed the leaves of the Qur'an, and their guest who was reading Qur'an for them hid in another room. Fatima overcame her fear and opened the door. Umar stormed into the room.

- "What were you doing here," he shouted, "What were you reading when I came? Fatima, have you converted to Islam?"

Fatima who had been shaking with fear shortly before gained courage now.

- Yes, my brother we have, she said, and we were reading Qur'an before you came.

Umar raised his hand to his sister and slapped her harshly. She was bleeding. However, she did not retreat.

- Do whatever you like Umar, she said. You can never make me and my husband give up our religion.



THE FORTIETH MUSLIM

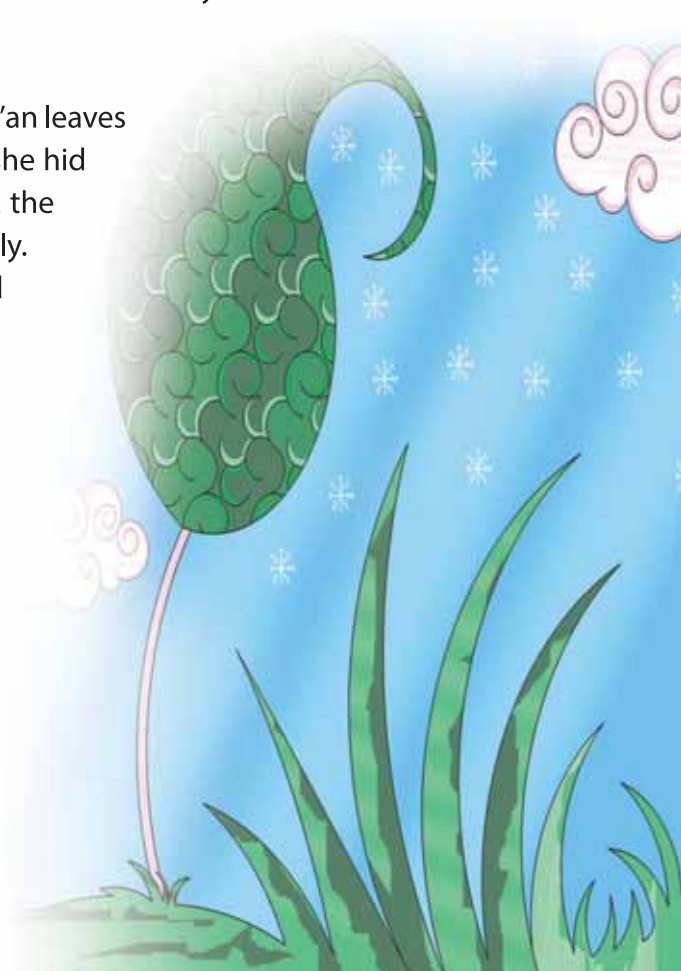
Umar loved his sister very much. He had never seen her this determined before. Fatima was now lying on the ground, bleeding. To see her this way made Umar sorry. At that moment, his anger fade away. He started to wonder why his sister and her husband were so much attached to the Qur'an, why they loved Muhammad (pbuh) so much. This curiosity made him curious. He said softly:

- Bring me what you were reading.

Fatima was afraid that Umar would rip the Qur'an leaves up. Even so, she took the leaves from where she hid and brought them to his brother. Umar took the leaves in his hands and read them interestedly. These did not resemble anything he read before. They were so beautiful. The verses affected Umar deeply. His heart was filled with affection and his face was brightened up. He turned to his sister and asked:

- What am I supposed to do to become a Muslim?

Fatima was overjoyed to hear this. He was looking forward to share this news with the Prophet. She told her brother:



- Go to our Prophet at once, he will teach you.

Umar went to the Prophet. Muslims on the door felt frightened when they saw him coming. Because Nuaym had informed them about what had happened before. They thought that Umar was coming to kill the Prophet. It was clear that in such a case, they would do their best and even give their own lives to protect the Prophet. However, Umar was a very strong man. It was not so easy to stop him.

Umar was insistently saying that he wanted to see our Prophet. Both his voice and behavior was soft. There was nothing left from his harshness. He did not seem like someone who came with the intention of killing. Nevertheless, the ones in the door did not let him in. The Prophet's uncle Hamza even stood up and draw his sword.

- Let him in. I know what to do to him, he said.

On the other hand, our Prophet was very calm. He was not afraid at all. Smiling, he wanted Umar to be let in. Thus, believers opened the door and faintheartedly took Umar in. Umar came in front of our Prophet and kneeled down. Under the bewildered eyes of the ones there, Umar told our Prophet that he wanted to become Muslim. The Prophet's face was brightened up with joy. He helped Umar to say *kalimat shahadah*.

In this way, Umar converted to Islam. He was the fortieth Muslims. He was a very strong man. Muslims were filled with joy. One by one, they embraced him. As to Umar, he was having the happiest moments of his life in this environment of brotherhood. Allah had strengthened his religion with him. Believers were now forty people. Forty!



THE SUN IS SHINING

Umar had converted to Islam. He was both very excited and happy. He felt himself stronger. He was now honored with the glory of Islam. He was much more courageous than before.

- O Messenger of Allah! He said to the Prophet. Since we are Muslims, let's not hide, no matter if we live or die. I swear by Allah, I will not stop. I will go to Ka'bah and tell everyone that I am a Muslim.

Hearing this, the Prophet smiled. He did not say anything. He stood up, so all who were there stood up. They were altogether forty people. The Prophet had Umar on his right side and Hamza on his left.

Meccan *mushriks* were still waiting for news from Umar. These miserable men thought that Umar killed Muhammad (pbuh). Soon Umar sighted from afar. They got excited. Then, they saw the other Muslims. All Muslims were coming and in the front of them was Muhammad (pbuh).

- O Meccans! Listen, Umar shouted. Here I came. La ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulallah (There is no god other than Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger). For I believe in Allah who is One. No one should move. I will hurt anyone who moves.

Mushriks were scared. None of them dared to move. Muslims came closer to Ka'bah. They began performing prayer in congregation. Our Prophet was leading them.

Only forty Muslims were enough to frighten *mushriks*, because Muslims loved Allah and trusted Him. Allah is the One who helps those who live in accordance with His religion.

Muslims are hopeful people. They do not quail easily when they face difficulties. They know that the hardships they have will come to an end someday. Because they believe in Islam even at the risk of losing their lives and property. They do not fear anyone other than Allah. On the other hand, *mushriks* are always anxious of losing their money and power. However, it is Allah who gave all these to them. They think themselves as the sole owner of everything. In fact, Allah can take everything they have away from them in an instant.

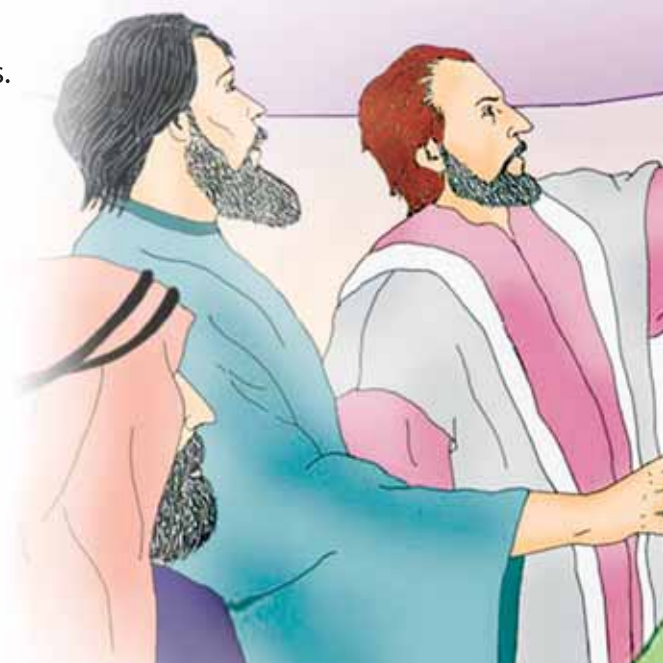
The most pleasant people in the world are the ones who believe in Allah and love His Messenger. There cannot be any happiness greater than being a Muslim. This was why Muslims in Mecca were the happiest people despite all the difficulties they had. They loved to be with the Messenger of Allah more than anything else in the world.

PATIENCE AND FAITH

*M*ushriks of Quraish were angry. People who believed in Muhammad (pbuh) was gradually increasing in number. Even Umar whom they trusted the most aligned himself with them. This rise should be stopped. But how? They discussed, thought about, and reached series of decisions. They said, "From now on, no one from us will marry Muslims and do any dealings with them. None of us will give them any food or drink. By no means, we will let them come close to us. Anyone who does not follow this rule and help Muslims will be penalized!

Soon they wrote these decisions down on a paper and hung up it on the wall of Ka'bah.

Thus, a quite hard period began for Muslims. *Mushriks* were cruel. They were very observant of their decisions they had taken. The Muslims' living place was thoroughly narrowed. Their houses were confiscated and they were forced to go to another neighborhood where their connection to the city was cut off. Sometime later, their food was used up, and famine and diseases appeared. They had difficulty even in finding drinking water. Young or old everyone became miserable. The voice of crying children was heard from a distance.



This state continued for about three years. However, despite all the hardship they faced, Muslims did not leave the Prophet alone. For Allah's Messenger was also having the same difficulties with them. He too was forced to leave his house and exposed to famine and indigence. With his beloved wife Khadija and his children, they were having very hard days.

There was a man among who tortured Muslims. He was the most merciless of them. This person was the Prophet's uncle, Abu Lahab. In enmity to Muslims, he was the leading one. The family bond was not important for him so did not like his nephew Muhammad at all. In order to prevent the spread of Islam, he left no stone unturned. He banned the trade caravans coming to Mecca from other countries from selling anything to Muslims. He threatened them with death.

Even under such hard circumstances, Muslims did not abandon their religion, because they were true believers. They knew that sooner or later Allah's help was going to come. They were certainly going to be rewarded one day for their patience.



THE YEAR OF SORROW

The Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) uncle Abu Talib was very sad about all that happened but he was not able to make himself listened by the *mushriks*. On the other hand, Muslims were under miserable conditions. If it were to have continued this way, they were going to die due to diseases or famine. Going from house to house in Mecca, Abu Talib wanted from everyone to end the boycott. Among mushriks, there were some merciful ones too. Because they had their relatives among Muslims, their suffering was making these merciful people sad. In the end, the effort of Abu Talib bore results. The relentless boycott against Muslims came to an end.

The distressful days were over. Everybody returned to their homes.

After a while, the Prophet's (pbuh) uncle Abu Talib got sick. He was quite old. The Prophet loved him very much. Abu Talib always protected the Prophet (pbuh) against mushriks' tortures and oppressions but he had not embraced Islam. Our Prophet (pbuh) did not leave his sick uncle's bedside. He wanted him to be Muslim before he passed away. He was saying to him, "Uncle, convert to Islam and save yourself!" When his uncle died, the Prophet was very sad, tears flowed down from his eyes.

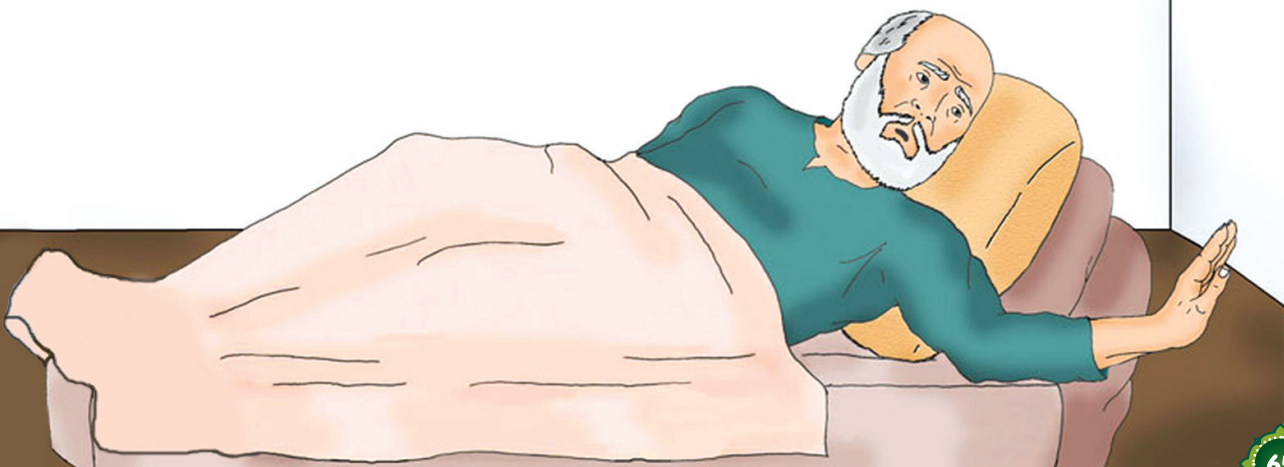
Abu Talib did not become Muslim but had always kept his nephew under his wings, protected and supported him. This was why he was a very significant person for Muslims.

