

**MUHAMMAD**

**(PBUH)**

**THE BENEFACTOR  
OF HUMANITY**

**Nayeem Siddiqi**

# Content

- Preface
- INTRODUCTION
- A light in the prevailing darkness
- Revolution erupts
- An Order - A Movement
- The spirit of the revolution
- A new man born
- The Prophet's great sacrifice
- How to study the Prophet's life

## Chapter one

- The personality at a glance
- The physical appearance of the Prophet and his manners
- Home life
- Personal habits
- Human feelings
- Recreation
- Some special traits

## Chapter Two

- His life at Makkah
- First phase of secret preaching
- Public call
- Violent phase begins
- Organized opposition
- Migration to Abyssinia
- The conversion of Omar
- Boycott and confinement
- Ascent to Heaven
- Farewell Makkah

## Chapter Three

- Life at Medina- History takes a turn
- Medina welcomes the Prophet
- Islamic state
- The treachery of the Jews

- Insolvent questions
- Public treasury
- The Jewish fifth column
- Allegations and aspersions
- Calumny against Hazrat Ayesha
- Good comes out of the evil
- Plots to kill
- Vindictiveness of Quraish

## Chapter Four

- Under the shadow of the sword
- Prophet's military policy
- Strategic position
- Subsequent events
- The siege
- Treaty of Hudaibiya
- Campaign to Khyber
- The conquest of Makkah
- Consolidation of victory

## Chapter Five

- Argument and appeal
- The moral force

## Chapter Six

- Political contacts
- The missionary spirit

## Chapter Seven

- The Prophet's relationship
- Prophet's marriages

## Chapter Eight

- The final stage
- Address at Arafat
- At the pond of Ghadir and Uhad

## INTRODUCTION

Before we study the life history of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) we must have a clear idea of the mission for which he worked all his life, its true nature and scope and its main features. If we scan the wide range of history we come across great reformers, founders of religions and philosophic systems and great rulers and revolutionaries who changed the course of history. But the common feature of all of them is that while they influenced only one part of human life they left loopholes open for evils creeping into others aspects. We do not find any movement or ideology which has transformed the whole nature of man, his entire being from within and without and his individual as well as his community life. This is what Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) accomplished as we will see in the following pages. This transformation of man from within and without in his individual and social aspects was unique in history and no such example can be found elsewhere. The transformation was such that human society from mosque to market, from school to court and from home to public field - the entire gamut of human life- was changed, and as a result of this change, there was goodness and virtue without the least tinge of evil. In fact, human life received a new base and the foundation was laid for all round progress and a virtuous life on an international scale.

## A LIGHT IN THE PREVAILING DARKNESS

At the time of the advent of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the entire world was steeped in darkness. Beliefs in multiplicity of gods and idol worship had shaken the foundation of civilized life. The light of civilization had faded over the then known world from Egypt to India and from Greece to China. Banners of Roman and Iranian empires, immersed in the worst forms of tyranny, and terrorism fluttered over the degraded humanity. Rulers had become not only the representatives of God but in some cases claimed to be gods, with whom were allied fiefdoms and religious orders, and the combined forces of the three had strangled the common man, who already overburdened with heavy taxes, bribes and graft and forced to labour under duress. No one seemed to take any notice of this malaise or provided any remedy or escape from this course. Sensuous and ease-going overlords were sunk in moral degradation, while devastating wars and frequent changes in ruling dynasties instead of giving any relief to the common man further ground him under heavier strain. And new orders introduced newer forms of oppression. The Roman and Iranian empires were frequently at war and large territories at intervals passed from one empire to the other and the new masters after consolidating their powers unleashed still greater forces of oppression. Churches and temples on changing hands became places of worship of the conqueror. All over the world armed clashes were the order of the day and humanity suffered most. The common man was deprived of the most essential necessities of life and could not even raise his voice of protest. Freedom of conscience was unknown. Man groped in darkness and no light from any religion or philosophy could guide him. Teachings of seers and prophets were lost in corruption and erroneous interpretations and whatever religion was left had become a profitable trade in the hands of religious orders which were in alliance with the ruling class. Greek philosophy had lost its force, teachings of Confucius and Mani were forgotten, and Buddhist Vedantic ideologies were discarded. When humanity despaired, found no way of escape, the crisis reached a critical stage that the light of the redeemer of the humanity emerged.

The very country where Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was born was steeped in utter moral degradation. Great civilizations of Ur and Nineva, of Aad and Thamud and of Aden and Saba were lost in ancient history and there was barbarism and disruption all over Arabia. Debaucher, drinking and gambling was rampant. The idol-worshipping Quraish were trading in religion with the custody of the Kaabah Tribes fought with one another on flimsy grounds. The Jews were engaged in religious controversies, usurer of Makkah and Taif had large-scale dealings in money-lending at exorbitant interest rates and traffic in slavery was rife. In short, men lived according to their whims while the strong were oppressing the weak.

In the midst of this degradation, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had to redeem humanity and prove to the world the phenomenal success of his great mission. He stood up single-handed to change the entire human outlook. Those who hated evil but were unable to reform their surroundings retired to forests and mountain caves and became recluses. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on the other hand, boldly faced the situation and reformed the humanity. To resolve the cultural crisis brought about by the clashes of Iranian and Roman powers, he rose as a third power which, having consolidated itself by then, challenged both the Iranian and Roman empires and crushed them, restoring freedom to the common man to rise.

God selected Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the most suitable man for bringing about this great revolution, the desert as the most suitable place for making such an attempt; the Arabs as the most suitable people to receive and propagate the message. It was also the most suitable age, as the feudal era was about to end and be replaced by the era of brotherhood, and history was all set to enter the scientific arena. The Prophet's advent coincided with these two phases of history and it was necessary to revive and reassert the truth and justice and enlighten the world with the Divine message. Then, humanity having lost all hope was ready to accept the message of peace in Islam. Despite being a land of desert, Arabia occupied a central place in the then known world where all caravan routes from east and west met and the foreign trade of different countries passed through

the hands of Arab merchants. There were regular caravans from Oman, Yemen, Makkah, Jeddah, Yanbu, medina, etc., which could not pass safely without the Arab guides and Quraish passports. Thus Arabia and, in particular Makkah, Taif, Medina, Yanbu had contacts with India, china, Iran, Iraq, Rome, Abyssinia, etc., and was ideal as an effective centre for a world movement. Makkah and Medina were important towns from religious and commercial points of view. The uncivilized, disorganized and economically weak condition of Arabia, though disadvantageous in certain respects, was ready to take up message of hope from any quarter. Furthermore, the country was more or less free from outside political control while internally also there was no such power which held political sway throughout the country and which could crush a new movement as was done in the case of several former messengers of God. The Quraish tribe was no doubt influential but, despite being strong in its religion and commercial influence, it could not take the place of an established government.

From the religious point of view wherever the prophets had preached the truth, archaeological remains of their cities had been preserved. In the north, Abraham was born at Ur. Further north was the land of Noah and Lot, and Madain of Saleh, and there were Palestine and Jerusalem where the Israelites rose and fell and where Christ gave his message of truth and godliness. In the south were the lands of Aad and Thamud and the Ma'arib dam which had burst and deluged the ungodly land, and across the sea in the west was Egypt where Joseph and Moses had brought light of God, and then Makkah where Abraham and Ismael had established the centre of monotheism. A call to truth here was most likely to rekindle in the minds of men the fading light of the teachings of these prophets.

And lastly, the human resources were rich and untapped in Arabia and untainted by the decadence of the oppressive civilizations of Iran and Rome. Nomadic life had produced certain defects in their character but it also had its merits. Due to their simple life they had their habits free from ostentation or artificialities and having proximity to nature they could read its signs in the universe.

The extremely hot climate desert winds, day and night travels, experiences of hunger and thirst frequent murders and robberies had made them hardy and engendered in them a spirit of bravery which could be most valuable in sponsoring a world movement. They were generous and possessed powerful memory which enabled them not only to recall their own genealogy but even the pedigree of their horses. They also possessed self-respect and sense of dignity and so could preserve their independence. They had highly developed language which had been well polished and could be used effectively in propagating a mission. They were firm in their determination and if they adopted even a wrong course they pursued it wholeheartedly and faced all obstacles and difficulties. At the same time they had the capacity to follow the right path with the same determination without wavering. Thus, as the Prophet in his own person was the ideal leader of his movement he was also given the most suitable human material to work on and the best geographical location where a great culture could evolve and flourish.

The Arabs were restless in their search for the path of progress and already some intelligent persons had their minds stirred and looked for some Divine guidance Politically, in cities like Makkah and Medina a system of government was slowly emerging and a crude form of democratic state had already come into existence, while the limited economic resources of the country were creating an urge in the population to expand. In is a well-known historical fact that when the existing civilizations were deepening the crisis and political leadership stagnated, a new poser arose form Beduins to challenge it, as Israelites rose against the power of the

haraohs. Arabia was thus the ideal place for inspiring men to carry out the prophet's revolution.

## REVOLUTION ERUPTS

This all embracing programme was not taken up haphazardly but was the result of firm conviction, deep meditation and contemplation. For years the deep thoughts of life's meaning and purpose engaged the Prophet's mind and in the cave of Hira he examined his own capacities and thought over the world condition, devoted his mind to basic problems which afflicted human society but did not take any practical step without receiving guidance in Divine revelation. The greatest truth was that God is Master of the universe and man is His servant. It was from this seed that the tree of wholesome civilisation grew with its roots deep in the earth and its branches over the earth (heavens).

The revolutionary slogan of the Prophet (La Ilaha Illallah), although brief, has tremendous significance. There is no divine being except Allah, the only God, Who should be obeyed, loved, worshipped, praised and remembered, from Whom we expect all good and Whose displeasure we fear, Who will reward the virtuous and punish the wicked, Who is regard as the Master, Ruler and Law-giver, Whose orders must be obeyed and prohibitions avoided and Whose prescribed injunctions are to be strictly observed. Life must be moulded according to His will. Those favoured by Him are to be respected and those frowned upon by Him must be resisted. Everything must be sacrificed on His command and His pleasure to be made the ideal of life. It was this comprehensive meaning of divinity that was condensed into a single phrase.

These attributes of divinity were separated from God and appropriated by different peoples, and innumerable divinities ruled over the society, viz. man's wishes and desires, social rites, tribal and group traditions, feudal and priestly dominance, kingly and court prestige, under which man was powerless, La Ilaha Illallah struck at the root of all this. One who believed in this pronouncement declared that he did not recognize any other greatness except that of God, did not submit to any other rule, did not recognize any other law or code conduct and would not bow before any other power, nor seek any one else's pleasure or shape his life ordained by anyone else. All edicts except those of the one God must be discarded This slogan was in fact the declaration of man's freedom. The second part of this slogan prescribed that the only means of uplift and social reform was the prophet hood established by God, that real knowledge given by revelation, which guided thinking Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) completed the prophethood, that life's purpose can be secured from this source alone and it is only through Divine guidance that humanity can successfully advance towards its true goal. It was this interpretation of the slogan that was made the foremost item of Islam.

Is was proclaimed by muazzins and given the status of the most exalted recitation and from every point of view it became the criterion of the Islamic movement and it was this pronouncement that when it entered the heart, changed the entire outlook of man and gave birth to a new humanity on the march towards progress and rectitude.

In order to gain profit from the Prophet's life, it is necessary to find the answer to the question as to what ideal the Prophet had in view, for the reformation of society and the extent of work in that direction? Did he want a partial change in social structure or a complete metamorphosis? Was his call only religious and moral or did it also have a political significance? In other words, what was his aim in the social field? The Qur'an answers these questions in full detail and in different forms the aim of Islamic mission has repeatedly been explained. Here we quote only two passages. The aim of all prophetic missions has been stated in the following words:

(TRANSLATION OF AYAH - ALHADEED, LVII-25)

"We have sent Our prophets with clear arguments and revealed to them the laws and given them the scale to measure truth with the object that they establish justice among me." (LVII: 25)

The meaning is clear that the aims for moulding human lives according to absolute justice and for creating social balance. The use of the rod is implied as essential for the purpose, that is for the

establishment of justice and its preservation the use of political and military force may also be inevitable.

The mission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself has clearly and repeatedly been specified:

“It is Allah Who has sent His Prophet with guidance and the Way of Truth so that he may make it dominate over all other ways of life howsoever unpleasant it may be to those who assign partners to Allah.” (LXI:9)

Let us now study the Prophet’s life to find the ideal, which he taught.

In the earliest stage of his ministry, the Prophet invited the clan of Hashim to a feast to deliver his message which he assured them would ensure their welfare in this world and in the Hereafter. Some time later, while talking to a deputation, he repeated this by saying:

‘If you accept my message, it will be for your own good here and in the Hereafter.’