It had been only three days since Abu Talib's death, this time Khadija got sick. Khadija had gotten exhausted during the boycott against them. Her body weakened because of famine and the nuisance she had undergone. She could not even rejoice for

returning home. Her health was getting worse each passing day. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) did his best for his wife's recovery, however she did not get better and soon she too passed away.

Losing his wife gave the Prophet (pbuh) a deep shock. Khadija had not even once hurt him, instead she had always been with him supporting and helping him. The Prophet (pbuh) had always loved his wife and held her dear. What was going to be now? She was not there anymore. She returned to her Lord. The grief of our Prophet (pbuh) was deep. He was suffering for the loss of two of the people he loved most.

Abu Talib's and Khadija's deaths one after another saddened everyone. That year was given the name "the year of sorrow". It was going to be a year always remembered by Muslims with grief.



THE GIFT FROM TAIF

As much as the year of sorrow filled Muslims with grief, it filled the polytheists with joy and happiness. However, their anger still did not cool down. Taking courage from Abu Talib's death, they increased their tortures. They were considering the Prophet as lonely and desperate. In fact, Allah is the owner of Muslims. This is why they never are alone.

The Prophet (pbuh) also trusted Allah in all his dealings. One day, taking Zayd along, he set off to Taif for calling the people of Taif into Islam. Taif was one of the towns close to Mecca.

When they arrived in the town, the Prophet (pbuh) preached Islam to people in Taif and called them to be Muslims. However, people of Taif did not even listen to him. Moreover, they made fun of him saying, "Could Allah not find any prophet other than you?" And what's more, they gave their children stones to throw at him. They gave their slaves sticks. The children tagged along after the Prophet and assailed with stones.

To protect the Prophet from the stones, Zayd stood up in front of the Prophet (pbuh) and shouted: "Don't do that! He is the Messenger of Allah!" However, the stones were also hitting our Prophet (pbuh). Zayd was drenched in blood. The feet of the Prophet (pbuh) were bleeding. Zayd forgot about his pain. He was weeping because of the torture that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was subjected to.

In the end, they took shelter in a garden. They could have saved themselves only by doing so. Zayd was filled with rage to people of Taif who stoned the Prophet (pbuh).

Allah's Messenger on the other hand was quiet and sorrowful. He turned to Allah with all his soul, praying. At that point, the owner of the garden showed up. He felt sorry for these two strangers who took refuge in his garden. He told his slave Addas to bring grapes for them. Addas served them grapes. Saying "Bismillah..." the Prophet (pbuh) ate a grape. Basmala is the expression that Muslims use at the beginning of every one of their actions. It means "With the name of Allah". So, whenever they begin to do something, by calling Allah's name, Muslims express their respect to Him.

Addas believed in the Prophet Yunus. He had heard of basmala before. He was surprised and asked:

- No one here knows these words. Who are you?

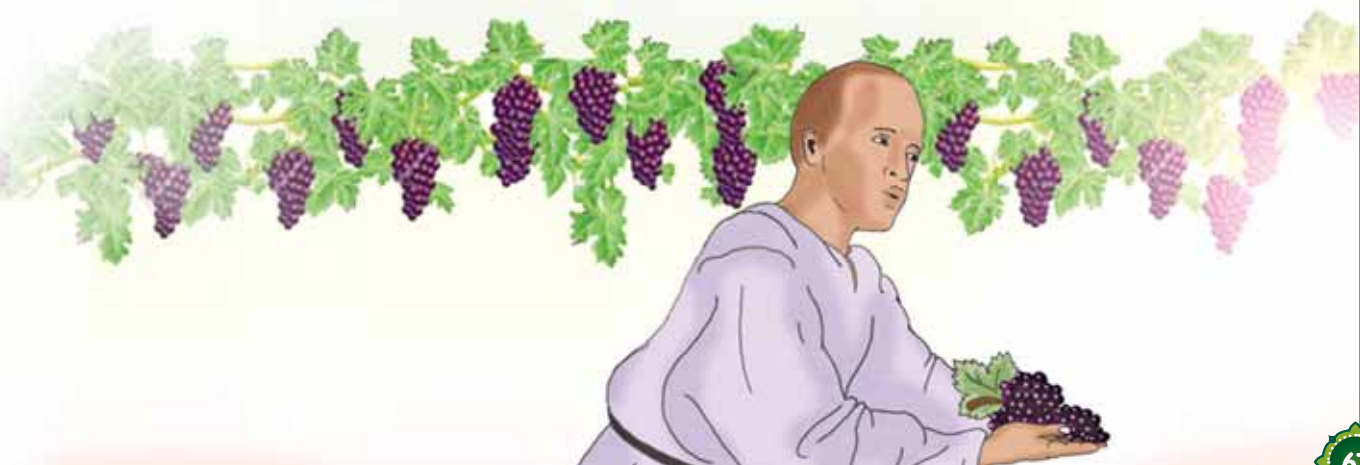
Then he mentioned about the Prophet Yunus. Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) said:

- Yunus is my brother.

Then he told him that he was also a prophet. He spoke to him about Islam. Addas was so excited. He listened to him curiously. He had no doubt inside. He believed in Allah's Messenger (pbuh) and converted to Islam by saying the shahadah.

It was indeed worth to see the Prophet's joy. The agony he had underwent in Taif was in a while gone. For him, it was really worth the whole world to observe the salvation of even only one person.

The gift from Taif was Addas' conversion to Islam.



OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Twelve years had passed. In spite all hardship believers faced, they continued to live their religion. The call for Islam got beyond the borders of Mecca and reached the cities from far. One of those cities was Medina.

One day a group of twelve people came from Medina to Mecca in secret. They met the Prophet (pbuh) at the valley called Aqaba. They told him that they wanted to be Muslims. This was a great help from Allah to the Muslims. People, from far and close, paid attention to the call of Prophet. Allah's Messenger welcomed them warmly. He told them about our beautiful religion, Islam. So Medinans believed in him and embraced Islam. They gave their word not to return to their old religion and do no evil. This incident pleased Meccan Muslims as well. They were happy to know that they had brothers also in Medina.

Telling that they were going to return one year later, Medinan Muslims went back to their city. However, they did not spend that year without doing anything. They preached Islam to their families, relatives and neighbors. Many people either young or old, woman or man now knew about Islam.

A year later, the same committee came again. They met at the same place, the valley of Aqaba. They all felt the joy of meeting him one more time. The Prophet (pbuh) explained them the basic principles of the religion. He ordered them to not associate any partner to Allah, to not kill their children, to not commit adultery and to not steal. And the Medinan Muslims took the pledge and invited the Prophet (pbuh) to Medina. They declared their loyalty saying:



- O Prophet! We believe in you. We hold your hands and do not leave them. We will protect you the same way we do ours. If we break our promise, we will be breaking our oath to Allah.

With these nice people, Allah strengthened his religion once more. Our Prophet (pbuh) accepted their offer. Medina was a place Muslims were able to live their religion better. Soon the Prophet and his companions were soon going to immigrate there. However, the time for his migration did come yet.

The Prophet (pbuh) sent Mus'ab ibn Umayr along with Medinan Muslims. Mus'ab was one of the young companions who lived Islam in the best way. From that time on, it was Mus'ab ibn Umayr who was going to teach them to read Qur'an and their religion.

ONE DAY WE WILL RETURN OH MECCA!

*M*edina became a door of hope for Muslims. It was the city where they could live without torture and perform worships.

When the time had come, the Prophet told Muslims to immigrate to Mecca. It is a hard thing to leave the place where one was born and grew up. However, for Muslims, there was nothing more important than their religion. This was why they obeyed the prophet's order. Leaving their homes, property, fields and gardens behind, they began to depart from Mecca. There were only a few Muslims who stayed back in Mecca.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was one of them. He was preparing with his friend Abu Bakr for hijrah.

Meccans, on the other hand, started to be worried when they saw Muslims migrating in crowds to Medina. They were anxious about the possibility that Muslims might get stronger and attack them. It was necessary for them to do something in order to prevent Muslims. They talked among themselves and said, "If Muhammad (pbuh) dies, it will solve all our problems."

Then they made a plan: By the time it became dark, they were going to break into the Prophet's house and kill him. However, Allah is the greatest. He is aware of what the oppressors were planning to do. He informed His Prophet (pbuh) about their plans through revelation and commanded him to immigrate at that night.

Meccans were watching the Prophet (pbuh). They followed all his moves. It was quite hard to leave Mecca without being seen by anyone. That night the Prophet (pbuh) asked Ali to lie on his bed and said:

- Don't worry, Allah will protect you.

Then he went out of his house secretly. With his friend Abu Bakr, they disappeared without having been noticed in the darkness of night.

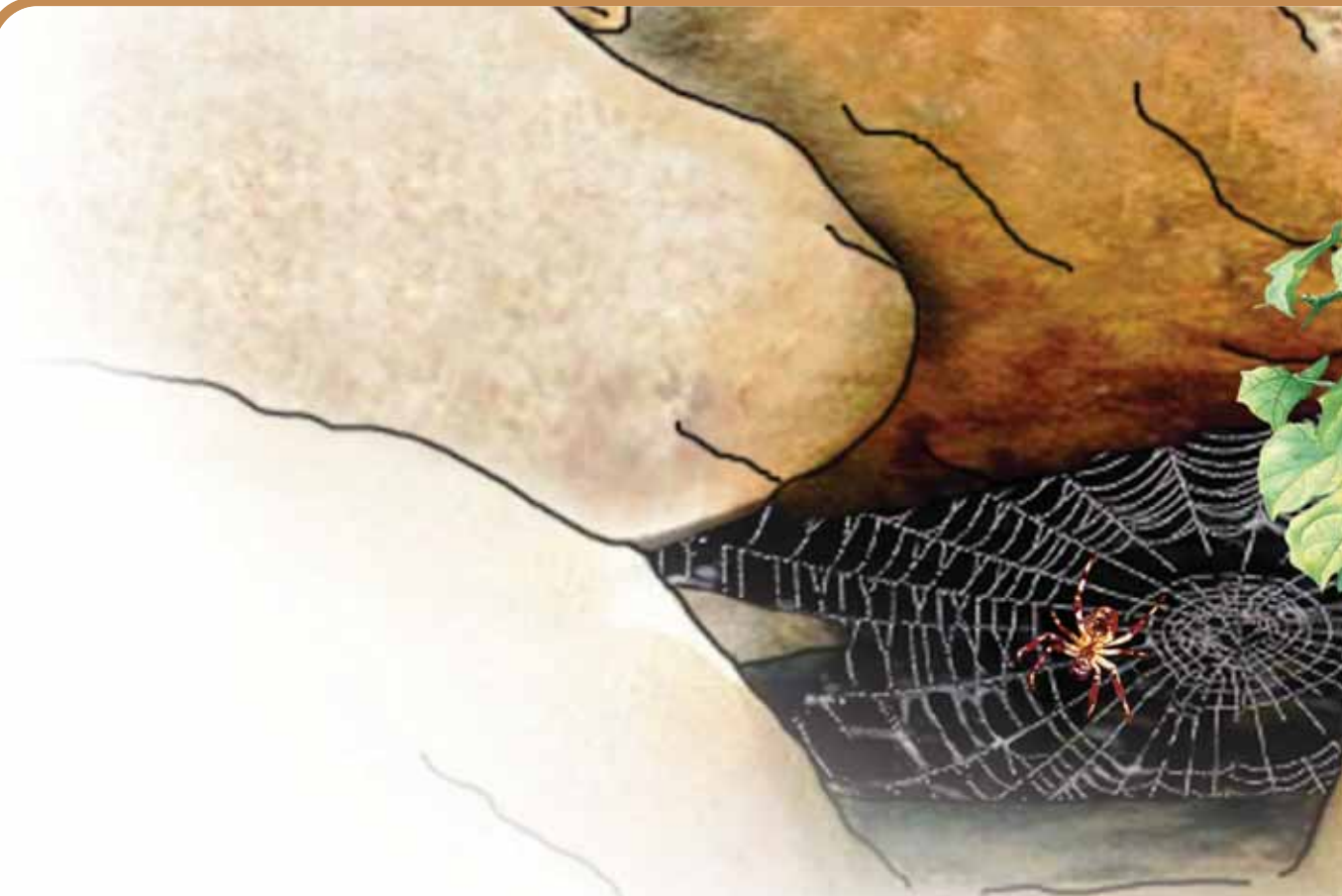
As to the oppressors, they were like a dark shadow. That night they made a sudden attack at the Prophet's house. However, when they saw Ali lying in the Prophet's bed, they got mad. Abu Jahl shouted:

- What are you standing for? We should catch him before he is too far.

Yes, our Prophet (pbuh) was going. Mecca that he loved very much remained behind. He was sorry to leave Mecca. For thirteen years had he been calling people of this city to Islam. However, most of them did not listen to him. They did not want to believe in him. Now this blessed Prophet was going with the love of Mecca in his heart. For the last time, he looked at the lights of the city and said:

- O Mecca! I promise that one day we will return with the permission of Allah...



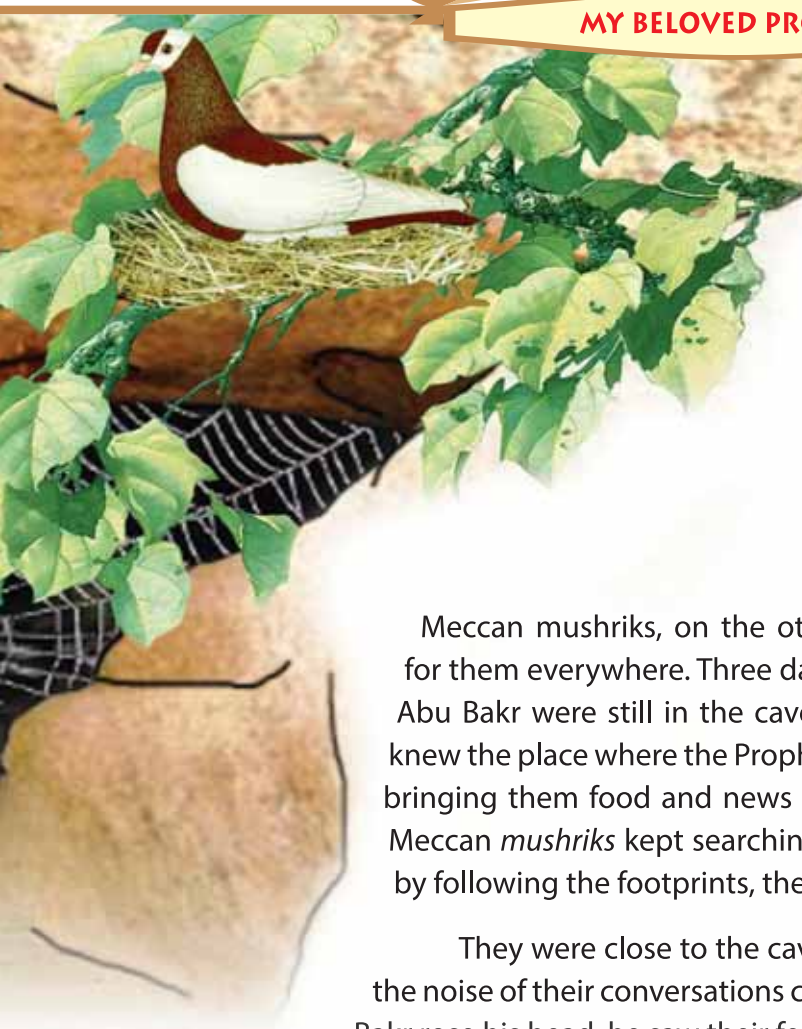


THE DOVE AND THE SPIDER

Our beloved Prophet and Abu Bakr were moving forward rapidly. They had the intention to arrive Medina without getting caught by mushriks. On the other hand, mushriks were not idling. When they could not find the Prophet (pbuh) at home, they started to chase him and began following the footprints.

As to Abu Bakr, he was afraid that something happens to the Prophet (pbuh). In order to scramble the footprints, he was going back and forth. However, the prints did not disappear totally.

They were far away from Mecca. It was utter dark everywhere. They were both exhausted. It was necessary to find a safe place where *mushriks* could not find them. There was a cave called Thawr in the south of Mecca. They decided to hide there. When they finally reached the cave of Thawr, they were very tired.



Meccan mushriks, on the other hand, were assiduously looking for them everywhere. Three days passed. Our beloved Prophet and Abu Bakr were still in the cave of Thawr. Abu Bakr's son Abdullah knew the place where the Prophet and Abu Bakr were hiding. He was bringing them food and news about what was going on in Mecca. Meccan *mushriks* kept searching for them without a break. After all, by following the footprints, they came in front of the cave of Thawr.

They were close to the cave so much so that the footsteps and the noise of their conversations could be heard from inside. When Abu Bakr rose his head, he saw their feet and said in a stew:

- O Messenger of Allah! If they bend down and look, they will see us! He showed his fear. Thereupon the Prophet said:

- Don't worry, Allah is with us.

Before mushriks climbed up the mountain, a spider span its web around the opening of the cave and a pair of doves built their nest there and laid eggs.

When mushriks saw this:

- Had they been inside, this spider net and this dove nest would have been deformed, they said.

They became quite angry because they lost trace of the Prophet. They thought that he already had arrived at Medina. Without even feeling the need to go and look inside, they moved away from there. There was no other way left other than returning to Mecca.



THE EXPECTED PASSENGER

In that day in Medina, there was joy of feast. People of Medina were on the streets. They had been waiting for Allah's Messenger (pbuh) for days, the best of the guests to come. In order to see him, some people climbed up the hills and some climbed up the trees. These were the watchers. The first one among them to see the Prophet (pbuh) was to announce to the whole city about it.

Medinan people had not seen the Prophet (pbuh), yet. Even so, they loved him deeply. There was no need for them to see in order to love him. He was the messenger calling them to Islam. He was also a model to all with his beautiful manners. And Medinans believed in him and submitted themselves to Allah's orders. They accepted our beautiful religion Islam and they were wondering the blessed Messenger very much. They were looking forward to see his beautiful face and to say, "O Messenger of Allah! Welcome to our city. You honored us."

Just then, two men appeared afar off. On their camels, they were coming from the valley of Wada. Our Prophet (pbuh) was like a light. With his splendor, he covered the horizon of Medina. There was the great Prophet (pbuh) coming. One of the watchers shouted:

- Allah's Messenger is coming! Allah's Messenger is coming!

Everyone in Medina began weeping out of joy. Especially the children, they were overjoyed so much so that they could fly.

Playing tambourines, they began singing:

"The moon rose over us from the valley of Wada

It is necessary for us to show gratitude for the call to Allah

Oh you, who was chosen amongst us, you've come with the commands to be obeyed

You've come and brought honor to Medina

Welcome! Oh you who call us to goodness!"

Everything got into action in a while. Young and old everyone was running towards the Prophet (pbuh) and greeting him with respect. And the Prophet (pbuh) too was greeting them back with his smiling face. It was obvious from his face that he was quite happy. He was feeling the joy of familiarizing with his Medinan brothers and the gladness of being accepted to the city. At last, there was a community that regarded his call. The Prophet's gratitude to Allah was endless.

Medinans began making arrangements long time ago. They all wanted to host the Prophet (pbuh) at their homes. They were picking his camel's bridle saying:

- Oh Allah's Messenger, stay in our home! Be my guest!
- Let Kuswa go. Wherever it stops, we will be guest there.

At that moment, the people of Medina subsided into silence. They excitedly began watching where Kuswa was going to go. The camel was moving as if it already knew where to stop. Everyone was surprised to see this.

Kuswa moved in the streets, moved and moved. Then suddenly it stopped in front of a house. The owner of the house was Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. So, he was the one who was going to host the Prophet (pbuh). Abu Ayyub was so excited. He felt himself the happiest person in the world for lodging the Prophet in his house.

Thus, the travel from Mecca to Medina ended. Muslims left their homes, property, relatives behind and came to Medina in order to live their religion freely. With Allah's permission, they were going to return one day.

Nevertheless, their home was Medina now. Medina! The blessed city that welcomed Allah's Messenger with open arms...

THE ONES WHO LOVE FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH

After Hijrah, there was a great cohesion between Medinans and Muslims coming from Mecca. Meccan Muslims called their Medinan brothers “ansar” because they hosted the Meccan Muslims. And Meccan Muslims were given the name of “muhajir” because they immigrated. They were the guests of ansar.

Soon Meccan and Medinan Muslims gathered in Arkam’s house. Their number was one hundred. The Prophet told them:



- Ansar and muhajirs are brothers to each other. Now choose your brothers.

This was an agreement of brotherhood. That day the ansar became brothers with muhajir. Each leader of Medinan families was to take a Meccan muhajir family along and share their property with them. In this way, no one among Meccans who left their homes and lands behind would be left homeless.

Everybody was quite excited. All the brothers were side by side trying to know, to understand each other. Then each Medinan took their brother to their home and shared with them their home, food, and goods. Muhajirs were both bewildered and happy.

In the end, no one was hungry or homeless. They all had a warm place to live. However, muhajirs did not sit back because they were given home and goods by ansars. On the contrary, they set to work in order to earn their living. They found themselves jobs through which they could earn their sustenance. Ansar and muhajir were now sheltering, working and eating together. This was such a brotherhood that it was going to continue both in this world and in *Akhirah* or the Hereafter.

‘Akhirah’ is the name given to the life in which we will be resurrected from death. The unity of Muslims continues in the Hereafter as well. So the unity of ansar and muhajir will also continue in the Paradise.

Medina had become home for Muslims. They had a state now. And this first Islamic state was rising like the sun.

All these beauties were the reward of the patience and brotherhood Muslims had.

THE STUDENTS OF THE QUR'AN

Our Prophet (pbuh) was staying in Abu Ayyub's house. There was no place for Muslims to perform prayers together. They began building a masjid. During the construction, they all worked heartily. They were doing soil-mixing, carrying adobes and putting up walls. The Prophet (pbuh) also personally worked in this construction.

In the meantime, there were still Muslims who were emigrating from Mecca. One of them was Ali. The Prophet overjoyed with his arrival, for he was his beloved cousin.

Days in Medina were alive and active. There were also Jewish tribes in Medina. After the hijrah, the Prophet (pbuh) made an agreement with the Jews. According to that agreement, Muslims and Jews were to live in peace and no one was to interfere in others' business.

Muslims were freer in Medina. They were doing their best to spread their religion. In surrounding areas, there were small tribes. They too heard about the Prophet (pbuh), so they began coming to Medina to learn about what kind of religion he was preaching. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was teaching Islam to everyone who comes to him. And those people were preaching Islam wherever they go. Thus, the number of Muslims was gradually increasing.

Meanwhile, the construction of the masjid was completed. Prayers were now going to be performed in congregation. Congregation (*jamaah*) means to be together. In Islam, being in unity is quite important. This was why people were going to meet in the masjid within the time of dawn prayer. However, they could not decide on how to inform each other when the prayer time comes. During those very days, Umar had a dream. In his dream, there was a man in green clothes holding a bell. Umar asked him,

"Would you sell me this bell?" The man said: "What will you do with it?" Umar responded, "I'll ring it to announce the prayer time." Let me teach you something better, the man said and he turned toward the qibla. Qibla is the direction where Muslims turn to during their prayers. In those times, Muslims were not turning towards the Ka'bah, but they were turning to masjid al-Aqsa which is in the city of Jerusalem. The man in the dream recited adhan out loud saying: "Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar..."

As soon as Umar woke up, he went to the Prophet (pbuh). He told him his dream and recited the adhan. The Prophet said that this was a dream given by Allah. He wanted Umar to teach Bilal the adhan. After that time on, Bilal was going to recite the adhan and call Muslims to the masjid during prayer times.

Masjid was a significant place for Muslims. For prayers were performed, meetings and conversations were held in it. The Prophet had also a place made beside the masjid for homeless Muslims. This place was named as "suffa" and the ones who stayed there were called "ahl al-suffa". It was a building for the poor both to stay and to learn. Our Prophet (pbuh) loved people staying in suffa very much and cared about them. He would frequently have the Qur'an lessons with them. Therefore ahl al-suffa's knowledge on Islam was very good. The Prophet used to send them to the tribes that wanted to learn about Islam.



AISHA (MAY ALLAH BE PLEASED WITH HER)

*I*t had been eight months since the hijrah. Construction of the mosque was finished. Soon another house was built next to the mosque. This was the Prophet's (pbuh) house, so he was going to move from Abu Ayyub's house to there.

Abu Ayyub's house was two layered. Because he had so many visitors, the Prophet (pbuh) was staying on the first floor. On the other hand, Abu Ayyub was feeling bashful to be on the upper floor of the Prophet. He refrained from making noise and disturbing him. He was quite mindful. He and his wife were always very silent. When our Prophet did realize this, he moved to the upper floor. So Abu Ayyub and his wife were relieved. The Prophet (pbuh) was very pleased with his landlord. He had always praised the favor of Abu Ayyub and prayed for him.