It will be futile to attribute partial good to some aspects of this life. Partial good can be seen in every mission. And even in a bad system there is random good. The aim is total reform of life, social uplift, the establishment of justice and attainment of a virtuous life.

In the first stage, in the course of his early preaching, the Prophet said:

“It is just one phrase; and if you accept that from me, the whole of Arabia will be under your rule as also the non-Arab lands.”

In the markets and public places and in the congregations of Hajj, the Prophet used to tell every head of the tribe: “Take me with you, let me have the chance to work and cooperate with you till I have explained the mission for which God has sent me.” Bayhara bin Firas, chief of the Banu Amir clan, was so impressed by the Prophet’s mission, his personality and his devoted zeal that he declared: “If we accept this young man and include him among us, we will dominate the whole of Arabia”. His mind foresaw a bright future and he tried to strike a bargain. He offered to cooperate with the Prophet on the condition that when all opposition had been subdued, the Prophet would transfer power to him. Bayhara’s eyes were on the distant future, and if the Prophet’s mission were confined to mere preaching he would have said: ‘My brother, I am just a servant of God, what have I to do with power and there is no question of gaining power in my mission?’ Instead, he said, “Power is in the hands of God and He confers it on whomsoever He likes,” and refused to enter into the bargain with Bayhara.

In connection with the Prophet’s mission the talk of domination over the Arabs and the non-Arabs was so widespread that it looked as if Islam would succeed, and everybody talked of it, so much so that the opponents had taken it as a pretext for ridicule and taunt. The slaves and the poorer classes were rallying under the banner of Islam and those who had been oppressed by the Quraish were taunted by their oppressors thus: “Look at these people, who aspire to become leaders of the Arabs and the non-Arabs!”

Despite all these taunts, opposition and obstruction, the sensible people among the Quraish believed that this mission was not an ordinary one but had great potentialities. On one occasion when the chiefs of Makkah sent Utbah to negotiate with the Prophet, he offered all kinds of temptation to deflect the Prophet from his mission, but the Prophet recited before him some verses of Sura Ha-Mim. Utbah was so moved that when he left the colour of his face had changed and he told the Quraish on return: “This mission carries with it something very great and portends a profound change. A revolution is in the offing which will entirely transform our lives”. Then he advised them that Muhammad (PBUH) should be left alone and not be interfered with. If the Arabs defeated him they might be relieved but “if he gained power his kingdom will be yours and his power will be yours and you will become the most respected among the people”. Thus when even Utbah could see the potentialities of this mission (that it would set forth a great power), how could the Prophet and his Companions remain in any doubt about it?

At one time when oppression had reached its peak, some of the Prophet's followers told him of their woes and requested that he should call a curse upon the oppressors; the Prophet at first explained that the path of mission like his was always fraught with difficulties and obstacles. What tribulations were not faced by those who treaded this path earlier! With full confidence he gave them good tidings saying: "By God this campaigns will meet with success with Divine Grace" and then he gave a picture of what would happened in the end- "a rider will journey from Sanaa to Hadramaut and he will not have any fear except that of God". He forecast such a bright future that as compared wit the existing conditions where there were robberies and murders and men were killed in broad daylight and women openly outraged, an order of justice and peace would prevail when a traveler could go on his journey unhampered and no one would dare attack him. On another occasion the Prophet had said that the time was not far off when caravans would come to Makkah without escorts. How clear and unambiguous was his goal!

Once the Prophet asked Usman bin Talha, the key-bearer of the Kaabah, to open the door of the sacred House, which he refused. The Prophet felt embarrassed but declared that a time would come when the key would be in his hand and he would entrust it to whomsoever he liked.

If one considers the historical pledges of the Ansar at Aqabah one will find that even the Ansar had foreseen the fears of the political strife involved in this mission of truth, which would have to be decided on the battlefield. On the one hand, the Ansar pledged their complete support to the Prophet in his struggle and welcomed the sacrifice of their elders and destruction of their property, and on the other hand, they secured a promise from the Prophet that when God gave him power he would not leave them and return to Makkah. Struggle, sacrifices and power! Did not all these concepts clearly bring out the aim which the Prophet had before him? On the eve of his migration to Medina the prayer which was revealed to the Prophet had its end. "And grant me your help and power" Power and domination were needed to support this holy mission. When the Prophet's uncle Abu Talib was urged to stop his support to him and Abu Talib entreated him not to put him in difficulties, the Prophet made his famous declaration that even if they placed the sun on his right hand and the moon on his left hand, he would not give up his mission... "Till the mission triumphs or I sacrifice my life in the struggle". It implies that the struggle was such that it involved danger of life.

At Medina Adi bin Hatim came to the Prophet, studied his personality, tried to understand the nature of his mission and examined the manners of the Prophet and was greatly impressed. The Prophet, reading his mind, told him not only of the prospects of the white palaces of Babylon coming under his control, of abundance of wealth pouring in and the vast numerical strength of Muslims but also explained to him the system of Islamic justice declaring that soon conditions would improve so much that a woman starting from Qadisiya alone for the Prophet's Mosque would reach it in perfect safety. Obviously he, who in the most distressing conditions of migration could foresee the bracelets of the monarch of Iran on the wrist of Saraga, could not be ignorant of his ultimate aim and social idea! He did not struggle for it but it came to him as a gift from God. It can be said that government was not sought for personal dominance or for worldly gains but for the establishment of the mission, enforcement of the order of justice for redeeming the humanity and constructing a social order! In fact, while the Prophet had spiritual and moral revolution in view, he had before him, and in equal measure, a political revolution as well.

## AN ORDER - A MOVEMENT

Philosophy is a mental attitude. A philosopher has no direct concern with practical life or history. He draws conclusions from events and conditions but takes no practical part in the efforts to change them. Religion (in its current restricted sense) goes a little further. It sets forth certain beliefs, and separating the individual from society, also gives him some moral lessons. But the path of religion lies outside any collective system. It neither interferes with the political conditions nor seeks any comprehensive change in social institutions, nor challenges the leadership of the time. The preaching of religion is on the lines of a sermon. The preacher makes some exhortations in idealistic words and passes on. He cares little about the condition of his hearers, whether they are free or in bondage, nor worries how the public mind and character are moulded by the activities of interested groups, nor does he think about what influences the trend of daily events, nor even about ideologies acting against his own exhortations or to what social system his most ardent followers belong. He has no social ideal nor any plan of changing it. He has no political sense nor capacity for leadership. He does whatever he can to instil partial virtue in one department of life, while the rest continues to flourish unchecked. What has a man of God to do with it!

Our Prophet, on the other hand, was neither a philosopher to be contented with just propounding some lofty ideals without taking any note of the factual conditions nor a mere preacher who gave only pleasant sermons and shut his eyes to the pervasive evil and never bothered about the consequences. This redeemer of the humanity was gifted with social awareness and planned a complete transformation of human society. He comprehended the forces and elements dominating the society, kept in view the leadership which was at the helm of the crude social order, argued against it, criticized it and even challenged it. He kept his eyes on the trend of history and watched every event. He looked upon every move with the insight of a leader and with a political consciousness and whether it would be a help or hindrance in his campaigns of reform. He kept his eyes on all elements of society to ascertain at what time each may be expected to help. He matched his strength against that of the enemy and waited for the most appropriate time to strike and when that time arrived he boldly advanced. He minutely studied the movements of public opinion and smashed every propaganda of the enemy. Hostile fronts of poets and orators were formed and to meet them he set up rival groups of poets and orators. He strictly followed his principles but not with closed eyes, rather watched the conditions and expediencies and adopted the wisest course. Wherever he found opportunity he advanced his steps but when the occasion was unfavourable he retraced his steps. Where two evils were faced he avoided the one and dealt with the other. When war was inevitable he did not shirk it and when peace was possible he would not shun it but readily extended his hand of friendship. And what is most remarkable is that in all his dealings he not only observed but also advocated fear of God and the moral approach. When we consider this in the light of the Quranic teachings, we can easily discover the difference between a religion and a system mere preaching and a revolutionary call, individual purity and collective transformations.

Since the Prophet had launched a new order, he selected persons of sound intellect and everybody who had his heart illumined by truth was absorbed in the order after a severe test and whatever organized forces were available at a particular time were put under his guidance to fight against the barbarous system, intellectually and politically, and, as a last resort, on the battlefield.

He did not make *Sufis* and derveshes of those who gathered around him and did not lead them on to the path of hermits and ascetics. He did not expect them to dread evil or fear those in authority. They were not simple-minded and inert worshippers, but bold, fearless, conscientious, wise, self-respecting dignified, intelligent, sensible, active, energetic, initiators and restless workers. They did not adopt the ways of priest and sadhus but were endowed with ability to lead. Men of refinement after the best training and association with the finest order under the best guidance became an invincible force. It was thus in spite of being a small minority they dominated over the pagan Arabs. When in Makkah the number of Muslims was just forty, it created such a stir in the city and the surrounding areas that for years it was the main topic of conversation. In Medina, while the supporters

of the Islamic movement hardly exceeded a few hundred, an Islamic state was established in the face of a non-Muslim majority.

For establishing a collective order, the Prophet did not wait for the whole of Arabia to accept Islam or till the majority of them was reformed. Nor was it his idea to go on preaching and reforming thoughts and beliefs till at last a wholesome order emerged or God fulfilled Himself by making them dominant. He knew from history that the bulk of the common people remains passive while only a small minority becomes active, and one section of it becomes the bearer of reform or revolution while another section obstructs it. The real struggle is between these two factions of active elements, and when the scores are settled the masses are aroused of their own accord. He was full aware that so long as evil leadership stood in the way and continued its campaign of contaminating the people or at least in keeping them stagnant, they could not accept a call for reform nor bring about a change in their lives. Even for those who had responded to the call, it was not possible to reform their lives to the full extent in the prevailing corrupt atmosphere.

On the other hand, if the revolution is delayed it becomes difficult for those who have achieved a position after long efforts as the bearers of truth to maintain that position, since the adverse conditions exert their full force in pushing them back. Thus the only course open to a collective movement is to gather as much strength as possible by selecting right-minded persons from among the active elements and to put them in the struggle against the opponents and break their ranks. History proves that all revolutions have been accomplished by active minorities. Since the movement for reform attracts comparatively larger numbers from among the active elements, rouses their latent sentiments and enhances their moral strength by training, the opposing group despite its power and influence, wealth and resources and also numerical superiority is defeated in the struggle. The Battle of Badr is a clear proof of this. So when the Prophet collected a sufficient number of right-minded persons, who, steered by moral force, could confront the evil leadership and its supporters, he did not hesitate in taking the necessary steps to achieve his political aim. The real significance of the victory over Makkah is that the evil leadership was totally subjugated and as soon as it was routed people voluntarily began to respond to the call of truth.

There is not a single example in history where any virtuous system has ever prospered under evil leadership or that a collective revolution was accomplished by mere preaching and sermons and individual reform without political struggle. During the last thirteen centuries after the Caliphate, there has been so much preaching and sermonising in the schools, khanqahs and mosques where people are actively engaged in individual reforms that even today the amount of work being done by the Ulema, Sufis, teachers and writers is gigantic in its magnitude, and yet no reform has been accomplished to the desired extent nor the society been so far developed as to bring about a transformation in the collective life as Prophet Muhammad's revolution had brought about in Arabia fourteen centuries ago. Obviously, there is some missing link in the theory of revolution, and that is without political supports, change of leadership is impossible and so individuals are approached leaving the general social order untouched.

Unfortunately, the political aspect of the Prophet's accomplishment has been so much obscured that it is difficult to form a true concept of his mission and aims, and unless this aspect is fully kept in view, it is impossible to understand the difference between limited religiousness and the wider concept of the Islamic order. The Prophet had come with a complete system to establish an order based on virtue and to enforce the Divine laws. We should understand that the Prophet launched the movement for comprehensive reform in the widest sense and to establish a new society, for carrying out this movement he was fully endowed with the ability of leadership and political consciousness and just as there is no other person equal to him in other respects, in the same way he has no match in the greatness of his political leadership.

The prophet ceaselessly advocated virtue, struggled for the supremacy of truth and established a complete system, on this basis. This cannot be comprehended within the narrow meaning of religion. It was a mission, and a movement.