At that time, Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr, had reached the age of marriage. Aisha had become Muslim at a very young age. Her father Abu Bakr loved his daughter deeply. He brought her up with Islamic values. After hijrah, like other Muslims, Aisha came to Medina along with her family. Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) had been alone since passing of her wife Khadija, he had not had a wife. In those days, Muslim women recommended Abu Bakr's daughter Aisha as a wife to the Prophet. The Prophet (pbuh) leaned to this. The women asked Abu Bakr for her daughter's hand in marriage. The most beloved person in Abu Bakr's life was the Prophet (pbuh). Therefore, he was very happy about the Prophet's wish to marry his daughter. He accepted this proposal with pleasure. Aisha too was willing to get married with the Prophet (pbuh).



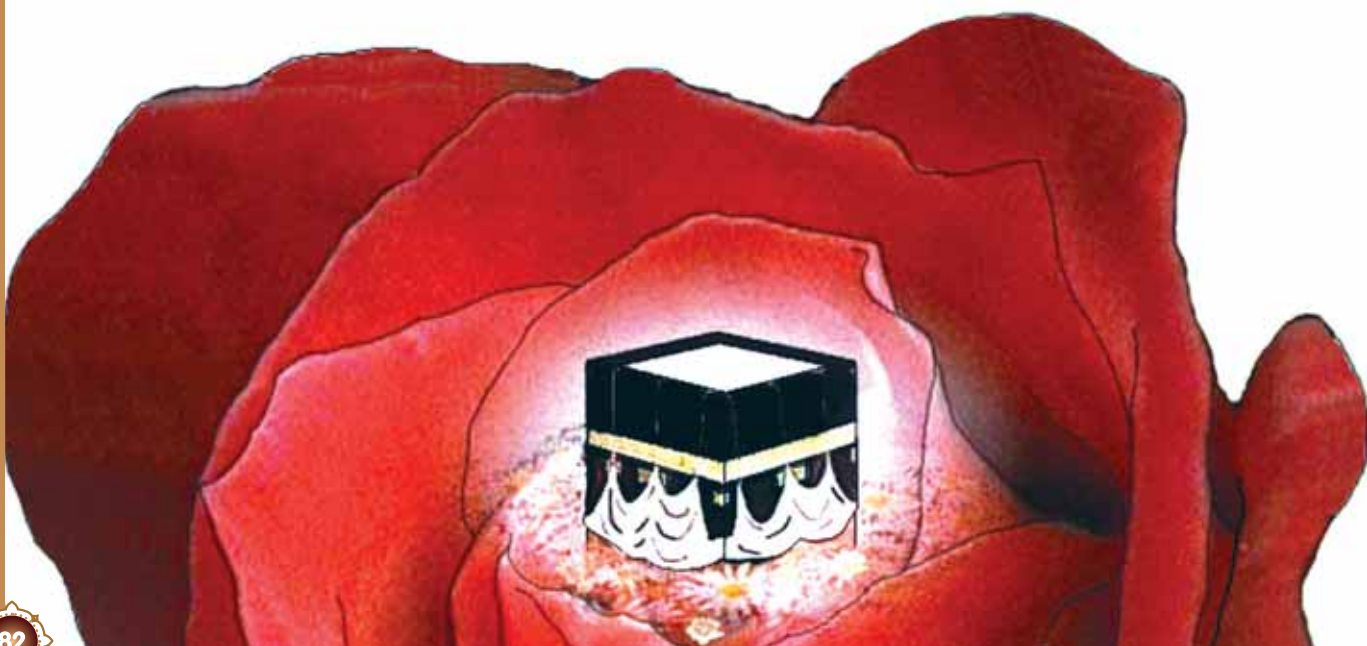
The time passed. When the time came for the Prophet (pbuh) to move to the masjid, he married Aisha. Then they moved together to their house and started a happy family. They both loved each other very much. Aisha was a clever woman. She would not forget anything. Thus, she paid close attention to the words of the Prophet (pbuh) and kept them in mind. Besides, she would perceive immediately whatever she was asked to and do it. Among Muslim women, Aisha had a really special place. Women would ask her about anything they did not understand. She also would answer those she was able to and about the questions, she was not, she would ask to the Prophet (pbuh).

Our mother Aisha is one of the people who narrated us the Prophet's words.

"O OUR PROPHET! COMMAND US AND WE WILL DO IT!"

When they were praying, Muslims used to turn to the direction of Masjid al-Aqsa. However, the Prophet wanted to turn towards the Ka'bah in prayers. He was praying to Allah for His permission about this matter.

One day, the Prophet (pbuh) was leading the prayer. They were performing the second cycle of the prayer. At that point, revelation came to the Prophet (pbuh) from Allah. The new verse was as follows: "Oh Prophet, from now on, turn your face towards the Ka'bah." Verse (ayah) is the statements sent by Allah. When he received the order of the Lord, the Prophet (pbuh) did not stop the prayer, he instantly turned to the direction



the Ka'bah and continued the prayer this way. The companions also did the same and turned towards the Ka'bah. The Ka'bah was the new qiblah of Muslims now. Allah had accepted the prayers of the Prophet.

Soon after this incident, news came to Medina that Meccan mushriks set off with a trade caravan. The way they were to pass was close to Medina. Hearing about this, our Prophet (pbuh) put a few persons in charge and told them to follow the caravan secretly. He wanted to know what was in the caravan, who were in it and who the chief was.

Soon, the reporters returned and informed the Prophet (pbuh) that the chief of the caravan was Abu Sufyan, the leader of mushriks. Abu Sufyan was the leading person of Meccan mushriks. He did Muslims quite much harm. When our Prophet (pbuh) heard about that, he prepared an army of one hundred and fifteen people and set off. However, there were some hypocrite people in Medina. They send message to Abu Sufyan in secret and informed him about their plan to attack the caravan.

Abu Sufyan and those with him were seized with fear. In no time, they sent news to Mecca to ask help from mushriks. Meccans were alarmed, when they got this news. Abu Jahl immediately gathered a strong army.

The Prophet (pbuh) did not actually have the intention to fight while setting off. He planned to capture the caravan and give a lesson to mushriks. Now they had two choices. They would either follow the caravan or fight with the Meccan army that set forth. The Prophet (pbuh) wanted to ask his companions to learn what they would like to do. The companions said:

- O Messenger of Allah! Do as you like. We already are ready to do whatever you ask us to do. If we need to fight, we are not afraid of death.

At that moment, they shouted "Allahu akbar".

The Prophet (pbuh) was delighted to see this. He said:

- Move! And rejoice upon the favor Allah will bestow on you. By Allah, it is as if I already see the Quraish people defeated in the battlefield.

THE LIONS OF BADR

Muslims' army was marching forward fearlessly. All of the mujahids were delighted and excited. Mujahid is the name given to brave men who fight in the cause of Allah. As to shahids (martyrs), they are the ones who died in the cause of Allah. When mujahids die during a fight, they become shahid and go the Paradise. Martyrdom is a very high status in Islam.

The Muslim army had gone out of Medina. There was a place called Badr. They settled down by the wells there. On the other hand, the army of Meccan mushriks that consisted of one thousand people was approaching rapidly. They had lots of camels, horses and maintenance with them. Being quite self-confidently, they were sure that they were going to gain a victory. Therefore, they laughed and had fun along the road.

As to our beloved Prophet, he turned to Allah wholeheartedly. He was praying to Him saying, "O Allah! If this little army of Muslims is defeated, there will be no one left on the earth to believe in You. So help us!"

Soon two armies confronted. It was a custom then, before the battle began, three warriors of each army challenged each other to single combat and fight. Among mushriks, Utba, Shaiba and Walid advanced. Shouting and mocking at Muslims, they all seemed to be quite sure of themselves. The Prophet ordered his uncle Hamza, Ubaida and his cousin Ali to advance. The fight started yet did not last long. All three of the mushriks were killed in a short spin of time.

Abu Jahl burst with anger when he saw his men killed. He turned to his army and shouted: "Charge!". Mushriks began running over Muslim army and soon a harsh

battle broke out between the armies. Mujahids were striving against mushriks as if they were lions.

Among mujahids, there were two fearless youngsters who were searching for Abu Jahl in the battlefield. Muslims. For he was the commander of mushriks and with his death, Muslims could gain a victory. Besides Abu Jahl harmed the Prophet (pbuh). So these brave youngsters wanted to recompense him. Finally, they found him and attacked. The commander of mushriks did not know what to do. Soon he was killed.

Allah did not left Muslims alone in this battle and helped them with an army of angels. Thus, mujahids gained more strength. Mushriks were gripped in fear. When they realized that they were going to lose, they run away. They were so frightened that their knees knock together.

In this battle which took place in Badr, Muslims gained the victory. Four Muslims were martyred in the battle of Badr. From the army of mushriks, seventy men died.

Muslims were sorrowful about the death of their Muslim friends. However, they were at the same time happy to know that they were going to the Paradise. The army returned to Medina. They gained the goods in the trade caravan as well. Moreover, they captured seventy men. Captive is the name given to those people who were captured by the enemy army. The Prophet (pbuh) went to the captives. He asked them about who knew how to read and write and to those who knew he said:

- Each of you will teach ten Muslims how to read and write. When you are done with this, you are free, you can go.

He was a prophet who showed mercy even to his enemy.



FATIMA AND ALI

*F*atima was the youngest one of Prophet's four daughters. He loved her very much and Fatima too loved his father a lot.

One day that they were still in Mecca, the Prophet (pbuh) was performing prayer by Ka'bah. Abu Jahl and his friends were making fun of him. When the Prophet prostrated, one of them came and put a camel's tripe over his head. Camel tripe is a quite dirty and heavy thing. Fatima saw all that happened. She was quite young at the time, but got furious at those who did this. Running to his father at once, she lifted the heavy camel tripe from his father's head with difficulty and moved it away. She was crying at the same time. Then his father prayed: "O Allah! Punish those who did evil."



The little Fatima was grown up and reached the age of marriage. There were many among companions who wanted to marry her. Through this, they could have a chance to be relatives with the Prophet. However, the Prophet wanted to marry her daughter to Ali, son of his uncle. He was praying to Allah for the goodness of this.

Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman were the Prophet's (pbuh) close friends. They knew that he wanted to marry her daughter to Ali. They had told about this to Ali. In fact, Ali also wanted to start a family with Fatima. However, he did not have the courage to say it. He was thinking like "What if the Prophet says no... What if he doesn't deem me worthy of her daughter..."

In the end, Umar told Ali to ask the Prophet to marry his daughter to him. Thereupon Ali built up his courage and went to the Prophet (pbuh). However, feeling ashamed, he did not know how to get into the subject. He bent his head and kept silent. The Prophet (pbuh) understood why he came. After a short silence, he asked:

- O Ali, you came to me to ask for my daughter's hand in marriage, didn't you?

Ali nodded his head and said:

- Yes.

A happy smile appeared on Prophet's face.

- O Ali! Welcome then, he said. He accepted Ali's request to marry his daughter, but he wanted to ask his daughter's opinion as well. In Arab custom, no one would ask his daughter for her opinion in such a situation. Because for them, girls and women were insignificant. However, the Prophet would always ask both his daughters and wives for their opinion and would never force them to do something they did not want to do. He asked Fatima whether she would like to marry Ali or not and she answered in the affirmative.

Thus, the Prophet's (pbuh) beloved daughter and his cousin got married. These young Muslim couple had very few furniture when they married. Nevertheless, they did not mind about it at all. For in a home set up for the sake of Allah, furniture has no importance..

DO YOUR DUTY PROPERLY

*I*t was the third year of the Hijrah. There was mourning announced in Mecca. Mushriks had lost their beloved family members in the battle of Badr. They could not acknowledge the fact that they had been defeated. People of Quraish came one day to Abu Sufyan and said:

— Muhammad killed our chiefs. We want to fight them and take revenge!

Abu Sufyan also had been aching for the revenge of Badr. He told them that they were right. Then, he immediately send a message to Mecca and surrounding villages. In a short span of time, he was able to gather a strong army of three thousand men. Moreover, some of the women who lost their relatives in Badr also joined the army. One of these women was Abu Sufyan's wife Hind. Her father and brother were both killed in Badr.

Thus, the mounted troops girded on their swords and armor set off towards Medina. Women within the army were playing tambourine and walking among the soldiers in order to motivate them.

Around that time, Fatima and Ali had a boy. Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) gave his first grandson the name Hasan. Later he was going to have another grandson to whom he gave the name Husayn. The Prophet (pbuh) was very happy to be a grandfather.

However, these happy days did not last long. Soon the news about mushrik army that had departed from Mecca came to Medina. The Prophet (pbuh) gathered his companions and asked:

- There is an army that set off from Mecca to Medina for war. Shall we defend Medina or shall we fight an offensive war and attack them?

Having won a victory in Badr, Muslims had gained more power. This was why they were confident about themselves. They said,

- O Messenger of Allah! Let's attack them.

Even though the Prophet (pbuh) wanted to stay and make defensive war, because his companions decided to attack, he did not raise an objection. He wore his battle suits on.

However, after a while, the companions regretted and came to the Prophet thinking that it would be best to do what the Prophet had said. They apologized from him. However, he did not reverse the decision. He told them:

- A Prophet does not give up his decision. If you do what I assigned you properly, we will win this war too!

Thus, Muslims too started to get ready for the war.





ARCHERS OF UHUD

Everything was ready. Messenger of Allah (pbuh) set off with his army composed of a thousand soldiers. However, their mounts were not enough. Most of the soldiers were on foot. Musab Ibn Umayr carried the flag of the army.

When they passed the halfway, a disturbance arose among soldiers. There was a man among Muslims called Abdullah Ibn Ubayy. This man was causing disturbances among the Muslims whenever he got a chance. This time he did the same. He was provoking the Muslim soldiers by saying "We should have met the enemy in Medina. Fighting out of the city is very dangerous." He regretted to set off. Some people shared the same thought with him and the disturbance started to increase. Thus, Abdullah Ibn Ubayy returned to Medina with three hundred soldiers he took with him.

Thus, the number of Muslims decreased to seven hundred. They were not even the quarter of Quraysh army. Everyone was angry with Abdullah Ibn Ubayy. This act of him was not right at all. Fortunately, the despondency could be overcome in a short time. Others continued their expedition under the command of our Prophet (pbuh).

Mountain of Uhud came into view. Our Prophet (pbuh) chose fifty archers among his soldiers and located them on the hill of Aynayn. These archers were going to prevent the polytheists soldiers from moving around the back and trapping the Muslim army.

Soon after Meccan army arrived. Abu Sufyan was their commander. Soldiers of both sides started to fight one by one. Exactly nine fights were done. In all of these preliminary fights, Muslim mujahids became victorious. Abu Sufyan could not wait anymore. He shout out "charge." Soldiers from both sides attacked each other. Muslims were fighting well despite they were minority in number. Above all our Prophet (pbuh) was strongest one among them. He was riding and using his sword very professionally. Ali says, "During the scariest moments of the battle, we would hide behind our Prophet (pbuh). He would give us courage and power." However, Ali was also a strong fighter. All of the Muslims were getting strength from our Prophet.

Muslims dispelled the enemy army and were about to win the battle. Polytheists started to run around in a state of fear. Abu Sufyan was shouting: "Do not disperse! Carry on fighting!" However, no one listened to him.

Muslims started to chase escaping enemy soldiers. The soldiers were running without looking back. Archers, who took courage from this, shout out,

- The enemy has been defeated!

Their commander said,

- Stop! Where are you going? We sould not leave our posts without the order of Prophet (pbuh).

Some archers said,

- Don't you see? Enemy fled by leaving their booties in the battlefield. We should go and collect them.

They did not listen to their commander. Only a few soldiers stayed at their posts.

MARTYRS OF UHUD

The battle had not ended yet. Archers' leaving their posts was the thing that exactly the enemy wished for. A group of enemy soldiers realized that the hill way was opened. With a last effort, they moved around the hill and surrounded Muslims. They martyred the remaining archers who tried to defend their posts. Thereupon the army of Quraysh took courage. Fleeing soldiers returned. They started to fight back to Muslims by surrounding them from both sides.

Muslims who were caught unprepared were in confusion. Army was in a rush. At the very moment they presumed that they won the battle, they became helpless and deprived their strength. They dispersed around by running from one place to another. At that moment, Hamza was martyred by a slave called Wahshi. Messenger of Allah (pbuh) also got hurt and his face was drenched in blood. A handful of Muslims around him were trying to protect him. Even Ummu Umare who joined army in order to give water to soldiers put her water skin away and picked up a sword, and run to protect the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Muslims were in a very difficult situation.

At that moment one of the soldiers of Quraish shouted out by thinking that our Prophet was dead:

- Muhammad is dead! Muhammad is dead!

This news shocked the Muslims who were dispersed. They started to look for our Prophet in a rush. Thank Allah, Muhammad (pbuh) was alive. They took heart. At the last moment, they gathered and weakened the polytheists' attack. Abu Sufyan was still thinking that the Messenger of Allah was dead. He disengaged his soldiers and got to top of a hill. Mujahids gathered on the top of counter hill.

Abu Sufyan was wondered about Muhammad. He called out to them and asked:

- Is Muhammad with you?

Umar shout out:

- Allah's Messenger is alive, O you enemy of Allah! He is among us and hears your words.

Then Abu Sufyan said:

- This is the revenge of Badr. Now supremacy is ours. We have Hubal and Uzza. They help us.

Umar replied:

- Our Lord is Allah! And you have no Lord!

Abu Sufyan gathered his soldiers and set off back to Mecca. Muslims went down to the field in order to bury their martyrs. Our Prophet (pbuh) learned the martyrdom of his uncle and became very sad. His eyes were filled with tears.

Muslims was subject to this disaster because they did not listen to our Prophet (pbuh). Archers did not keep their posts and went for having the booty. This behavior cost Muslims dearly. All of them were in a deep sorrow.

During the battle of Uhud seventy Muslims became martyrs. One of them was Musab Ibn Umayr who was the first teacher went for teaching the principles of the Qur'an.

Twenty polytheists in the army of enemy were killed.

Allah has revealed the following verse in order to relieve the Muslims' distress:

"So do not become weak, nor be sad and you will be superior if you are true believers."

Allah was testing believers with victory and defeat. Those who have faith in their hearts are the ones who are not afraid of difficulties.

NEWS OF MARTYRS IN RAJI

*I*t was the fourth year of Hijrah...

Muslims were quite sorrowful after the battle of Uhud. During the battle, the Prophet (pbuh) was wounded and Hamza was martyred. The bravest young man in Medina, Mus'ab was also among the martyrs. Medina was having hard days with the grief of their loss. In those days, our Prophet (pbuh) was praying for Allah to give them strength and power.

The defeat of Muslims gave courage to mushrik tribes living in surrounding area. In those tribes, there were people who did not want Muslims to increase in number and to spread Islam.

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) on the other hand kept sending teachers from people of



Suffa to surrounding tribes in order to increase Muslims' power. These teachers taught Islam wherever they went and preached them how to live in accordance with Islam.

Adal and Qara tribes were among the ones who were disturbed by the spread of Islam. They did not want Islam to gain strength but they were hiding this fact. One day, a group of six people from these tribes came to the Prophet (pbuh).

- Oh Allah's Messenger! We became Muslims, so send us teachers, they said. However, they were actually lying.

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) believed their words and accepted this offer. He chose ten people among the Companions of Suffa and sent them along with the ones who came from those tribes.

The journey was long and hard. The ten teachers and the men who were taking them got tired of walking. There was a water well called Raji on their way. They decided to take a rest by the well.

Just then, suddenly an archer unit of one hundred people appeared and surrounded the teachers. Muslims could not understand what was going on. Soon the truth was revealed. The men who came to the Prophet (pbuh) and asked him to send them instructors to teach Islam were actually the enemies of Islam. They delivered Muslims mercilessly to those one hundred people. Their intention was not to learn about Islam, but to get the Muslims killed. In short, they had set an insidious trap to them.

However, the Muslim teachers were brave people. They did not surrender themselves to the archers who came to kill them. Drawing their swords, they began fighting with them. The enemy was crowded. It was really hard to withstand against them. Seven of the teachers were martyred just over there. As to other three, they were taken captives. On the road, the mushriks martyred another one among them. When they arrived at Mecca, the remaining two were also martyred by Abu Sufyan and his men.

No one of the ten teachers who set off in order to preach Islam survived. They all went to the Paradise.

When our beloved Prophet heard about this incident, he became so sad. He prayed for the martyrs. This sad news increased the believers' pain.

SEVENTY HAFIZES OF THE QUR'AN

*I*t was the fourth year of Hijrah.

After the battle of Uhud, Abu Bara who was the chief of Najid tribe came to Medina. He asked from the Prophet (pbuh) to send instructors to teach them Islam. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

- I am worried about that something bad might happen to the teachers I send.

However, Abu Bara was a reliable person and the people were afraid of him. They would do whatever he tells them to do. This was why when he said that he could protect the teachers, the Prophet (pbuh) believed his word and prepared seventy sahabis. Sahabi is the word used in the meaning of the companions of Allah's Messenger (pbuh).

In the absence of Abu Bara, his nephew Amir ibn Tufayl was in charge. The Prophet (pbuh) sent a letter to Amir ibn Tufayl and told him to protect the teachers he was sending.

All seventy of these teachers were from the Companions of Suffa. They knew the whole Qur'an by heart so they were called hafiz of the Qur'an. Hafiz people played a very important role in the spread Islam. Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) loved them and cared about them very much.



The hafiz teachers set off along with Abu Bara and his men. On their way, there was a water well called Biri Mauna. Because their way was very long, they were going to take a rest by the well. While they were having a rest, the man who was carrying the Prophet's (pbuh) letter was going to keep going.

However, when they came by the dwell, something very bad happened. Amir ibn Tufayl surrounded the Muslims with a crowded army. Without even reading the letter sent by the Prophet to him, he attacked Muslims.

- We're teachers of the Prophet. We do no harm to anyone, Muslims said. However, they could not have their voices heard.

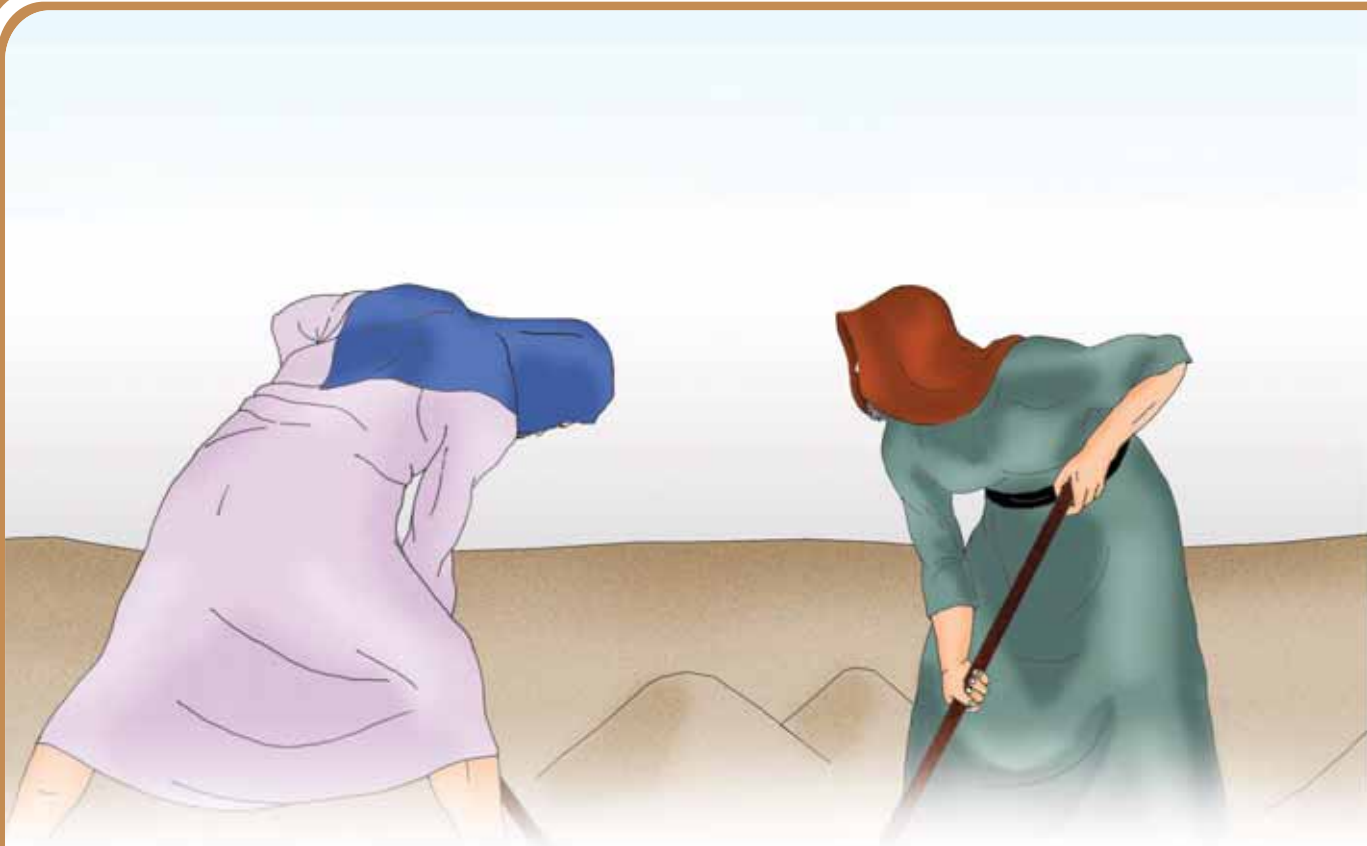
Amir ibn Tufayl was a real enemy of Islam. He did not even listen to his uncle Abu Bara. Amir ibn Tufayl's own tribe had not wanted to kill the Muslims, so he had gathered soldiers from surrounding tribes. These mean-spirited soldiers martyred the hafiz teachers there. Only two of them was able to escape and save their lives.