The glorious movement of the Prophet, which established a Divine system of life by bringing about a revolution, had as its distinguishing feature caused the essence of its creed pervade all aspects of life with equal strength. It dominated the entire social order. All the institutions absorbed its impact. The one God, Who was worshipped within the four walls of the mosque, was also Omnipresent and Omnipotent. The Qur'an that was recited was the same Qur'an that formed the basis of court judgements. Moral principles which were obeyed in the homes were also followed in international relations. The truth which was preached from the pulpits was also practiced in administration. The beliefs which were impressed on the minds of individuals were also enforced on collective institutions. The mode of thinking which guided the educational system also moulded the entire culture. The Divine pleasure which was sought in prayer was also sought on the battlefield and in wielding the bow and the sword. It was a system in which the entire human life was under one Divine law and different values and codes were not followed in different areas. There were no contradictions in the system and its different parts never clashed with each other. There was no confusion. There was no eclecticism. It was due to this phenomenon that the humanity progressed under it with no parallel in history.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE REVOLUTION

It has probably been the greatest misfortune of the humanity that whosoever found an opportunity to come to power, by force of arms or by intrigue, by democratic means or by accident, presumed that he was also a teacher a reformer. When such teachers and reformers gain power, they appropriate all wisdom to themselves. They regard themselves as the greatest thinkers. Discarding all sources of knowledge and dismissing the wisest and most sensible elements of society wantonly, they embark on things which prove disastrous at every turn. They want to mould the humanity by violence reform life by using the rod. Often these sponsors of reform and revolution are quite ignorant of human nature and do not possess even the elementary knowledge about it. They have never given thought to the subject of the correct methods of reforming life or to the causes of degeneration and how best to remove them. Without learning from the experience of the past, they start experiments of their own. In order to remove all obstacles in their ventures, they reject all advice or criticism. They have only one remedy for every evil, and that is wholesale violence. They enact oppressive laws, subjecting people to unmitigated tyranny.

The revolution brought about by the Prophet, on the other hand, had no element of violence in it, but a spirit of affection and concern for human welfare marked every step. The Prophet was most merciful to the humanity and had real love for all mankind. He explained the nature of his mission by the example that he was saving them from falling into the abyss towards which they were madly rushing. Hence, the Qur'an described him as the Apostle of Mercy. Just imagine how he accomplished such a great revolution without a single instance of his having resorted to undue force. The decade of the Prophet's life at Medina was a period of continuous emergency. Three large-scale attacks were made by the Quraish while small clashes and frontier attacks were quite frequent. Different tribes attacked Medina at different time from different places. Patrol parties were regularly sent from Medina and military expeditions were undertaking to deal with disturbing elements while guards had to be kept ready at night. In addition to this, there were constant conspiracies by the Jews and the hypocrites. In short, it was the life of a military camp. There were intrigues for disrupting Muslim society, for creating dissension, for defeating the Prophet's mission and for even killing the Prophet. Could there be any greater emergency? But the Prophet never assumed dictatorial powers, nor promulgated despotic laws. No one was ever imprisoned or punished by emergency powers. No fines or punitive taxes were imposed and no citizen was taxed beyond the impositions ordained by the Divine law. The right of opposition and criticism was never taken away nor was anyone silenced or confined. Even the most mischievous person, Abdullah bin Ubay, was left unhindered. The Prophet had full trust in the righteousness of his mission and excellence of his character. He never imposed his superiority over others. He never indulged in extravagant talk nor insulted anyone but patiently bore the affront of enemies, who, in fact, were weaker. It was this attitude which won the hearts of his enemies, while his followers were loyal to him with all their souls. His opponents appeared meek and inferior before him and when they bow end their heads before truth and nobility, they were completely transformed.

The love of God which the Prophet bore in his heart manifested itself in another form: he loved God's creation with the same intensity. Illustration of his love for the humanity can be had from the fact that for the very people of Makkah who opposed him with all their might, the Prophet sent a supply of food when they were afflicted with famine and also five hundred gold coins for the relief of the poor. One night when the wailings of the prisoners of Badr reached his ears, he was so upset that he could not sleep till the ropes which bound them were loosened. Then by his order six thousand prisoners of Banu Hawazin were freed on their appeal. The greatest demonstration of his love for the humanity was at the time of his triumphant entry into Makkah. When those who had fought against him for 20 years came to him defeated, he pardoned them all. A conqueror on such an occasion would have ordered a general massacre or perennial imprisonment as the people of Makkah were legally and morally guilty and deserved to be punished, but because of the Prophet's love for the humanity, they

were generously forgiven for their crimes and excesses, and the Prophet declared: 'There is no punishment for you today. You are all free!' to win their hearts, he showered wealth on them and instead of humiliating them, he gave them responsible work. The Prophet knew the revolution which degrades itself by taking revenge digs its own grave while the revolution which forgives and pacifies wins the hearts of even enemies and gains the support of those who had opposed it. The Quraish forced the Prophet into war and once on the battlefield, the Prophet fought with courage and determination but his military and defensive policies were such that they did least harm to the enemy; he took every possible care that even during war respect for the humanity was maintained. No other revolution can present such outstanding and generous examples of love for the humanity. His revolution was purely educative, and based on goodwill towards all mankind.

## A NEW MAN BORN

We have before us histories of numerous movements of reform, uplift and revolution, but each one of them accepted man as he was and concentrated only on external change. Such changes were superficial and totally failed in solving the problems of life. The most striking achievement of the Prophet was that man was changed from within and completely transformed. The self-seeking animal which existed in the shape of man was totally effaced by the power of truth and in his place emerged a God-fearing and principled man. If you look at the mesmerizing spell of this man you will be wonder-struck. A young drunkard of Makkah like Hazrat Umar was transformed and to what great heights he rose! Fuzala was elevated and to what greatness! Look to Zul Bajadain, how he spurned wealth and comforts and took to the life of simplicity! Look at Hazrat Abu Zarr and his revolutionary spirit that challenged the unbelievers at the Kaabah and suffered much beating at their hands. Look at the character of Ka'ab bin Malik and condition of Abu Khaisma and to the revolutionary courage and determination of the maid servants like Lubaina and Summaiyya and also see Ma'iz bin Malik Aslami and Ghamidiya. Take a lesson from the boldness of Hazrat Jafar at the court of Negus and the independent spirit of Rabie' bin Amir at the court of the Iranian commander-in-chief and who among the galaxy of heroes does not display the courage of his conviction!

These personalities formed the society and such leaders and workers were produced to run the organization of truth, that when the prohibition of wine was proclaimed the cups raised to the lips were promptly thrown away and the casks of the best of wines were emptied on the streets. When women were ordered to cover their heads and bosoms, immediately scarfs were prepared. When the call of Jihad was made, children stood on their tiptoes to increase their heights so that they might not be disqualified. When subscription was called forth, rich merchants like Hazrat Usman presented a long line of camels laden with wealth and the devoted companion like Abu Bakr placed all his belongings at the feet of the Prophet. Similarly, even the labourer surrendered the dates earned as the day's wages and kept nothing for himself. When the Ansar were called to rehabilitate the Muhajirin they equally divided their property, their houses, corns fields and orchards and gave evidence of exemplary brotherliness. When officers were called for civil service, the world found for the first time governors working on the token salary of just one dirham per month. When the spoils of war were ordered to be deposited with the army commander, even needles were brought before the commander and it will be recorded in history in its brightest page that a soldier named Amir came with a large treasure of Madain and before anybody could discover it, he carried it in the darkness of the night and quietly deposited it with commander. These were the people who introduced an era of righteousness, where crimes became rare and during the ten years of Prophet's life at Medina only a few cases came to the court. The conditions were so ideal that there was no need for the crime investigation body. The conscience of the people was sufficient as their guard and guide.

This was the revolution which while changing the external order also changed the mind and heart of man and produced a new character. It succeeded in solving the basic problems of life and thus the salvation of the prevailing crisis.

## THE PROPHET'S GREAT SACRIFICE

The Islamic revolution is unique in another respect in that its sponsor, in spite of its accomplishment with innumerable sacrifices, did not take any compensation or reward for it. He sacrificed everything for the good of the humanity but did not take in return even as much as was rationally, legally and conventionally, permissible and just. Not the slightest stain of selfishness or avarice is found in this great triumph. Can one find any other example to equal that?

From the economic point of view, the Prophet sacrificed his successful trade, gave away all his earnings for the mission and when its success was assured, he distributed all his wealth with his own hands; he preferred a life of extremely modest and simple living for his own. He did not leave behind any money for his family nor acquire any property or establish any financial rights for his household during his lifetime nor did he leave behind any hereditary office of succession. He did not recruit any guards or servants or acquire conveyance and did not like to have any furnishings in his home. From the political point of view, he did not claim any prerogative for himself and never used his authority against anyone beyond that prescribed by God. He did not issue any arbitrary law to exalt his political position. Although a serious state of emergency persisted in Medina, and he had to face ever increasing intrigues and conspiracies of the Jews and hypocrites, he never interned anyone or imposed any restrictions or issued any conscience-killing orders, or established any emergency courts or ordered flogging. On the other hand, he gave perfect liberty for criticism, advice and difference of opinion. He also allowed people to reject his personal suggestions. These rights and privileges were not merely on paper but were actually practiced. Occasionally, the Prophet discarded his own valuable opinion and accepted others point of view.

If he wanted to give some concession to someone he obtained permission from his companions. For instance, once when Hazrat Abul Aas came as a prisoner and Hazrat Zainab sent a necklace as his ransom, which was gift from Hazrat Khadija (the Prophet's first consort), the Prophet appealed at a public meeting for the return of that necklace. Similarly, when the property of Abul Aas came as a booty he returned it but only after taking permission from the public. Once, a deputation arrived at Jaarana for the release of prisoners of the Battle of Hunain appealing to the Prophet in the name of his foster mother. The prisoners had already been distributed and when the Prophet released prisoners attached to the Quraish on his own initiative, he appealed for others at a public meeting and when the people, found that the Prophet had released prisoners allotted to his relatives, all of them released those given to them. In such cases the Prophet never used any pressure.

From the social point of view, the Prophet preferred equal status for himself and never claimed any preferential treatment, nor did he adopt any higher standard in the matter of food or dress, nor did he like a distinctive place at public gatherings. He would not see people standing before him as a mark of respect or encourage others to address him with the title of master or chief. On the battlefield or while travelling, digging the ditch or building mosques, he worked with his companions in carrying building material, breaking stones and collecting wood with his own hands. He allowed the people to make a stern demand from him for the recovery of a loan and he offered himself to the public for taking revenge if he had done any wrong to anyone.

It was this lofty ideal of the redeemer of the humanity which was entrusted to us, and it was to popularize this message that we were raised to the high position of "witnesses over men" and the "balanced community". This slogan of truth was given to us as a trust so that as successors of the Prophet we play the role of redeemer of the humanity and whenever mankind is in difficulties and the society is involved in a crisis, we rush to their rescue. But we failed to keep aloft this banner of truth, rather we destroyed it with our own hands. The result was that when the modern age took a turn towards materialism, we were unable to check it. It is the bitter fruit of our failure that the entire human life is now facing a crisis, world leadership is in ungodly hands, conflicting materialistic ideologies clashing with one another are disturbing the peace of mind, and we ourselves have become

their slaves. No amount of misfortunes instills in us a sense of shame, and neither the disorders in Islamic society nor the crisis in human ranks infuse in us a sense of duty.

Behind the deceptive curtains of the modern materialistic civilization, let us survey the conditions of the humanity and a distressing spectacle will be before our eyes. The mankind is caught in the clutches of strange values and everywhere there is a struggle for wealth and power. The light of moral consciousness in man has extinguished, crimes are increasing with the advance of civilization and as psychological perplexities prevail, mental peace is altogether gone. Confusion prevails in the human mind and character. No sector of human life is uncontaminated. The spirit of truth has gone out of philosophy and science and there is no sincerity in beliefs and ideas. Spiritual values have declined while the law has become devoid of the spirit of justice, and self-seeking mentality has replaced the deep urge for service in politics. In the social sphere, groups of oppressors and the oppressed have emerged. Sex dominates the fine arts and contradictions are found in every part of social life. Rival forces are at war and the whole history is turned into a dreadful drama. Learning has advanced but its follies continue to pester us. Fountains of knowledge are there but these very fountains foster misconception which enslave humanity. Piles of wealth lie scattered all over but a vast majority still lives in abject poverty, penury and want. Thousands of organizations, political groups, ideological parties and contradicted relationships exist but there is no brotherly attachment between man and man. There is the talk of development of rational, political, moral and social consciousness, but the most hateful weapons of oppression and violence are still being used against humanity. History is a vast battleground in which there are horrifying clashes between imperialism and freedom, Communism and capitalism, democracy and dictatorship, individualism and collectivism, and the Orient and the Occident.

This is the world in which we live. We are facing the challenge of global crisis. Modern materialistic civilization or the man fostered by it is incapable of taking up the challenge. There is no new philosophy which can provide even a momentary relief. Nowhere can salvation be found. In this perplexing period when darkness is enveloping man from all sides there is only one light which can be seen, far off, fourteen hundred years away. This is the light of the greatest benefactor of the humanity, light of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which we claiming to be the followers of Muhammad (PBUH), have eclipsed by our confused thinking and unprincipled conduct.

## HOW TO STUDY THE PROPHET'S LIFE

To our mind the only object of studying the Prophet's life is that the light of his message becomes again fresh before us and before humanity, and in the midst of prevailing darkness life again finds the path of felicity just as the way was found in the crisis-ridden sixth centuries of Christian era.

Unfortunately, we do not study the Prophet's life in appropriate spirit with the understanding that we have to adopt him as our model and mould our lives accordingly. On the other hand, some other considerations have come in the way and are multiplying.

Muslims take interest in the Prophet's life just for the sake of heavenly reward. It is true that every attempt to get access to the Prophet is a virtue in the sight of God and we expect reward for it, but should not the foremost aim of such an effort be to reform our lives? We hold gatherings on the Prophet's birthday in the belief that the Prophet's soul is present at these gatherings and is pleased to see the devotion of his followers. Trays of sweets, garlands of flowers, qawwalis and poems in praise of the Prophet, burning incense, and illuminations are all mere ostensible indications of this devotion. But the picture of the Prophet's life which is presented to us in such gatherings is not the picture of a man- a man of flesh and blood. We are introduced to a superhuman being whose body has a halo of light, whose shadow does not fall on the ground, whose entire life is full of miracles and all his duties and prayers are performed by angels and everything about his is a mystery. It is not denied that the Prophet's spiritual and moral level is supreme among the human beings. Many superhuman factors can be seen as also miracles and the presence of angels. But in any case the holy life was that of a human being and this is the very basis of its greatness because a life with no parallels was presented by a man. Every activity of his is carried on under the laws of nature and conventions of history and culture, and sacrifices are made at every stage of success. His life can be a model for us to emulate only as a man and only as a man can we take lessons from him, learn adherence to principles and recognition of duties, acquire courage determination from him, cultivate the spirit of service to the humanity from his example and create in ourselves an urge to fight against the forces of evil. If you make the Prophet's life all miracles and give it the colour of the life of a superman, where will then be the model for this earthly man? We can feel dreading for such a person but cannot imbibe any of his attributes. We can adore him but cannot follow him.

Of late, a tendency has crept in from the West which is called hero worship under which great personalities of history are adored and idolized and their birthdays are celebrated with all pomp. But such demonstrations are hollow and although a particular kind of sermonising is common in all such celebrations they have the least effect on our lives.

Another tendency is to regard the Prophet's message not as a code of conduct of life, but just as a religion only for reverence. Those who think like this feel that the Prophet came to teach a few beliefs, some rites and prayers, some recitations, some moral principles and some religious laws and his object was just to produce people who would call themselves Muslims. For them the Prophet's life is nothing more than the combination of some rules of cleanliness, prayers, recitations and individual moralities. But in the wider field of social life they serve every evil purpose with perfect ease and league themselves with any mischief. Such people have missed the brightest chapters of the Prophet's life and got themselves lost itself in its preface alone. This picture of the Prophet's life cannot have any effect on other nations of the modern age, even the Muslim youths cannot conceive that the Prophet can also be a leader of civilised life and that some of the most complex and difficult problems can be satisfactorily solved through him. This had led a curtain being drawn before the Prophet's life.

These erroneous conceptions flourish only because the atmosphere is congenial to them. The political and social system which is before us and the kind of life we lived need a particular type of man and want to see a particular type of character in him. In other words the practical life here does not at all need the type of man which is presented by the Prophet's life, and the mind and character which can be acquired from the Prophet's life has no relevance. Parents are fostering their children on the model of their choice and years are devoted to educate the young for this life. now entire world which has been

consciously or unconsciously adjusting itself to this model can gain nothing by writing or reading books on the Prophet's life or by hearing and delivering sermons on the subject. They will never have the urge to follow the real model of the Prophet's life.

The fact is that we have completely missed the correct concept of the Prophet's life because other extraneous viewpoints are at work. Thus despite the presence of all the spectacles of devotion and love and the minds devoted to the study of the Prophet's life, the man whose model the Prophet has presented never appears. The Prophet's life cannot enter into us in any other way except by our determination to work for the ideal to which he dedicated himself.

The Prophet's life is not the story of Rustam and Sohrab or the tale of a Thousand And One Nights. It is not the story of an imaginary character and its study is not to be treated as a literary pastime! It is not the life of a person but the story of a historical force which appeared in the form of a man. It is not the story of a *darvesh* who cut himself off from the world and sitting in seclusion had devoted himself to self-purification. On the other hand, it is the biography of one who was the moving spirit of a movement. It is not the story of a man but of a man-maker. It covers the noble deeds of the builder of a new world. The achievements of a whole community, a revolutionary movement and a collective effort are comprised in it. The Prophet's life from the cave of Hira to the cave of Thaur, from the sanctuary of the Kabaa to the market of Taif, from the closets of the Mothers of Muslims to the battlefield, is all-embracing. His impress is the hallmark of many lives. Abu Bakr, Umar, Ali, Ammar, Yasir, Khalid, Khwailid, Bilal and Suhail are different chapters of one life. There is a whole garden where every flower and petal narrates the gardener's life.

The prophet, in fact, is not a "great man" in the limited sense of the term. His life is not the story of any great or famous man as are indicated among the heroes. His personality is far above that of any of the great and famous men. The world has produced many great men and is still producing them. There have been great men who presented a constructive idea, and those who thought over moral and legal codes, and those who worked for social reforms and those who conquered countries and left mark of glorious achievements, and those who administered kingdoms and those who presented surprising examples of spiritual life and those who showed the world the highest models of personal morality. But when we study the lives of these great men we find that their energies were concentrated on one branch only, leaving the other branches bare. We find one part very bright while the others are quite dark. There is excess on one side and deficit on the other. But in the Prophet's life, every part is well-balanced and the whole is the model of perfection. There is warmth as well as coolness, spiritualism as well as materialism, prayers as well as respect for the individual, leadership of the community as well as household engagements, relief for the oppressed and restraint on the oppressor, and all features are evenly balanced and supplement one another. There is a model for every aspect of human life and once a man takes a lesson from it, he needs no other guidance from anywhere and it is a light for all ages to come and for all climes and communities, the hottest or the coldest, the black or the white. Many great men have taken light and guidance from this greatest of men and prospered and wherever there is progress and advancement it is because of examples set by him.

The community organized by him had the responsibility of fostering and propagating his great message, but the community itself has strayed away from the right path and is in disorder. There are volumes and volumes of books describing his great achievements and the methods by which they were accomplished, but there is not a trace of this in the lives of the community or its actions or mental attitudes. Some faded lines of his thinking, politics, life, conduct, character and culture are still visible but they are being eroded by a mixture of many new features and as the community stands today it gives no evidence of being representative of those traditions. Rather, it stands as a beggar at the door of every perverse ideology and is ashamed of its own proud inheritance. The Qur'an has been kept wrapped up in covers and the Prophet's life has become a forgotten chapter.

Worst of all, the Muslim community has lost its universal character and degraded itself into a religious and communal group and assigns to the Prophet the role of only religious and national leader and

confines this international personality and his universal message to a specified group although the Prophet's role was that of a world teacher and a redeemer of the humanity. It was necessary to present the Prophet as a model for the humanity so that anyone casting himself in its mould could become a source of happiness for himself and for the human race and disentangle himself from perplexing problems and achieve a purified system of life. The example of Prophet's life is a universal boon like the light of the sun or the rain or the air. It is we who have shut ourselves in the shell of ignorance and inaction. Today we try to gain something from the teachings of Plato, Socrates, Machiavelli, Marx, Freud and Einstein without any prejudice but there are innumerable prejudices in the way of seeking any guidance from the light and enlightenment of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). There is a notion prevailing that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Prophet of the Muslims and since others have no concern with the Muslims, Muslims have no concern with them. Why should others have anything to do with the Prophet and teacher of the Muslims? Unfortunately, our own attitude is to a large extent responsible for this trend.

The western nations which held the leadership in later rationalistic and democratic age could not comprehend the Prophet's message and the order established by it. The European mind could not visualize the personality which shines in the background of the European renaissance and whose hand could be traced behind the democratic and international movements and religious reforms. There are various factors to account for it but the major factor is the religious prejudice of the minority among them which became dominant and confronted the Muslim power with all available weapons making them subservient in the end. The bitterness created by the crushing defeat of the Crusades was also partly responsible for this. Furthermore, the life of the Prophet is not studied as a whole but in fragments, giving prominence to the features regarded as unfavourable by the Western mentality. That method of studying a mission can never lead to a correct appraisal and the result is an overdose of biased and hostile literature on the subject, prejudicing the minds of even those who are not absolutely averse to the truth.

This book is a humble attempt to remove the cobwebs of prejudice and misconception and to present the Prophet's life in a manner that will appeal to a wider circle of the humanity, to bring out clearly the universal aspects of the Prophet's message, his concern for the entire mankind, for the whole world of the East and the West, of both black and white for the classes and the masses, for labourers and the elite class, for men and women of all walks of life and of all religions and political persuasions, for the rulers and the ruled, for the learned and the ignorant and for every man in every field of activity.

## **THE PERSONALITY AT A GLANCE**

### **THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF THE PROPHET AND HIS MANNERS**

Those who accomplish great deeds in the world, particularly the prophets and reformers, are gifted with a charismatic personality and it is this personality which is the power behind all their works of reform and leadership of movements and building up of a new order, based on a particular way of thinking. Thus, while studying the Prophet's life we should first assess the personality of this redeemer of the humanity.

The appearance of a man helps a great deal in understanding his personality. The body structure, physical features and symmetry of body parts are indications of his mental and moral makeup. The face being the index of the mind, it is an open book in which a man's character and the history of his future achievements can be clearly read. We do not have any picture or image of this greatest man whereby we can have the privilege of looking at his elegance because the Prophet himself prohibited the drawing or sculpturing of his picture as he feared this would be abused and might even be worshipped, which would annul the most basic tenet of Islam. All pictures of him, drawn by non-Muslims are imaginary and are based on their biased view of the Prophet. We, therefore, have only some pen-portraits drawn by his companions, which give us a glimpse of his appearance.

Abdullah bin Salam was a Jew of great learning; the moment he saw the Prophet, he was convinced of the truth of his mission and embraced Islam. He said, "As soon as I saw the Prophet, I realized that this face cannot be that of an impostor." Another companion, Abu Ramsa Taimi says, "I went to the Prophet with my son and the people there pointed him out to me. Immediately my son and the people there pointed him out to me. Immediately on seeing him I was convinced that he was truly a messenger of God." A caravan of merchants came to Medina and camped outside the city. The Prophet incidentally passed that way and purchased a camel, promising to send its price from home. The owner of the camel felt worried that he had trusted a man whom he did not know whereupon his mother said, "Do not worry. I have seen the face of a man which was bright like the moon. A man with such features cannot be false and if he does not send the price of the camel. I will give it to you myself." Later, however, the Prophet sent to him dates worth more than the price of the camel. The mother and aunt of Qarsafa had said. "We have not seen more handsome man than the Prophet. We saw light coming out of his lips." Abu Huraira remarked, "The Prophet was like a bright sun. I have not seen a more handsome than the Prophet. Rab'ee, daughter of Mu'awwaz. Had said, "If you had seen the Prophet, you would have felt as if the sun had risen." Hazrath Ali said, "On the very first sight of him you would feel awe." Hazrath Jabir Samra said, "I was once looking at the Prophet in the moonlight and comparing his face with the moon. At last I realized that the Prophet was much more handsome than the moon." Ka'ab bin Malik said, "When the Prophet was pleased, his face became as bright as the moon and we could find from his face that he was pleased."