Before they were martyred, the hafiz teachers prayed saying, "O Allah! Inform your Messenger about our situation, deliver our greetings to him."

Allah informed the Prophet (pbuh) what these beloved people asked. The Prophet (pbuh) was very sad to hear about their martyrdom. He immediately gathered his companions and said, "Your brothers are surrounded and martyred by mushriks. They were pleased with Allah, and so is Allah with them."

The Prophet (pbuh) never wanted anyone to be harmed. This was why he would never treat anyone badly or curse them. Cursing means to pray to Allah and ask from Him the punishment someone. However, as soon as he learned that the hafiz teachers were martyred, the Prophet (pbuh) cursed for a month for those who killed Muslims at Biri Mauna. He asked Allah to punish them and Muslims who were present there said "amin" for the Prophet's prayer. Allah the Exalted accepted the prayer of his Messenger and in due time, He punished those merciless people one by one.





THE TRENCH

*I*t was the fifth year of the hijrah...

The love of Muslims to their religion was endless. They put their heart and soul in living Islam and spreading it. No hardship they faced could make them give up. On the other hand, the Jews in Medina were not happy to see this. They began feeling anxious that Muslims might increase in number and harm them. Therefore, they did not follow the agreement they had with Muslims, and especially Banu Nadir Jews broke the agreement and plotted to assassinate Allah's Messenger (pbuh).

However, this plan was heard in a short time. The Prophet (pbuh) ordered the Jews, who broke the agreement, to leave their houses. However, the Jews rejected this.

Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) prepared an army and organized an expedition over them. Banu Nadir Jews who did not adhere to the agreement were forced to leave their lands.

These Jews settled in surrounding tribes. Each of them was feeling the anger of having been forced to leave their houses.

In Medina, there were also people who pretended to believe in Islam but did not do so in reality. These people were called munafiq, which means hypocrite. Whenever there was an incident from which they could gain benefit, they would side with Muslims. And whenever there was a hardship, they would leave them alone.

The hypocrites, the Meccan mushriks, and Jews collaborated with and decided to start a war against Muslims. The chief of Jewish tribes went to Mecca and shared his thoughts with Abu Sufyan. They agreed to prepare a huge army and attack Medina.

People of Quraish were already the archenemies of Muslims. Having sent message to surrounding tribes, Abu Sufyan prepared a huge army. Jews from the tribe of Banu Nadir took their place in this ten-thousand-man army. Soon the army set off towards Medina.

Muslims had received the bad news. How would they stand against this huge army? Just then, Salman al-Farisi who came from Persia and was recently converted to Islam said:

- O Messenger of Allah! In Persia, we used to dig a trench around our cities to defend them. Let us dig a huge trench around Medina as well. By this way, the enemy cannot enter the city.

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) liked the idea. Thus, he ordered his companions to dig the trench. The companions grabbed the digging tools and set to work immediately. The Prophet (pbuh) also was among them working in earnest. In those days, there was famine in Medina. People had too little food at their homes. In addition to these, it was winter. Muslims were working with self-sacrifice, in cold, and half-satiated. On the other hand, the hypocrites thought the idea of trench as a useless effort. None of them came near to work.

However, the believers did not give up. They worked days and nights. In the end, the digging of the trench was completed. It was a five and half kilometers long, really big and deep trench.

THE BATTLE OF TRENCH

With his ten-thousand-men army, Abu Sufyan came to Medina. However, when he saw the long trench dug around the city, he could not believe his eyes. Yet, he had thought that he could ravage the city with his strong army within a couple of hours. The soldiers were walking around the trench up and down, but could not find anywhere to cross it. A deep unrest arose in the army. Desperately, they encamped on the other side of the trench.

They were thinking of solutions for crossing the trench. However, Muslims were shooting arrows whenever the soldiers tried to cross it. The wait of enemy army lasted for days. Even though two of the mounted soldiers were able to cross the trench, but Ali and one of his friends killed both of them immediately.

Days were passing. Abu Sufyan and his army was demoralized. It was impossible for them to enter Medina without passing the trench. It had been nearly a month since they came there, but they could not have any result. It also was very hard to wait in the cold.

When they were not able to cross the trench, Abu Sufyan tried to find a way to fight the enemy from inside. There was a Jewish tribe in Medina called Banu Quraiza. They had not broken their agreement with Muslims yet. However, when Abu Sufyan sent them a message and asked for their help, they immediately turned their back on Muslims and sided with mushriks.

Muslims had a harder job now. They were to fight both the enemies waiting on the other side of the trench and the Jews of Banu Quraiza who were in Medina.

The weather got colder. The Muslims' food reserve was nearly depleted and their strength to resist was weakening. Abu Sufyan's army could cross the trench and enter the city at any moment. However, the deadly waiting in the emplacement was continuing. Muslims were bravely shooting arrows to the enemy. They were at the same time withstanding against Jews inside.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) kept praying to Allah without a break:

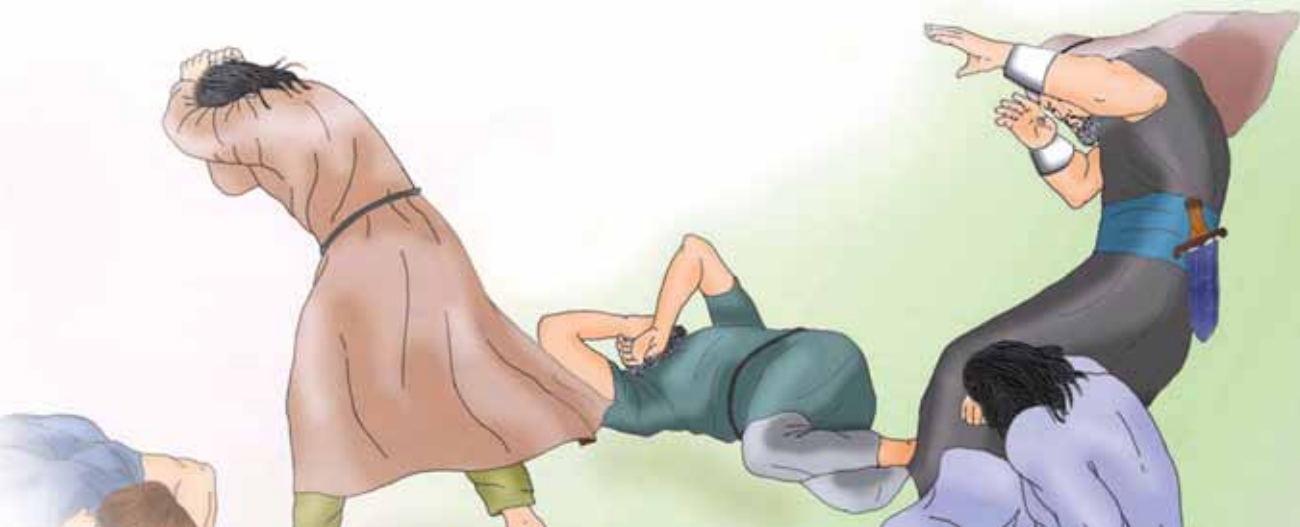
- O Allah who revealed the Qur'an and who is swift in reckoning. Disperse our enemy and vanish them. Scatter them.

Allah accepted the prayers of his Messenger. That night, it got freezing cold. A strong gust of cold wind rose up and flew the tents of Quraishi people away. Their fire went out, cooking caldrons tumbled down, and the horses and camels ran away. The mouths and noses of the mushriks were filled with dust. The enemy army was shocked. Their encampment was dispersed and torn down. They began running here and there with fear and shock. They swore to return to Mecca as soon as the storm subsided.

That night they set off in a hurry. They could not even pick their belongings while leaving.

In the morning, the storm completely faded away. Muslims overjoyed when they did not see the enemy army where it used to be. The enemy had given up and gone. Moreover, they had left many goods behind. Sacks of dates, food, camels, swords and shields were all Muslims' now. Muslims got rid of the danger of famine thanks to the food that Mushriks left behind.

In the Battle of Trench, four of the mushriks were killed and five Muslims were martyred.



BANU QURAIZA

During the battle of Trench, Muslims had very hard and difficult times. They were opposing the enemy and trying to deal with famine at the same time. On the other hand, the Jews of Banu Quraiza tribe did Muslims the worst thing that could be done in such a situation. They broke the agreement between them and attacked Muslims by collaborating with the enemy. What they did could not be left unanswered. They needed to pay for what they had done. So, as soon as the battle was over, the Prophet said to his companions:

- From now on, the Jews will not be able to dare fighting us. For we will confront them.

Soon he sent his army over Jews of Banu Quraiza. The Jews who learned that Muslims were coming for them took refuge in their castles. By doing so, they thought that they assured their security. However, Muslims were determined. Keeping watch and ward there, they did not give any chance to their opponents.

The Jews of Banu Quraiza regretted to break the agreement. They asked for permission to leave Medina and go anywhere else. However, the Prophet (pbuh) did not allow



them to do so, because it was possible for them to collaborate again with mushriks and attack Muslims. The Prophet (pbuh) wanted them to surrender.

The Jews did not come out of their castle. They refused to surrender. Meanwhile, their archers kept shooting arrows from the castle to Muslims. However, as the days went by, their weapons and food were exhausted. They had no strength to stand any more.

In the end, after twenty-five days, they surrendered. Allah's Messenger told them that if they became Muslims, they would be forgiven. However, the Jews declined this offer. Only four among them accepted to convert to Islam. The rest wanted to be punished in accordance with Torah. Torah is the name of the Holy Scripture revealed to the Prophet Musa. Jews believed in the Prophet Musa. However, they had corrupted the religion brought by him and changed some parts of the Torah. Moreover, they were expecting a Prophet to come among their nation. Thus, when prophethood came to Muhammad (pbuh), they felt jealous and did not accept his prophethood.

They wanted to be judged in accordance with the Torah and the Prophet (pbuh) accepted this. According to the rules of the Torah, their women and children were taken captives and their men were punished by death.

Thus, Banu Quraiza Jews paid the price of betraying Muslims by their lives.

THE TREATY OF HUDAYBIYYAH

*I*t had been six years since the Prophet (pbuh) migrated from Mecca to Medina.

Against all obstacles of mushriks, the number of those who converted to Allah's religion and Islam gained more strength. However, Muslims had missed the places where they grew up, but were forced to leave behind in order to be able to live their religion. They wanted to visit the Ka'bah. Knowing about the desires of the believers, the Prophet gave his Companions the good news that they were very soon going to visit Allah's House.

The Muslims rejoiced with this news. They got prepared at once for the road. Visiting the Ka'bah is a very important act of worship in Islam. By visiting it during the months of Hajj, believers perform their Hajj (major pilgrimage) worship. Visiting the Ka'bah within the times other than the months of Hajj is called "Umrah (minor pilgrimage)". The Prophet (pbuh) was going to Mecca with his companions for Umrah. He did not have any intention to fight anyone. They were only going to visit Allah's house and return.



The number of Muslims reached a thousand and four hundred. They were all in white clothes for Umrah when they set off from Medina in great enthusiasm. In case something bad would happen, many of them took their swords along.

The distance between Mecca and Medina was very long. The journey took days. Meccans who learned that Muslims were approaching thought that they were coming to fight. They got alarmed, so in order to ascertain the situation, they sent observers.

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions stopped over in a valley called Hdaybiyyah. The Prophet (pbuh) sent one of his closest friends, Uthman to Mecca as a messenger. Uthman was the Prophet's son-in-law and he had many relatives in Mecca. The Prophet (pbuh) hoped that Meccans would take his words into consideration. However, Meccans did not want to listen to the messenger. They said to him:

- We cannot allow Muslims to enter our city. However, you are an important person, so if you like, you can do your worship on your own.