Now let us see the statements of people about different parts of his physical features:

Face : "His face shone like the moon." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 "His face was round like the moon." - (Bara bin Azib)  
 "His face was not quite round but inclined to roundness." - (Hazrat Ali)  
 "Broad forehead, slanting thick brows parted in the middle. A vein protruded between the two parts which became more prominent in anger." (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 Colour : "Neither white like lime, nor tanned, but brown with whiteness predominant." - (Hazrath Anas)  
 "White, reddish." - (Hazrath Ali)  
 "White but wholesome." - (Abu Tufail)  
 "White and bright." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 Eyes : "Black, with long eyelashes." (Hazrath Ali)  
 "Black and drooping. Habit of looking from the corner of the eyes in shyness." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 "Red lines in the white parts, wide sockets, and natural grey corners." - (Jabir bin Samra)  
 Nose : "Somewhat high with unique brightness whereby it looked large at first sight." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 Cheeks : "Even and soft, a bit of flesh drooping at the lower end." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 Mouth : "Wide." - (Jabir bin Samra)  
 "Moderately wide." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 Teeth : "Thin and bright, symmetrical, openings in front teeth." - (Hazrath Ibn Abbas)  
 "When talking a light seemed to sparkle from the teeth." - (Hazrath Anas)  
 Beard : "Full and thick." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 Neck : "Thin and long, beautifully chiselled like a statue Colour of the neck white like silver and handsome." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 Head : "Large but symmetrical." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 Hair : "Neither quite straight, nor sheep like." - (Qatada)  
 "Slightly curly." - (Hazrath Anas)  
 "Thick, sometimes touching ear lobes and sometimes reaching upto shoulders." - (Bara bin Azib)  
 "Parted in the middle." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 "The body did not have much hair. A line of hair running from the chest to the navel." - (Hazrath Ali and Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 "There were some hair on shoulders, arms and upper chest." (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 General Structure : "Body well built, bones joining limbs large and strong." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

"Body was not fat." (Hazrath Ali)  
 "Neither tall nor short, small but middle-sized." - (Hazrath Anas)  
 "Inclined to be tall. Among the people he appeared to rise higher than others." - (Bara bin Azib)  
 "The abdomen was not protruding." - (Umme-e-Mabad)  
 "Despite has poor conditions and lack of proper food his body was stronger and more virile than those of better nourished persons." - (Al-Mawahib)  
 "I have not seen a braver and stronger man than the Prophet." - (Ibn Umar)  
 Shoulder and Chest : "Chest broad and even with the abdomen." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 "Chest broad." - (Bara bin Azib)  
 "Width between shoulders more than usual." - (Hind bin Abi Hala and Bara bin Azib)  
 "Portion between shoulders fleshy." - (Hazrath Ali)  
 Arms and Hands : "Wrists large, palms wide and fingers symmetrically large." (Hind bin Abi Hala)  
 "I have not touched any thick or thin silk or anything else which was softer and fleshier than Prophet's palms." - (Hazrath Anas)  
 Calfs and Feet : "Calfs were not fleshy but symmetrical." - (Jabir bin Samra)  
 "Feet were fleshy, lower parts of feet little hollow and feet so smooth that they could not retain water." - (Jabir bin Samra)  
 "Very little flesh on heels." - (Jabir bin Samra)

The most graphic description of the Prophet was given by an old woman at whose house the Prophet stopped on his way from the cave of Thaur to Medina and her goats gave so much milk that the Prophet and his companions were fully satisfied and yet there was much left over. When the old woman's husband returned home and expressed his surprise, the woman gave the description of the Prophet as follows:

"Handsome features, bright face, likeable temperament, neither the abdomen protruding nor hair of the head fallen out, graceful, handsome, eyes black and large, hair long and thick, voice clear, long neck, bright black of the eye, natural grey corners, thin and drooping eyelashes, black and curly hair, silent with dignity inclined to cordiality, graceful and captivating at a distance and very sweet and most handsome from near, talk sweet and words clear, neither more nor less than necessary, all talk consistent, middle-sized, neither short so as to look insignificant nor tall to look unbecoming, a fresh twig of handsome plant, charming to look at and well- built. His companions are so devoted that they always surround him, quietly listen to what he says and promptly obey what he orders. Obeyed, liked, neither verbose nor cryptic."

The original Arabic has been translated into Urdu in the book *Rahmatul Lil Alamin*.

Dress: The Qur'an says:

*"Oh ye children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover your shame as well as be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness is the best." (VII 26)*

At another place:

*"He made you garments to protect you from heat and coats of mail to protect you from (mutual) violence." - (XVI: 81)*

Thus the Prophet's dress was governed by these conditions. It was protective and dignified and with all that a dress which indicated the fear of God. It served needs and followed some strict moral principles and good taste. The Prophet hated pride and ornamentation. He said, "I am a servant of God and dress up as such." Usually the Prophet's dress consisted of loose cloth tied above the navel and reaching up to a little above the ankles, the front portion somewhat lower than the back, a little long shirt (*Kurta*) and turban. When he saw some of his companions wearing trousers he liked it and purchased a pair for himself. It was also found among the things he left after his death. Sometimes he also put on a cap and also socks. A pair of socks sent as a gift by the Negus was worn by him and he passed his hands on them in ablution (instead of washing the feet). A pair of socks presented by Wahiawa Kalbi was used by him till they were worn out. He preferred white clothes and directed that dead bodies also should be wrapped in white. His footwear was like a *Chappal*. He also put on a ring

on his little finger which had the words "*Muhammad Rasul Ullah*" engraved on it and was also used as a seal. His clothes were always clean and though he disliked ostentation he never dressed like anchorites. He was very careful about his hair and particularly of his beard and ordered that those who kept beard should keep it and tidy. He always kept the following seven articles near his bed whether at home or traveling: (1)A bottle of oil,(2)Comb,(3) *Surma dani*, (4) Scissors, (5) Stick for tooth-brush, (6) Mirror and (7) A thin chip of wood. He was very fond of perfumes and was pleased to accept gifts of these.

He walked with firm and dignified steps always looking ahead. Despite his very heavy responsibilities he found time to participate in social conversations in which all kinds of religious and mundane subjects were discussed. He always spoke slowly and pronounced each word so distinctly that his listeners could memorise them. The modulation of his voice in talking was most striking. Arabic language was already well-known for its brilliance and polish and the Prophet's language as he himself claimed was inspired, so in clarity, and style and comprehensiveness, his language was unique and brevity of expression was its chief characteristic, so that his few words carried great meanings. If it were possible to render into translation some of his most beautiful expressions and remarks, we may have given here some but those interested in the subject are referred to the original of these. Two of his greatest orations are, one on the conquest of Makkah and the second on his last Hajj. The last one in a way opens a new chapter of history.

The Prophet greeted everyone whom he met on the way when he went out and was always ahead in wishing others. If he sent a message to anyone he also sent his wishes with it. If someone sent a message to him he greeted both the sender and the messenger. Once he passed by a group of children and greeted them. When he passed by a group of women he greeted them too. He used to wish everyone at home when going out and while coming in. He shook hands with friends and also embraced them and sometimes even kissed them on the forehead. While shaking hands he never withdrew his hands till the other man had withdrawn his. In the assembly of people he always chose the corner place to sit and never jumped over others to go ahead. He used to say, "I sit as a servant of God should sit." He disapproved of people rising for him in respect. If someone came to visit him he spread a sheet of cloth for him to squat on and did not dismiss the visitor till he himself wanted to leave. He never introduced any irrelevant subject in the talk but participated in the general topic of discussion and talked with his companions most cordially. Stories of pre-Islamic days were told and laughed at. Verses were also recited and commented upon. If the Prophet found from the faces that people were disinterested in any subject he would at once change the topic. He treated all those present with equal cordiality so that no one could complain of indifference or discrimination. If someone interjected an irrelevant topic in the course of the conversation, the Prophet overlooked it, reverted to the subject of discussion and then turned to the person who had talked irrelevantly. He never turned away his face from anyone unless the other one looked away or finished his talk if he was speaking in confidence. He even gave a hearing to the talk he did not like but admonished in a general way. Even for those whom he disliked the Prophet had smiling face. Once a person came to him whom he used to call the worst of his group but he talked to him with all cordiality and on Hazrath Ayesha's expressing surprised said, "By God, the man whom people avoided because of his discourtesy will have the worst place on the Day of Judgement."

When he went to meet anyone he sent his greetings from outside and sought permission, and if it was night he wished in such a way that the person concerned might hear if he was awake and if he was asleep he might not be disturbed. If he did not receive a response, he returned without any annoyance. If anyone removed a straw or dust from his clothes he thanked him and said, "May God keep away from you everything that you dislike." He accepted gifts and offered gifts in return. If someone was harmed by him accidentally he gave him the right to retaliate or sent him some gift. If anyone came to him putting on new clothes, he would say, "*Very Good, Very Good*. Wear it for long till it is worn out." He did not retaliate for ill-treatment from others but forgave them. If anyone accosted him even if he was one from his family, he always responded with a respectful 'yes'. He was particularly keen on calling upon a sick person and on visiting him, he enquired about his health, sat by his side, passed his hands over his forehead and if he asked for anything to eat, he would

send for it if it was not harmful. He caressed the patient, pacified him and told him "God willing, you will recover soon." He even went to call on ailing relatives who had not accepted Islam. He called on a sick Jewish child, who then accepted Islam. There was no fixed time for such visits but the moment he heard of an illness and he was free, he went to see the patient. He even called on Abdullah bin Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites, when he was ill.

When he heard of the death of anyone he visited the bereaved family members and consoled them; he prohibited loud lamentations. He insisted on the dead body being shrouded in clean white cloth. If any dead body passed before him he stood up even if the dead man was not a Muslim. He also insisted on the burial taking place immediately after death. He led the funeral prayers of Muslims and accompanied the bier. He advised that people should send food to the house where a death had occurred. He embraced the person who returned from a journey and bade farewell to those departing, saying "Please remember me in your prayers."

He was particularly interested in children whom he called flowers of the garden of God and said that it was they who would be future leaders of the Islamic movement. He patted the children and prayed for them. If a baby was brought to him he took him on his lap. If he met a child on a journey he took him on his conveyance. When he received a seasonal fruit for the first time he gave it to the children. Occasionally, he also found time to play with them.

His treatment of the people is best illustrated by Hazrath Anas. This is what he said, "I had been with the Prophet for ten years and he never snubbed me even once. He never criticized anything I did for him and he never resented if I failed to do something. He treated all his servants and dependents the same way. He never beat any of his servants." This is further corroborated by Hazrath Ayesha who said that the Prophet never beat any of his servants or dependents nor took revenge on anyone.

## HOME LIFE

The Prophet's public and private life was governed by one common principle. Replying to a question Hazrat Ayesha is reported to have said, "He was just like other men. He himself took care of his clothes, milked his goats, stitched his torn apparels and mended his shoes and leather buckets. He carried loads, gave fodder to animals. If there was a servant he also worked with him and shared his labour. He himself brought provisions from the market and carried them in a sheet of cloth." Hazrath Ayesha also said, "The Prophet was the most lenient man at home, smiling and cordial. In fact, there was no one more affectionate to his people than the Prophet." According to Hazrath Ali, the Prophet was occupied at home in three kinds of activities: he spent some time in prayers and some time on his dependents and some time in rest. At the same time he spent some time for general meetings at the mosque and for friends and guests, and to receive people who came to him for their personal needs. In fact, he found very little time for rest. He had to arrange provisions for his consorts and for their training and the work of reforming women was also carried on through them. Many women came to him with their problems which they conveyed on him through his consorts. But despite that, his domestic life was never artificial or onerous. It was a man's home in which there were natural feelings. There were smiles and also tears, affections were at work and at times strains of jealousy. There were worries and also enjoyments and whenever the Prophet arrived at once the home was bright and glowing. There was conversation on general topics and sometimes there was story-telling and interesting tidbits. It is related, for instance, that once Hazrath Ayesha cooked a preparation of minced meat and wheat flour when Hazrath Sauda was present and the Prophet was sitting between them. An atmosphere of informality prevailed in which Hazrath Ayesha asked Hazrath Sauda to take some of her preparation not agree to take it. On Hazrath Sauda's again refusing it, Hazrath Ayesha actually pasted it on her face whereupon the Prophet had a hearty laugh and told Hazrath Sauda to do the same with Hazrath Ayesha to make her stop and when Hazrath Sauda did it the Prophet laughed again. Once Hazrath Abu Bakr came and finding Hazrath Ayesha talking to the Prophet impertinently, lost his temper and wanted to beat her when the Prophet intervened and pacified him and said that it did not matter. When Hazrath Abu Bakr left, the Prophet said to Hazrath Ayesha, "Did you see how I saved you from the old man?"

Throughout his life the Prophet woke up in the latter half of the night, cleansed his teeth, did ablution and offered *Tahajjud* prayers and recited the Qur'an very peacefully. Sometimes he stood in the prayers for such a long time that his feet became swollen and when his companions said where was the need of his putting himself to so much trouble when God had promised him forgiveness of all his lapses of the past and future, the Prophet replied, "Shall I not become a grateful servant of God?"

The Prophet's idea about the house and its furnishing was that man should pass his life as a traveller who takes a little rest under a shade and then continues his journey. It meant that those who make the next life as their goal should live in this world just to do their duties and to live on probation. And how could those who have to struggle here for a high ideal think of building mansions and equipping them with costly furniture and enjoying life in blissful comfort? So neither the Prophet nor his companions built large houses or furnished them. Their houses were just like rest-houses where there was provision for protection from heat and cold and preventive measures against wild animals and for privacy in regard to hygienic necessities. The Prophet had built small rooms by the mosque for his consorts in which the only decoration was cleanliness. The Prophet was so keen on cleanliness that he always exhorted his companions to keep their courtyards quite clean. Very few utensils were kept in the Prophet's house. There was a wooden bowl covered with iron which was mostly used for eating. There could be no question of stocking provisions as daily necessities were often hardly available. His bedding was of leather filled with straw. His cot was strung with jute ropes which he often used without the bedding and the marks of the rope were found on his body over which Hazrath Umar once shed tears and said that while emperors of Rome and Iran lived in all luxury the Prophet was in that condition. The Prophet asked him if he was not pleased to find that while those people gained this world, the Prophet gained the next. Gunny bag sheets were also used as bedding and once when they were four-folded and the Prophet got such a sound sleep that he could not wake up for his *Tahajjud* prayer, he resented it and strictly prohibited making for him such 'comfortable' bedding.

His taste of food and drink was very refined. He liked meat in particular and preferred shank, neck and lion of animals and also bones of ribs. A special Arab dish prepared with soup and bread was also relished by him. Honey, vinegar, melon, cucumber, gourd, butter and rice cooked with pulses were particularly liked by him. He also liked dates mixed with milk or with butter. He also ate cucumber with salt and melon with sugar. He also put dates into water and drank from it till the evening and then threw away as keeping it longer would ferment it. While drinking he never made a noise and raised the cup from his lips three times, each time thanking God. He liked people sitting together to eat. Use of table and chair was contrary to ascetic life. Also he did not like food served in small dishes. Silver and gold utensils were prohibited and generally glass, earthen, zinc and wooden vessels were used. Before sitting on the dinner mat, he removed his shoes and washed his hands. He used only right hand while eating and always took from his side of the vessels, never dipping his fingers in the middle. He did not like to lean while eating. Generally he sat cross-legged or on folded legs with the feet put behind like in prayers. If he disliked anything he quietly left it and did not criticize. He avoided very hot food. Sometimes he cut the meat with eating he used only three fingers and did not soil them. Sometimes he also ate a fruit while standing and sometimes took two fruits together like melon and dates. Sweet dish was his favourite. He also used fried barley powdered and mixed with water. Once when almond powder was substituted he rejected it saying that it was a rich man's food. When soup was prepared he asked to increase its quantity so that the neighbours could also have it. At every morsel he used to thank God. He was very particular in washing his hands after eating. If there was a guest he urged him again and again to eat freely and well. He never refused invitation and if someone else went with him he always asked the permission of the host to include him. In offering thanks to God after dinner he also blessed the host. He got up only when others of the company had risen. If others had finished before him he rose along with the rest. He disliked blowing over hot food or drink or smelling them. Since he disliked bad breath he never used onions or garlic. If any food was sent to him, he insisted on those present to partake of it, and set apart the share of the friends who were absent. Ever since the attempt made to poison him he always enquired of the name of the food brought from elsewhere and insisted on the person who brought it to take at least a morsel from it. In

spite of this refinement of taste the Prophet had often to go without food and used to say, "I eat and drink as a servant of God should do."

## PERSONAL HABIT

The Prophet often sat on his haunches and sometimes put his arms round his legs, sometimes covering his legs with some cloth. He usually rested on his left arm. While deeply thinking he was found digging the earth with some stick. When sleeping he lay on the right side and put the palm of his right hand under his cheek. Sometime he also slept on his back, sometime putting one leg over the other but always careful to see that no part of his body was uncovered. He very much disliked lying with the face downward and forbade others also to do so. He did not like sleeping in a dark room or an open roof without parapets. He performed ablutions before retiring to bed and recited prayers till he fell asleep. He snored softly in sleep. When he woke up in the night for easing himself or passing urine he generally washed his hands and face on return. A separate long cloth was kept for using at bed time when he usually removed his shirt. Since there were no latrines in the houses those days the Prophet used to go out upto two miles out of the city so as to be completely out of sight and he selected soft earth to avoid water spilling over the body. He also took care to take the cover of some rock or raised ground. He always took his bath behind a curtain or used a long cloth when bathing in a shower of rain. When sneezing he always put some cloth to his nose. He usually liked to begin his journey on Thursday and herd his conveyance at a fast speed. While taking rest during the journey he would start afresh the next stage early in the morning and while camping he worked with others on different chores. On one occasion when his fellow travelers divided the work of various items of cooking the Prophet took upon himself the task of collecting wood for fuel and in spite of others desiring to spare him he insisted on doing it and did it cheerfully. He always took some pedestrian fellow-traveller on his conveyance. When he returned from a journey he first prayed in the mosque and when the household was informed he went in without any fuss.

## HUMAN FEELINGS

The Prophet like any other human being was moved by feelings, shared in the joys as well as in the sorrows of others. He had great affection for his consorts and used to eat and drink in the same utensil with Hazrath Ayesha. He invited *Ansar* girls to play with her and once while showing her the acrobatic feats of the Abyssnians, her chin was resting on the Prophet's shoulders, and he repeatedly asked her if she was satisfied but Hazrath Ayesha continued her interest and this lasted for a long time. For Hazrath Safiah the Prophet bent his knees to let her step over them to mount the camel for conveyance. On one occasion the camel stumbled and both the Prophet and Hazrath Safiah fell down and when people rushed to help them, the Prophet cried that the lady should be attended first. His son, Ibrahim, was put on the second floor of an iron-monger's house during the nursing period and the Prophet went there covering long distance and despite suffocating smoke he sat by the child and fondled and kissed him. When his daughter, Fatimah, came to him he stood up to receive her. Her sons, Hasan and Husain, were very much loved by the Prophet who used to carry them on his shoulders and played with them. Even at the time of prayers they were permitted to sit on his shoulders. To a person who was surprised on seeing the Prophet kissing Hussain, he said, "One who does not feel compassion for others should not expect for himself." When his son, Ibrahim, died his eyes were filled with tears. Again when one of his daughters died before his eyes and the maidservant Umm-e-Aiman began loud lamentation, the Prophet stopped her and on her retort that the Prophet himself was weeping, he said that such weeping comes from a feeling which is a Divine blessing. At the grave of his daughter, Umm-e-Kulsoom also, the Prophet was in tears. Before the dead body of his foster brother, Usman bin Mazoon, the Prophet was in tears and kissed the forehead of the corpse. The Prophet himself explained his weeping in the following words: "The eyes are full of tears and the heart is sad but we can say nothing except that whatever is the Will of God must prevail." Often in grief he uttered the following verse:

*"For us God sufficient and He is the best dispenser of affairs." - (III:173)*

He never raised his voice in weeping but sighed like a boiling kettle. His sensitive heart was also moved while praying to God and pearls shone in his eyes. On one occasion he asked Abdullah ibn Masud to recite the Qur'an and when he came to the verse:

*"How then if We brought each people a witness and We brought thee as a witness against these people" - (IV : 41)* a flood of tears rolled down his eyes. It is a matter of great surprise how the Prophet with such delicately sensitive heart could demonstrate such patience and fortitude in times of distress and difficulties!

As mentioned above the Prophet had a cheerful disposition and used to say "Your meeting a friend with a smiling face is also a virtuous act." The Prophet said that a smiling and cheerful disposition of a person who intended to accomplish stupendous tasks helped to win the hearts of the people. He has been described as:

He met people with such cordial cheerfulness that his affection became rooted in the hearts of his companions.

His interesting and cheerful talks enlivened those around him, although he never lost balance and modesty. The portion of jest was mild like salt in the bread and there, too, never anything against truth could be found nor anyone's feelings were hurt, nor did he indulge in boisterous laughter. His laughter was a smile like the opening of flower-buds in which only teeth were visible and never the gullet. Hazrath Abu Huraira once asked in surprise, "Do you joke with us also?" The Prophet replied, "Yes, but I never say anything contrary to truth." Some examples of the Prophet's sense of humour will not be out of place here.

Once a man asked the Prophet to give him a conveyance and the Prophet said "I will give you a camel calf ." The man said, "What shall I do with a calf?" And the Prophet said "Every camel is born of a she-camel as a calf."

An old woman came to him and requested that he may pray for her to be given a place in Paradise. The Prophet humorously said, "No old woman can enter Paradise." When the woman was leaving in tears, the Prophet asked those present to recall her and inform her that God does not send to Paradise anyone in the state of senility but has promised:

*"We have created (their companions) of special creation and made them virgins pure (and undefiled)." - (LVI : 35-37)*

it means that those entering Paradise will be given the bloom of youth.

A beduin friend of the Prophet who was on friendly terms with him was usually sent by him to market on business. Once when the beduin was selling something in market the Prophet went quietly to him and put his hands over his eyes and asked him to recognize who he was. At first the beduin was flabbergasted and when he recognized he began to rub his shoulders against the Prophet's chest. The Prophet then called out, "Who is going to purchase this slave?" The beduin said in humility, "Whosoever purchases this worthless slave be at a loss." The Prophet then remarked, "You are not worthless in the sight of God."

Once the Prophet was eating dates with his companions and playfully he threw the seeds in front of Hazrath Ali and when they became a heap the Prophet said to Ali, "You have taken a lot of dates." Hazrath Ali replied, "I have not eaten them seeds and all."

Once in the thickness of the Battle of the Ditch the Prophet found an occasion to laugh. It so happened that Sa'ad, the father of Amir, was aiming his arrows against an enemy who was promptly warding them off with his shield. Sa'ad then put the arrow in the bow and waited till the enemy put his face

out of the shield and then threw the arrow with such precision that it struck the enemy's forehead and he swirled and fell in a way that his legs were lifted above, creating a ludicrous situation.

The figure of religious and godly men as generally conceived is identified with a wry face and morose disposition, and it is difficult to understand as to how the Prophet with his devotion in prayers, his God-fearing nature, his stupendous responsibilities and overhanging worries could find time for such relaxation in the scheme of life.

But in this scheme, faith and godliness do not mean abstention from relaxation. In reply to a question Ibn Umar said that the companions of the Prophet used to laugh although faith was firmly rooted in their hearts like a rock. They used to compete in archery exercises and heartily laughed together. There was a general assembly after the morning prayer at which pre-Islamic stories were also told and the Prophet laugh along with his companions. With the children and with his household he was always full of cheer.

## RECREATION

Recreation within bounds is an essential element of well-balanced life in order to remove its monotony and scheme of life which has no place for diversion cannot be tolerated for long by any society. The Prophet also occasionally liked to enjoy some permissible diversion. He liked to go to the gardens sometimes alone and sometimes in company and discussions on various topics were often held there. Sometimes swimming exercises were also held in which pairs of two competed with one another. Hazrath Abu Bakr was once partner of the Prophet in this. When it rained after a long break the Prophet bathed in the shower wearing a long cloth. He took keen interest in all running and archery exercises and wrestling bouts and heartily laughed there along with others. On joyous occasions he liked playing of drum open from one side, and singing by young girls. Once on the day of Eid two girls were singing near Hazrath Ayesha when Hazrath Abu Bakr came and snubbed them; the Prophet intervened and allowed them to continue. On occasions of marriage also he allowed the beating of such drums. At the wedding of an Ansar girl who lived with Hazrath Ayesha, the Prophet said that the Ansar were fond of music and so a singing girl should be sent with the bride who should sing:

We have come to you. We have come to you. So you live long and we live long.

On one such occasion some girls were singing when Hazrath Amir bin Sa'ad came and snubbed them upon which those present said, "If you want to listen, sit down, otherwise go away. We have the Prophet's permission for it." The Prophet had also a taste for poetry which somewhat differed from the prevailing style. The stream of revelation did not give him time to indulge in poetry but his taste in it was polished and he appreciated a good couplet. In fact, he gave a new trend to poetry. Jabir bin Samrah says that he attended more than a hundred meetings of the Prophet at which tales of pre-Islamic days were told and the companions recited poems. Once the Prophet greatly appreciated a line of poet Labid which said:

Beware, everything besides God is mortal.  
Its other line was:

And all pleasures are bound to fade.

Once the Prophet heard one hundred verses of Umayya bin Abi Salt, recited by Hazrath Sharid and said at the end that this man had reached very near Islam. Sometimes, especially on the battlefield, the Prophet unintentionally talked poetically. He asked Hazrath Hassan and Ka'ab bin Malik to compose verses in reply to abusive verses of the enemies of Islam, and often asked Hassan to recite verses from the pulpit and remarked that these verses were more effective against the enemies than daggers. He also once said, "A Muslim performs *Jihad* with the swords as well as with his words."