However, Uthman did not accept to visit the Ka'bah without the Prophet (pbuh).

On the other hand, Muslims were curiously waiting for the news Uthman was to bring. Yet, he was late. Soon the rumor spread that he had been killed. Muslims were deeply grieved to hear this. They immediately gathered around the Prophet (pbuh) and swore that they would fight the people of Quraish who killed Uthman. The allegiance Muslims swore by laying their hands over the Prophet's (pbuh) is called "the Pledge of Ridwan".

Hearing about that Muslims swore to fight them scared the mushriks. When the army was about to start moving, something astonishing happened. Uthman showed up along with a group of people. Muslims were happy to see that Uthman was alive. Pointing at the chief of the committee, Uthman said:

- Quraish wants to sign a peace treaty with us.

The Prophet (pbuh) leaned towards this offer. Thus, on that day, the treaty of Hdaybiyyah was signed between Muslims and the people of Quraish.

According to this treaty, Muslims were to return without entering Mecca. However, they were going to visit Allah's house in the coming year. It was saddening for Muslims to return without being able to see the Ka'bah. However, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was in the opinion that this treaty was necessary at the time. The importance of the treaty of Hdaybiyyah was going to be understood more clearly by the Muslims in the following years.

THE LETTERS

After the treaty of Hudaibiyyah, Muslims returned to Medina.

Our Prophet (pbuh) wanted Islam to be heard everywhere either close or far. Therefore, he sent letters to the rulers of various lands. In these letters, he invited the rulers and their followers to Allah's religion.

Some of the kings took an interest in those letters. There were also those among them who embraced Islam. While some of them did not even want to hear about this religion. Moreover, boasting of being a king, they mocked at Islam and the Prophet (pbuh) and showed disrespect to Allah. Yet, Allah is the One who gives men their power or takes it back. He is the One who bestows His blessings to them. He can take it back whenever He wishes. However, these poor kings were not eager to understand this fact.

The Prophet (pbuh) used a seal on all his letters. His seal was a sign on which was written, "Allah's Messenger". He sent his letters by signing with this seal.

Thus, Islam was heard all over the world. People began wondering about this religion they heard for the first time. Could this religion make them happy? For every single person likes to be happy in their lives. However, nobody was happy enough, because the kings ruling over their lands were not nice to their people. There was disorder and oppression everywhere. People were not hesitating to do evil to each other.

Muslims, on the other hand, were the world's kindest people. They all loved each other and did not treat each other with injustice, because they were brothers and sisters. The Prophet (pbuh) told that all Muslims were brothers and sisters in terms of religion.



This exemplary brotherhood and sisterhood made even *mushriks* jealous. When they saw the collaboration and unity among Muslims, they admired them. Khalid ibn Walid, one of the prominent commanders of Quraish, was one of them. The unity and solidarity among Muslims influenced him deeply.

One day, escaping from Mecca, he came to Medina. His friend Amr ibn As was also with him. They told the Medinans that they wanted to see the Prophet (pbuh) and convert to Islam.

Muslims overjoyed upon this news. They took these two guests to the Prophet (pbuh) at once. He welcomed them with smiling face. Khalid and Amr pronounced the kalimat al-shahadah and joined the believers. Thereby, Islam gained more strength with conversion of these two important people.

THE CONQUEST OF KHAIBAR

*I*t was the seventh year of Hijrah...

Khaybar was a big Jewish city in the north side of Medina. The Jews that were forced to leave Medina by Muslims had settled here. People of Khaibar did not like Muslims at all. Therefore, they had collaborated with other Jews during the battle of Trench.

The Prophet wanted to sign a peace treaty with the Jews of Khaibar. By this way, they could stop the attacks against Muslims. He sent a messenger to Khaibar to offer peace. However, the Jews paid no attention, because they still intended to unite against Muslims and fight them.

The news spread in Medina that Jews were getting ready for a battle with Muslims. With the command of the Prophet (pbuh), Muslims also took action. Soon a crowded army was prepared. They set off towards Khaibar. After going a long distance, they stopped in Raji. It was night and whenever The Prophet (pbuh) went to a war, he would not do night raids but wait for the morning.

After the dawn prayer, the army under the command of the Prophet (pbuh) advanced on Khaibar. When the Jews came out from their houses in the morning, they were shocked to see Muslims in their city. They were screaming,

- The soldiers of Muhammad! The soldiers of Muhammad are here.

There were seven castles in Khaibar. The Jews took refuge in them. They stored their weapons and food in these castles all of which were quite safeguarded. Feeling confident, they thought that no army would be able to capture these castles.

However, Muslims were determined. The Jews who were hostile to them at every possible opportunity were going to be punished this time. The mujahids laid siege to the castles. They had been fighting for twenty days to be able to enter them. Finally, they managed to capture six of the castles. There was only one castle left which was called the Kamus Castle known as the most powerful castle of the Jews. Its commander was a very strong man who had not been defeated until that time.

The Prophet (pbuh) put Ali in charge for this duty. Ali girded himself with a sword and went in front of the castle. He called one of the Jews out.

Then the sturdy Jewish commander stepped out of the castle. He supposed that he would be able to knock Ali down just with one sword blow. However, Ali leaped forward as a thunderbolt. Fighting valiantly, he killed the enemy. The Jews who witnessed their commander being beaten down surrendered with fear. Thus, the last castle was captured.

Khaibar was now taken by Muslims. The Jews agreed to work on their own land as workers. They were going to pay half of what they harvested to Muslims.

The battle of Khaibar ended up with the victory of Muslims. There were five martyrs among Muslims and ninety-three of the Jews were killed in the battle.



THE BATTLE OF MU'TAH

*I*t was the eighth year of Hijrah...

The letters of the Prophet (pbuh) to the rulers of various lands continued to be written. One of the letters was written to the governor of Busra under the rule of Byzantine. In the letter, which Allah's Messenger (pbuh) sent with a messenger, he invited the governor of Busra and his people to embrace Islam. The Muslim messenger met with the governor of Busra in town of Mu'tah. He said that he was the messenger of the Prophet Muhammad and delivered the letter he brought along.

However, the governor had the Muslims' messenger killed after he read the letter. This was something unprecedented. Messenger is just intermediary who delivers messages. No one would kill a messenger and killing a messenger means a big disrespect to the person who sent the letter.

When the Prophet (pbuh) heard that his messenger was killed, he felt very sad. He made an army of three thousand men prepared and sent to Mu'tah.

When the governor of Busra learned Muslims' coming, he asked for help from Byzantine Emperor. Thus, a hundred-thousand-man Byzantine army set off towards Mu'tah.



The armies of two parties met in the town of Mu'tah. When Muslims confronted such a crowded army, they puzzled for a moment. However, the commander of Muslims, Abdullah ibn Rawaha addressed the mujahids in the army:

- My friends! Our enemy is strong and more numerous than us. Nevertheless, if you ask me, I would say to fight for our religion. We will be martyrs if we die, and veterans if we survive. Aren't both beautiful?

Shortly after this speech, a violent battle broke out. Zayd ibn Haritha, one of the commanders of Muslims leaped forward with the Muslims' flag. He heroically fought against thousands of soldiers and overcame lots of them. However, in the end, he became martyred by the lances of the enemy.

When Zayd was martyred, Jafar ibn Abu Talib took the flag. He, too, bravely fought. When his right hand with which he was holding the flag was cut off, he took the flag to his left hand. However, when his left hand was cut off, he clung to it with the remaining parts of his arms. Even though he was seriously injured, he fought to his last breath.

After Jafar, Rawaha took the flag. He fought heroically by reading poems. His body which was riddled by the enemy was drenched in blood. Finally, he, too, became a martyr.

Martyrdom of all three commanders caused despondency among Muslim soldiers. Khalid ibn Walid took the control of the army. He began fighting fearlessly. That they nine swords was smashed in his hands.

In the evening, when a break was given to the war, Khalid ibn Walid reorganized the army. He placed the ones in the front to the back, and the ones in the back to the front; the ones in the right side, to the left and the ones in the left side to right.

Mujahids attacked at the enemy all of a sudden in the morning. The enemy was confused when they did not see the fighters they fought the day before, they thought that a support unit came to assist the Muslims. Being frightened, they withdrew.

Muslims had twelve martyrs in this violent battle. They were all sad for losing their beloved friends.

On the other hand, they had defeated a huge army under the command of Khalid ibn Walid. This was the first battle Khalid attended after his conversion. He was a great commander.



TOWARDS MECCA

*I*t was the eighth year of Hijrah.

Two years had passed over the treaty of Hudaibiyyah. One day when the Prophet (pbuh) was sitting in the masjid, forty men came to him from Khuza'a, a tribe near Medina. Their chief said to him:

- O Messenger of Allah! The tribe of Banu Bakr attacked our homes suddenly in the night. They killed twenty-three of us. The survivors could hardly save their lives. People of Quraish helped them.

The Prophet (pbuh) was very much upset to hear this. People of Khuza'a were honest people who always stood by Muslims. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would always show respect and protect them. According to the treaty of Hudaibiyyah, the mushriks were not going to attack any Muslims. Attacking the people of Khuza'a meant that they broke the treaty.

To those who came to him, the Prophet said:

- Don't worry. I will help you.

Then he send a message to Quraish, asking them to pay war compensation to people of Khuza'a because they did not observe the treaty. However, people of Quraish paid

no attention. They neither compensate the damage they caused to people of Khuza'a, nor did they stop being hostile against Muslims.

Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) started to organize a military expedition. However, he kept it secret which direction they were going for the expedition. Besides, he called for support from other Muslim tribes. In a short span of time, he made a ten-thousand-men army ready.

The army set off on a hot day of Ramadan. With the ones who joined the army on the way, the number of Muslims counted twelve-thousand.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) did not want the Quraish to learn that they were coming for them and get ready for a war. Therefore, he informed Muslims only on the halfway to Mecca. His aim was to enter Mecca without fighting. So he prayed throughout the way:

- O Allah! Make the eyes and ears of Quraish people closed so that we may unexpectedly enter the city.

After the several days-long journey, the army arrived at Mecca. In the night, Muslims lit fires in front of their tents. They spent the night praying and worshipping.

The fires were seen from Mecca. Meccans who saw the crowded army was coming over them were seized with fear.

Soon it was heard that those who were coming were Muslims. The commander of Mecca, Abu Sufyan could hardly stand still out of worries. He decided to go and talk to the Prophet (pbuh). Getting on his horse, he went where Muslims were. Seeing the size of the Muslim army, he became speechless. Then, he told Muslims that he wanted to see the Prophet.

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) greeted him with smiling face. Abu Sufyan asked for signing a peace treaty. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told him that if there were no one opposing them, they would not fight anyone, and added:

- When our army enters Mecca, whoever enters Abu Sufyan's house will be safe; whoever stays in their own houses will be safe; whoever takes refuge in Ka'bah will be safe.

Abu Sufyan understood that they would be defeated if they fought, so he returned Mecca and told the people of Quraish what the Prophet (pbuh) had told him.

ENTERING MECCA

The Prophet (pbuh) had divided the army into four sections before they entered in Mecca. He appointed a commander to lead each group and told them from where they were going to enter the city. Then he said:

- Do not fight with Meccans. Do not shed blood unless you are attacked.

Muslims entered Mecca from four sides. Allah's Messenger was marching forward on his camel. With his head bowed down, he looked very humble. He was thankful to Allah. The city they were forced to leave in secret was now in the hands of the Muslims.

It was calm in Mecca. Everybody were in their homes. Muslims were marching with takbirs.

There were three hundred and sixty idols in the Ka'bah. Hubel, the largest among them, was placed on the Ka'bah. The Prophet (pbuh) started smashing the idols into pieces with a stick. He was at same time saying:

- The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished; surely, falsehood is bound to vanish. (al-Isra, 17: 81)

At that point, the Meccans who realized that Muslims would not do anything to them came out of their homes and gathered around the Ka'bah. With puzzled eyes, they were watching the idols being broken into pieces. The gods they had worshipped until the day before were turned into rubbles.

The Prophet (pbuh) entered in the Ka'bah and smashed the ones inside, too. He tore up the paintings on the walls. He did not leave even a small piece of stone back. The House of Allah the Exalted was cleaned up from the idols. Muslims were living this moment in tears by saying "Allahu akbar!"

As for the people of Quraish, they were sad and scared and were waiting what was going to happen to them. They were worried about the decision the Prophet (pbuh) about them.

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) performed prayer along with his companions by the Ka'bah and circumambulated it. He was thinking of the twenty years that passed over his prophethood. He came to these days after going through a very difficult struggle. During circumambulation around the Ka'bah, he was saying:

- There is no god other than Allah. There is only Him. He has no equals no partners. He fulfilled His promise. He helped His servant. He alone defeated all enemies.