## SOME SPECIAL TRAITS

The Prophet used his right hand in taking or giving anything. In dictating letters he asked the writer to begin with the name of Allah and then put the names of sender and of the addressee. The text then followed and the seal was affixed at the end. The Prophet was free from all superstitions and never consulted omens. Nevertheless, he appreciated good names and disliked bad ones. While camping on the way during a journey he selected places whose names indicated happiness or blessing or success. Similarly he did not entrust any work to a person whose name smacked of quarrel or loss. He gave work to such men whose names meant joy or success. He also changed some names for better ones. In the use of conveyance he preferred the horse and used to say that in the hair of the horse's neck there was blessing till the Day of Judgement. He cleaned the eyes, nose and mouth of the horse with his own hands. He did not like noise and turmoil and preferred calm, dignity and order in everything. Even for going to prayers he prohibited running and undue haste. He used to say "Calmness and dignity is for you." Once at the time of Hajj there was much noise and confusion and the Prophet restored order by raising his whip and said, "Undue hurry is no virtue."

A description of the Prophet's good manners needs a separate volume as his whole life was a portrayal of elegance in manners. Hazrath Ayesha said, "His etiquette is the Qur'an." What Anas bin Malik said about him was most comprehensive. He said, "He was the best of men, most generous of men and the bravest of men." Never in his life did he hurt anyone except under the Divine law and never took revenge for any injury from others. He forgave everyone to the extent that he even forgave his most cruel persecutors of Makkah and Taif. He never refused anyone's request for help and even borrowed to help others if he could not arrange it himself or asked the person to come some other time or kept silent. The proof of his courage is that he stood up single-handedly to proclaim the truth and bravely faced all troubles and tribulations, never giving way to fear even in the most dangerous situations nor did he ever show any weakness. In the most critical times of his stay at the cave of Thaur and in the Battles of *Uhad* and *Hunain*, his faith remained unflinching and his steadfastness unparalleled.

## HIS LIFE AT MAKKAH

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of Rabi-ul-Awwal (22<sup>nd</sup> April, 571 A.D.), the Prophet was born in Makkah in a poor but esteemed and highly connected family of the Quraish and was according to the Arab custom sent to a village to be nursed by a very respectable lady. He was thus brought up in the healthy atmosphere of the countryside and living in the desert, he became habituated to the hard life that lay ahead; while rearing goats he was trained for the leadership of the nations. He was a posthumous child as his father had died a few months before his birth and his mother died a few years later. His grandfather who then took charge of him did not too live long and at last his uncle became his guardian. Thus devoid of all earthly support he prepared himself for the discharge of his stupendous responsibilities with the sole support of Almighty Overlord. As a boy, he did not associate himself with playful children or waste his time in idleness but displayed the serenity of his elders and, despite the prevailing atmosphere of corruption, debauchery, gambling, drinking and other vices, kept himself aloof, chaste and pure. He never bowed before the idols as was the practice of the Quraish. He always refused to take the meat which was sacrificed for idols and brought to him. In addition to these vices, the Quraish started the practice of going round the Kabah naked and avoiding the stay at Arafat. But this child never followed them and kept himself strictly aloof from all malpractices. While he was a small boy he participated in the Battle of Fajjar, on the side of the Quraish whom he thought were in the right but did not soil his hands with the blood of anyone.

At the most impressionable youthful age he offered his services to a body of like-minded young men who had formed into a reformist association to help the poor and the oppressed and check the excesses of oppressors. This association known as *Halful Fuzool* had pledged itself to the aforesaid objects. During the days of his prophethood, he once recalled this incident and said, "In return for this pledge I will not accept a gift of red camels and even now if I am called upon for such a pledge I

will not refuse." The wisdom and tact of this young man can be judged from the act the once at the time of rebuilding of the Kabah there was tension among the tribes over the right of fixing the black stone, and swords were drawn but the delicate and difficult task of defusing the tense feelings fell on the shoulders of this youth who suggested that the stone be placed on a sheet of cloth and leaders of all tribes hold the sheet, raise the stone and put it in its place. This settlement pleased all.

When this young man came of age, he chose the honourable and honest profession of trade in which the most prominent capitalists wished to invest their money through him because traders like Sa'ib, Qais bin Sa'ib Makhzoomi and Hazrath Khadija had already had practical experience of his integrity and fair dealings and had given him the title of the "Trustworthy Trader". One instance of his staunch steadfastness is that long before revelations began to come to him, one Abdullah bin Abil Hamsa had asked him to stay at a place and wait for him, but the man forgot all about it. After full three days when Abdullah passed that way he still found the young man standing there and waiting.

When the time came for him to enter into matrimonial life, he did not run after young girls of tantalising beauty but preferred a well-connected lady of reputed integrity. The offer came from the lady herself- Hazrath Khadija- which he readily accepted. This choice clearly indicates his most refined taste, his farsightedness, his greatness of soul and his unimpeachable character. And who were his close friends and associates? Not a single person of doubtful character or shady habits or mischievous nature is found in this list. His most intimate friend was Hazrath Abu Bakr who was of the same age and of same tastes. Another of his friends was Hakim bin Hazam, a cousin of Hazrath Khadija, who held the office of looking after the pilgrims of the Kabah. Although he did not accept Islam till the eighth year of Hijra the Holy Prophet regarded him with great affection and as a token of this he once sent to him a robe costing 50 gold coins, but the young man prevailed upon him to accept its price. Another of his friends was Zomad bin Tha'alaba Azdi who practiced surgery. If a person could be judged by one's friends and associates here was another proof of the Prophet's sterling character.

What is most significant is that when this young man could spare time from his business and household work he did not spend it in useless pursuits or in indolence, but retired to the cave of Hira and in seclusion he prayed to God according to his own wisdom, searched his mind for the truth and pondered over the degradation of his country and the world at large and the remedies to overcome it. It is not at all difficult to understand the nature and outlook of the young man who had been devoting his leisure in such contemplations. This young man who was to proclaim himself as the Messenger of God presented himself to his people with a definite scheme of life. He was born and bred among them, spent his childhood and youth in their midst and attained his maturity before their eyes. His life was an open book before them. Could anyone discern the least spot of blemish in his character to arouse a suspicion that he could cheat his people with some untruth or act in any selfish way or exploit name of God in trade in order to gain fame or cheap popularity? His people repeatedly acknowledged his integrity, trustworthiness, wisdom, moral uprightness and exalted character and did it even when their relations with him were most strained. The Prophet's life itself was presented as an argument in his favour:

*"A whole life-time before this have I tarried amongst you. Will ye not then understand?"* -(X:16)  
But when this jewel of his community came forward to proclaim the truth as the Prophet of God, there was a sudden change in the people's attitude and his integrity, nobility and trustworthiness at once lost their value, became questionable and the very person who till the previous day was the pride of his people was considered as their enemy. Did he suddenly become a counterfeit coin? No, certainly not. The defect was not in him but in the eyes of the people. The Quraish fully knew and understood the Prophet but had deliberately shut their eyes because their selfish interests and prejudices had made them blind.

*"They have eyes wherewith they see not."* -(VII:179)

In fact, under a traditional system, the Quraish had attained a position of leadership in the Arab society and this position could only be maintained if the same system continued. All political and religious offices were in their hands; they had become leaders in trade and guides in a particular form of religion and this leadership could be retained only under the existing system which they had to preserve at all costs whereas the Prophet came forward to assail and destroy it. In fact, it was just on his account that leaders of a perverted society, religious guides and upholders of selfish interests made common cause against the call of truth and reform.

Before relating the story of the cruel persecution of the Prophet and his little band of followers and their forbearance and fortitude, I would like to refer to a few beams of light which were seen in this overwhelming darkness as they indicated the preparation for the floodlight which was restlessly waiting to emerge and which showed that men's minds were seeking the light and were disgusted with the darkness. Before the revelation came to the Prophet sensible people were preparing to rebel against the prevailing evils of the society and were awaiting Divine guidance.

One day while the Quraish were celebrating a festival, singing praises of their idols, offering presents to them and going round them in reverence, four persons, viz. Warqa bin Nofal, Abdullah bin Jahsh, Usman bin Alhowairis and Zaid bin Amr bin Nofail were holding a secret meeting away from the din of festivities and taking pledges of secrecy. They were dismissing that their community was going the wrong way, had drifted from the religion of their ancestor Abraham and were worshipping idols of stone, which could neither see nor hear, nor could they do any harm or confer any boon. And they resolved to go about in search of the true followers of Abraham. Later Waraqa bin Nofal became a Christian, Abdullah bin Jahsh in his restlessness first adopted Islam and then went over to Christianity, Usman went to the emperor of Rome and became a Christian. But Zaid did not adopt Christianity or any other religion and continued his search for truth and gave up the religion of his community. He gave up idol worship, refrained from eating the sacrificial food presented to the idols and preached against killing of newborn daughters, proclaiming that he was following the religion of Abraham. He used to say that he did not know the right manner of worshipping God and would have adopted the way if he knew it. He often used to recite the following verses:

God should be one or a thousand,  
Is that a religion which divides its  
Affairs among so many deities?

I have forsaken Lat and Uzza and all (idols of the Quraish). And this is what the firm and patient men do.

But I worship my God, the Sustainer.  
That He, the Lord, forgive my sins.  
So you maintain the fear of God alone.

And so long that you retain it you will not be at a loss.

His wife, Safiah, daughter of Al-Hazrami, always teased him and whenever he wanted to leave his home in search of truth she informed Khattab bin Nofail who forced him not to give up the religion of his forefathers. Whenever he entered the Kabah he cried.

I am present, my Lord, as an obedient worshipping servant with all sincerity.

He also prayed that he was seeking the protection of the Lord whose protection was sought by Abraham. Khattab bin Nofail's hostility to him grew to the extent that he expelled him from the city and deputed some youngsters to guard against his re-entering Makkah. Whenever he secretly went there he was driven out and beaten. At last he left his country and wandered about Mosul, Aljazira (Iraq), Syria, etc. in search of the unadulterated religion of Abraham. At last he met a learned anchorite of Damascus who told him that he could not find any follower of the religion of Abraham anywhere, but a prophet would arise from the place he had left and he would proclaim the religion of Abraham. As advised by him Zaid started for Makkah but someone killed him on the way at

Lakhim. His son said, and Hazrath Umar asked the Prophet later if they could pray for his salvation and the Prophet said; "Certainly. He will be raised as a community by himself."

The urge for true religion which stirred the hearts of thinking people sometime manifested itself in the verses that the poets composed just before Islam. A prominent figure among them was Umayya bin Salt whose ideas about the unity of God and reward and punishment of sins were admirable and he also composed verses advocating virtue and good conduct. The Prophet appreciated his verses and said that he had reached very near Islam.

The revolutionary force which history awaited with anxiety and sought for a life-giving message appeared at the right time in the person of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), whose message was not a negative protest against the existing order but a comprehensive ideal and a system of life for a complete collective transformation of society. How could this revolutionary call be ignored?

## FIRST PHASE OF SECRET PREACHING

In the earliest stage of Prophethood, Hazrath Muhammad (peace be upon him) sometimes had Divine dreams and sometimes saw angels. One day the first Divine message proclaimed.

*"Read in the name of thy Lord, the Creator!"* -(XCVI: 1)

This first experience of revelation gave him such fright that he returned home shivering and narrated the incident to his wife who comforted him and said that his God would never forsake him. Warqa bin Nofal also confirmed this and assured him that this was the same message which was revealed to Moses. He added that people would not believe him but persecute him and expel him and also wage war against him. If he were destined to be alive at that time, he promised to support him.

Now Muhammad (peace be upon him) was duly installed as the Messenger of God and entrusted with a very heavy responsibility. The message was first presented before Hazrath Khadija who accepted Islam and became the first Muslim. Then preaching continued slowly and secretly. His friend of childhood (Hazrath Abu Bakr) and temperamentally closest to him was next approached and he readily embraced Islam as if his soul had already been seeking it. Then the Prophet's slave Zaid who was fostered by him and had seen his life and character declared his firm faith in his message. The fact that those nearest to him and fully acquainted with every detail of his life and character were the first to enter into the faith proves its absolute truth and sincerity.

Hazrath Abu Bakr became a zealous companions of the faith and began to work in his circle of influence. Several important personalities like Sa'ad bin Waqqas, Hazrath Usman, Hazrath Zobair, Hazrath Abdur Rahman bin Auf, Hazrath Talha joined the ranks of the faithful due to his efforts. The enthusiastic workers of the faith began to spread the message secretly and in due course Ammar, Khabbab, Arqam, Saeed bin Zaid, Abdullah bin Masud, Usman bin Mazoon, Ubaidah, Sohaib Roomi were enlisted in this first phase of secret preaching. The mission was kept so secret that the Prophet had to go out to some mountain caves and perform his prayer with his companions hidden from others. Once his uncle Abu Talib happened to witness this worship and asked his nephew what was this new faith he had adopted. The Prophet replied that it was the faith of his ancestor Abraham. Abu Talib then said that although he would not accept this faith, he would allow the Prophet to follow it and extend his protection to it.