He then turned to the people of Quraish and recited the following verse:

- O people! We have created you from male and female and made you into peoples and tribes not so that you pride yourselves, but you may know one another. Surely the most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is the one who avoids disobedience. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.

The Prophet (pbuh) was always forgiving. He did not have a grudge towards the Meccans who banished them from their land. He did not punish them.

Witnessing this power and mercifulness of Muslims during conquest of Mecca, many Meccan mushrik swore allegiance to the Prophet and became Muslims.

During the conquest, one of the most unforgettable moments was when the adhan was recited in the Ka'bah after it had been cleaned from idols.

The Meccan sky resounded with Bilal's voice reciting the adhan. Muslims who were forced to migrate from their land were thankful to Allah. With the help of Allah, they were able to conquer the blessed city, Mecca. It was the flag of Islam that was going to flap over this sacred land that once had hosted the Prophet (pbuh).



THE BEST OF ALL HUMAN BEINGS IN RESPECT TO MORALS

After completing his pilgrimage, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) returned to Medina. Mecca, the city of the prophets, was cleaned from the idols and polytheism. People were embracing Allah's religion in crowds. Muslims were happy ... Allah's Messenger was happy. Mecca and Medina were cities honored by Islam. The light of Islam illuminated the Arabian Peninsula.

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) was thanking Allah for all those blessings. He would never boast about the things that he did. He knew that all good things come from Allah. He was very modest and merciful. He was the best of people in respect to morality.

He would feel sorry for the poor, the wayfarer, and the weak. He would protect and help them.

He would never speak with harsh and impolite words.

He would never tell people their mistakes directly but correct them by using methods that would not hurt their feelings.

He would never interrupt people's speeches, but rather listen to them until the end of their talks.

He would never keep himself busy with things that did not concern him. He would not search people's secrets.

Provided that they were not disrespect to Allah or His religion, he would forgive the mistakes done to him.

However, he would give the proper punishment to those who violate the rules established by Allah.



He would always thank Allah for His blessings. He would always wash his hands before having a meal and would never should ingratitude for the food given him by Allah.

When he finished his meal, he would thank Allah.

Moreover, he was the most generous of all people. He would give as charity anything he had, because he disliked to accumulate goods.

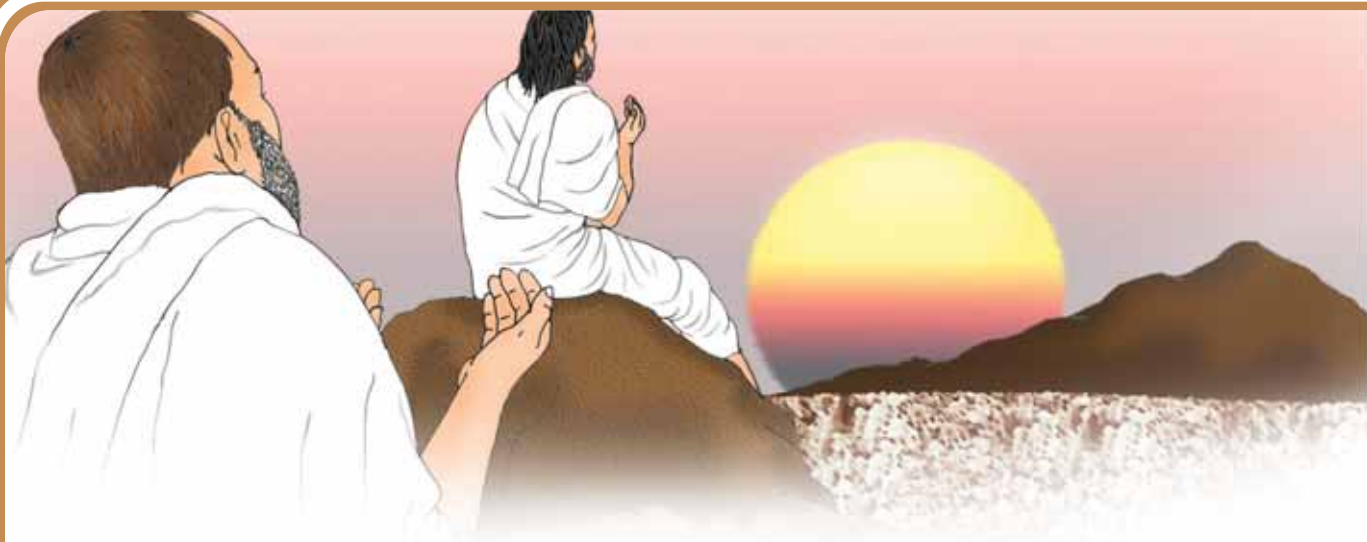
No one could be better than him in terms of righteousness and fairness. He was so just that no matter who committed a crime, he would treat them equally. He would not let wealthy people to be esteemed more than they deserved and tyrannize the poor the way it used to be before the birth of Islam.

This mild and beautiful manners of him has become a model for everyone. He would neither reprehend anyone nor break their heart. He liked children very much and would make them happy with gifts. Whenever the children saw him coming, they would gather around him and show him their love. The Prophet would not pass them without caressing their heads. He would protect all orphans.

The beautiful morality of our Prophet (pbuh) has been narrated from generation to generation.

In the Qur'an, it is remarked about Allah's Messenger (pbuh) as follows:

"Verily you are of a great morality." (al-Qalam, 68: 4)



THE FAREWELL SERMON

*I*t was the tenth year of Hijrah.

Islam was spreading rapidly. There was no one who did not heard about this beautiful religion any more. The Prophet (pbuh) wanted to go to Mecca and perform hajj. This was going to be the first pilgrimage after he migrated to Medina. Muslims who wanted to go to hajj gathered in Medina. They set off all together on 22 February 632 CE.

- Labbayk Allahumma labbayh... Labbayk Allahuma labbayk... which means "O Allah, here I am at Your service.... O Allah, here I am at Your service....."

Throughout the journey, the number of Muslims increased and reached to a hundred thousand. This journey took ten days. Finally, they arrived in Mecca. They all were so happy. When the Prophet (pbuh) saw the Ka'bah, he prayed:

- O Allah! Increase the honor and sublimity of your House. Also increase the honor and dignity of those who visit it.

Then he circumambulated the Ka'bah along with his companions. Muslims were paying their respect to their Lord, saying:

- Labbayk Allahumma labbayh... Labbayk Allahuma labbayk...

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) walked up to plain of Arafat. Arafat is the name of a plain close to Mecca. The Prophet (pbuh) on his camel went towards the mountain of Mercy located in the middle of the plain of Arafat. Then he dismounted from his camel and performed prayer. His companions, too, performed prayer with him.

Then Allah's Messenger came down to plain of Arafat. He recited the following verse to the Muslims who gathered around to listen to him: "Today I have completed your religion for you, and I have chosen for you Islam as a religion." (al-Maida 5: 3)

That day in the middle of the plain of Arafat, on his camel called Quswa, our beloved Prophet (pbuh) addressed his companions whose number reached 124000:

- All praise is due to Allah. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. And I bear witness that He is One, without an equal, partner, or associate. Nothing resembles Him. I again bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.

- O people! Listen to me carefully. For I do not know if I may be able to meet you again here after this year...

My companions! You will die one day and meet your Lord and He will question you about your deeds. Do not return to your previous sins. Do not kill each other.

My companions! Whoever has been given something for safekeeping should give it back to its owner.

- O People! Protect the rights of women.

- O believers! I entrust you two things. As long as you follow them, you will not go astray. They are the Book of Allah, the Qur'an, and my Sunnah.

- Oh believers! Listen to my words carefully and understand them. Each Muslim is the brother or sister of other Muslims, so all Muslims are brothers and sisters.

- O people! Do not ever do following four things:

* Do not associate any partner to Allah.

* Do not unjustly kill any soul which Allah has forbidden.

* Do not commit adultery.

* Do not steal.

- O people! You will be asked about me when the day comes, what would you say? Have I conveyed Allah's message?

The companions answered all together:

- You have conveyed Allah's religion, discharged your duty of prophethood and counseled.

While saying these, Muslims were all crying.

Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) rose his forefinger up and then pointed at his companions saying:

- O Allah, be my witness!

- O Allah, be my witness!

- O Allah, be my witness!

THE DEMISE OF THE PROPHET

Soon after his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage, our beloved Prophet (pbuh) fall ill. His illness increased day by day. So much so that, in time, he wasn't able to go to masjid and lead prayers. This case gave all Muslims a deep sorrow. However, even during the worst times of his illness, the Prophet (pbuh) was thinking about his companions. He appointed Abu Bakr to lead them in prayers.

One Monday morning, the Prophet (pbuh) got up from his bed and looked in from the door of masjid. He was happy to see his companions preparing for prayer behind Abu Bakr. And Abu Bakr, thinking that the Prophet (pbuh) had come to lead the prayer, he waited for him. However, the Prophet (pbuh) signaled him to continue and then left.

This was the last time that the companions saw him. Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) passed away that day beside his wife Aisha. The news of his demise was rapidly heard by everyone. People gathered around his house. None of them wanted to believe that the Prophet (pbuh) had died. Even Umar drew his sword saying: "Don't say that he is dead!" Was the Messenger gone with whom they lived together for those years? Where did he go leaving his companions like orphans? The pain they were feeling was so deep. They could not imagine a life without the Prophet (pbuh).

On the other hand, Abu Bakr was very strong. He did not lose his patience. To those who gathered around him, he said:

- I bear witness that there is no god other than Allah. Whoever worshipped Muhammad (pbuh) should know that Muhammad (pbuh) is dead. And whoever worshipped Allah should know that He is eternal, He never dies!

Then he recited the following verse:

“Muhammad is no more than a messenger. The messengers before him have also passed away. So if he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels? Whoever turns, it doesn't do any harm to Allah. Allah will reward the ones who are grateful.” (Al-i Imran 3: 144)

Abu Bakr's speech influenced the Muslims. The companions were so much bewildered that it was as if they heard this verse for the first time. Yes, no matter if he is a prophet or not, everyone dies. So the last of all prophets, Muhammad (pbuh) also passed away.

It was the time for prayer. Bilal went up to the masjid to recite adhan. However, before he completed the adhan, his eyes were filled with tears. The companions' tears were flowing like a river. All this sorrow and tears were for Muhammad (pbuh). He was a great leader sent to the mankind. His name was going to live throughout centuries.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our beloved Prophet.



THE LAST BREATH

Allah sent the last verse of the Qur'an: "Today I have completed your religion for you, and I have chosen for you Islam as a religion."

Abu Bakr was crying. For, this verse was indicating the demise of the Prophet (pbuh).

This really was what happened. After eighty-two days, our Prophet (pbuh) passed away. He did not have any power to stand. Even the prayer was led by Abu Bakr. The Prophet (pbuh) lied on his bed. He leaned his head on Aisha's lap. He was praying to Allah: "Oh Allah, take my soul easily, don't give me pain."

He gave his last orders: Observe your prayers, he said. Then he closed his eyes to meet with his most Beloved Friend. Abu Bakr entered the room. The Prophet (pbuh) was his best friend. He kissed him on the middle of his eyebrows. He then broke into tears. Everybody was crying. No one wanted to believe that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was dead. However, he was a human being. This is why he was going to die when his time came, and so did he.

The news of that the Prophet (pbuh) passed away was heard everywhere. People came and gathered around his house. Nobody wanted to believe that he was dead. They wished that this news was a lie. Even Umar did not want to believe this. Drawing his sword, he said, "Don't say that he is dead. I will kill whoever says so!" At that moment, Abu Bakr came out. He looked at Umar and said:

- Whoever worshipped Muhammad (pbuh) should know that Muhammad (pbuh) is dead. And whoever worshipped Allah should know that He is eternal. He never dies!

Then he recited the following verse of the Qur'an:

“Muhammad is no more than a messenger. The messengers before him have also passed away. So if he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels? Whoever turns, it doesn't do any harm to Allah. Allah will reward the ones who are grateful.” (Al-Imran 3: 144)

Then Umar and all those who gathered there understood that the Prophet passed away. He really had died.

Aisha was crying. Fatima was crying. The Prophet's grandsons, his friends, Ali, Umar, Uthman, Khalid ibn Walid, Amr ibn As, Bilal, Abu Sufyan were all crying. Muslims had already missed the Prophet (pbuh). That was the reason why they were crying. The whole Muslim ummah was crying. Ummah refers to all people who believe in the Prophet.

We, too, are crying, for we have not had the chance to see our Prophet (pbuh). However, we still miss him.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our beloved Prophet.

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