One of the persons enlisted in the faith in this period was Hazrath Abu Zarr. He had already given up idol worship and used to pray to God according to his wisdom. When he heard of the Prophet's preaching he sent his brother to him to ascertain the facts and when on return the brother told him that the people called the Prophet irreligious although he taught good conduct and recited something strange which was quite unlike poetry and that his ways were like the ways of Abu Zarr. Thereafter, he personally went to the Prophet and accepted Islam.

The Quraish did not mind so long as the message was spreading secretly and thought that it was the act of some unbalanced young man who would soon repent because before the power of Quraish no such movement could flourish, while the idols whom they worshipped and to whom they offered sacrifices would protect their religion. But the movement continued to grow and spread its roots and branches in secret.

## PUBLIC CALL

Three years passed like this. God willed that the truth must stand up against falsehood and clash with it in order to triumph

*"Nay We hurl the truth against falsehood."* -(XXI : 18)  
Then the order came for the next stage:

*"Therefore, expound openly what thou hast been commanded."* -(XV:94)

Thus the Prophet with all his faith and determination prepared himself to meet the new situation. He went to the top of Mount Safa and called in the manner in which the Quraish used to rally people at the time of a crisis. People collected to hear what the matter was. The Prophet called in a loud voice.

"Will you believe me if I say that an aggressive army is behind this mountain?"

those assembled responded with one voice:

"Yes why not! We have never found you speaking falsehood."

On this reply the Prophet said, "Then I tell you to believe in God. O children of Abdul Muttalib, of Abd Manaf, of Zahra, of Makhzoom, of Tamim, of Asad. Listen carefully, otherwise, a great calamity will befall you."

In these most concise words the mission was proclaimed but the Prophet's uncle Abu Lahab, red with rage, cursed his nephew and said: "Was it for this that you called us all?" Abu Lahab, with the elite of the Quraish, left in disgust complaining that their time was unnecessarily wasted.

Next, the Prophet invited the entire family of his grandfather to a dinner at which he made a brief speech and said that if they accepted the message which he had brought for them they would prosper in this world and in the world to come. All those present were dumbfounded but a child came forward and said, "I have sore eyes, my legs are weak and I am still a child, yet, I will follow you in this mission." This was Hazrath Ali who later became one of the strongest pillars of Islam. Others present laughed, cracked jokes and said to themselves that a preacher with such follower was not going to perform any miracles. It was only a joke and madness which could be dismissed with ridicule.

## VIOLENT PHASE BEGINS

Once while the Prophet and his companions were praying secretly in a mountain pass, their enemies passed that way and began to hurl abuses and ridicule at those engaged in prayers and gesticulated at every movement of the prayer and when the Prophet and his party did not retaliate they fell upon them with blows and swords and in the scuffle Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas received a sword cut. This was the beginning of the wave of violence against the Prophet which erupted when revelation came to the Prophet to proclaim the truth publicly. In compliance with this revelation the Prophet made a public call in the precincts of the Kaabah and the opposing people taking it as an insult and defilement of the Kaabah assaulted the Prophet. See the irony: in this house built for the worship of one God all sorts of obscene rites were performed in the name of religion and it was not defiled but when truth and unity of God were proclaimed from there they said it was defiled! When the clamour grew and people from all sides gathered, Haris bin Ubayy came to pacify the mob but he was attacked and killed. A peaceful call to truth was now being opposed at the point of sword and then other violent methods were adopted. Hazrath Bilal was thrown on hot sand with his face down and a heavy stone was put on his

back. But despite these obstacles the call of truth continued to gain ground and in due course a devoted band of 40 followers had gathered about the Prophet.

When ridicule and violence did not succeed in silencing the call of truth, malicious propaganda was set against the Prophet and new forms of abuses were coined for him. People were prevented from listening to him by alleging that he was irreligious or that he was a Sabian, a system much disliked by the Quraish. One nickname given to the Prophet was "Ali Kabsha" or the father of Kabsha, who was a worshipper of stars against the general custom of the Arabs. It was also alleged that he had become mentally unbalanced due to the curse of the idols. Sorcerer, mystic, astrologer and poet were other names given to the Prophet by the opponents. In fact, the effect of abuses and ridicules is not permanent and dies out soon in the face of truth. So new abuses were invented everyday and propaganda to prevent people from coming to him. But could people collect around a movement run by a mad man, sorcerer or a poet? In the teeth of opposition, hostility, ridicule and abuses, the Prophet continued to stand firm and organize his movement. The Divine injunction was revealed:

*"Hold to forgiveness, command what is right, but turn away from the ignorant." -(VII:199)*

Here three injunctions were given, viz., not to take notice of the abuses, to carry on proclaiming the truth and not to quarrel with the recalcitrant. And Divine revelation refuted the allegations of the opponents:

*It is not the word of a poet. Little it is you believe.*

*"It is not the word of a soothsayer. Little admonition it is you receive." -(LXIX:41-42)*

Then the Prophet was challenged:

*"O God, if this is indeed the truth from thee, rain down on us a shower of stones from the sky or send us a grievous penalty." -(VIII:32)*

*"Now cause a piece of sky to fall on us." -(XXVI:187)*

It was also alleged that some jinn came to the Prophet and taught him strange things. Also that a Christian slave of Makkah named Jabir taught him a religion and even dictated to him notes for his lectures. And it was said in the presence of the Prophet that they had found out that a man named Ar-Rahman of Yamama had taught him this, "But by God, we will never believe in Ar-Rahman."

It was intended to prove these allegations that the Prophet was a mere tool in the hands of others. Also that it was neither a revelation from God nor any extraordinary ability of the Prophet which he related in the form of Divine revelation. The Qur'an answered these allegations most effectively and challenged them to produce one small chapter or even one verse like it after taking all help they could from men and jinns. Furthermore, it was alleged that there was nothing but the stories of old in what the Prophet said and such ancient tales could not solve the problems of the day. Then a group of poets was organized to compose obscene and foul verses degrading the Prophet. And all this was done under a well-thought out scheme as they had decided:

*"Listen not to this Qur'an but talk at random in the midst of its reading that ye may gain the upper hand." -(XLI:26)*

Then Aas bin Wail As-Sahammi spoke the following biting words:

Leave him alone. He is a man without a heir. There is none whom he will leave behind and will be forgotten as soon as he dies.

Thus was the Prophet belittled and ridiculed for being without heirs. But the Prophet's heirs were his deeds and his followers who would carry on his mission. And the Qur'an said that it was the unbelievers who were unconnected and would be forgotten after their death, while the Prophet had been blessed with abundance of goods and fountain of bounties. The Prophet was also challenged to bring a manifest sign:

*"Why not a sign is sent to him from his Lord?" -(X:20)*

*"Why are not the angels sent down to us, or why do we not see our Lord?" -(XXV:21)*

They also said that if what the Prophet said was really from God why not let a written book descend before them from heaven or the Prophet himself ascend the heaven and bring the book. They also ridiculed his normal human life and natural needs. For, if he were really appointed by God, angels would have formed his bodyguard or that a treasure would have come to him from above, or that he would have possessed a beautiful garden with luscious fruits and canals running through it. On the other hand, the Prophet and his followers were poor people in the lower rung of the ladder in the material sense of the world. How could they believe such a person to be a prophet and wherever the Prophet passed people jeered at him:

*"Is this the person sent by God as a Prophet?" -(XXV:41)*

How the Prophet should have felt about these ridicules, affronts and grotesque vituperations can well be imagined. But that nothing deterred him from his chosen path proves his great forbearance and fortitude.

Far worse than these, the non-believers indulged in worst kind of hooliganism. It was the Prophet's daily experience to see that thorns were thrown on his way by the chiefs of the community, noisy demonstrations made at his prayer time, entrails of animals with all their filth were placed on his back while he was prostrating in prayer, cloth was put round his neck and tightened till his eyes bulged and mischievous children were urged to clap and jeer after him and abuse God while he was reciting verses of the Qur'an, and bucketfuls of refuse were thrown on his head from roof tops as he passed on the road. The wife of Abu Lahab was foremost in teasing the Prophet and spreading thorns on his way whereupon the Qur'an has cursed her in a verse. All this hooliganism failed to serve the Prophet from his determined goal. His nobility of character and tenacity of faith triumphed.

The non-believers were making dubious efforts to kill the Prophet but he was under the protection of his uncle Abu Talib and so long as this protection continued, any attempt at the Prophet's life meant enmity with the whole clan of Banu Hashim. Whenever Banu Hashim thought of declaring their wholehearted support to the Prophet, Banu Umayya who were their rivals and did not wish that a prophet should emerge from the house of Banu Hashim, always dissuaded them. And then efforts were made to persuade Abu Talib to withdraw his support from his nephew. A deputation of influential people like Utbah and Shaiba, sons of Rabia, Abu Jehl, Walid bin al-Moghira, Nabia and Munabba, sons of Hajjaj bin Amir and Aas bin Wail called on Abu Talib and addressed him thus:

"O Abu Talib, your nephew abuses our gods, criticises our religion, calls our ancestors fools and regards them on the wrong path. So you should either stop him from these activities or do not stand

between us and your nephew and oppose his religion along with us. In his place we will be enough for you."

Abu Talib listened to this calmly and sent back the deputation with pacifying words. This effort having died out another deputation, more determined than the first one, came to Abu Talib and its leader spoke as follows:-

"O Abu Talib, you hold an important position among us in respect of age and nobility. We had asked you to protect us from your nephew but you did not do it. Now the way in which our ancestors are being abused and degraded and our gods criticised is beyond our endurance. So unless you stop him from this, we will fight both you and him till one of us is eliminated."

Abu Talib called his nephew and explained the situation and entreated him not to put any strain on him by antagonising the tribes. The Prophet faced a great crisis and the only support he could depend upon was now wavering. The movement was face to face with the greatest peril. Yet, the Prophet, with his characteristic fortitude born of his conviction, replied:

"Dear uncle, by God, if these people even put the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left and ask me to give up my mission, I will not do it, even if I lose my life in the struggle.

This was the voice which changed the course of history and crushed all opposition and obstacles, but the Quraish could not realise its force. Abu Talib, however, was impressed and said to the Prophet:

"Now dear nephew, preach whatever you wish. I will never give you up on any account."  
A third deputation came to Abu Talib with Amara bin Walid and its leader declared:

"Just see, this Amara bin Walid is a handsome young man, well built and strong. Take him and adopt him as your son. His wisdom and strength will serve you well and hand over Muhammad (peace be upon him) to us. He is abusing our ancestors and disrupting our community. We will kill him. We are giving one in place of him."

In view of the impending danger Abu Talib called together Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib and appealed to them to support the Prophet. The majority was agreeable but Abu Lahab strongly opposed them and the meeting dispersed without coming to any decision. In the meantime, the movement was spreading and rising above the common folk, and was winning over some influential people. The opponents again gathered and met Abu Talib who was sick in bed. They demanded an agreement to bind both the parties to leave each other alone and do as it liked without hostility from the other. The Prophet was summoned and there was a dialogue. After listening to the demand of the opponents, the Prophet said, "It is only a simple creed which, if you accept, you will be masters of Arabia and the non-Arabs will be subject to you." It is to be noted how in the midst of overwhelming opposition and turmoil the Prophet expressed such high hopes for the potentialities of his movement. Abu Jehl walked out in a rage saying. "Yes, by your father, not one but ten slogans will flow."

The non-believers then tried a new gimmick. They asked the people to withdraw protection to the supporters of the Prophet and so the clan of Banu Makhzoom demanded from Abu Talib to deny Abu Salma his protection to which Abu Talib said, "He is my nephew and has sought my protection. You people are oppressing him and always persecuting him. No, by God, if you do not stop oppressing him I will stand by his side to support him wherever he is." Similarly, one Ibnud Dughunna had extended his protection to Hazrath Abu Bakr who used to recite the verses of the Qur'an in melodious voice which influence the listeners. The Quraish went to Ibnud Dughunna and complained to him that the melodious recitation of the Qur'anic verses by Hazrath Abu Bakr was affecting their weak-minded women and children and so Ibnud Dughunna should withdraw his protection to Hazrath Abu Bakr. Ibnud Dughunna went to Abu Bakr and told him to desist from loud recitation of the Qur'an to which he refused to agree and absolved Ibnud Dughunna from the responsibilities of protecting him.

## ORGANISED OPPOSITION

In spite of all efforts of the opponents to defeat the Prophet's mission the work of preaching continued and began to spread. The Quraish had a hold on Makkah and could freely carry out their designs but Makkah was the centre of Arabia and caravans of merchants and pilgrims to the Kaabah used to flock there and people from outside were not under the influence of the Quraish or had any particular prejudice against a movement based on reason. Some of these were clear-headed men to judge any movement on the basis of its logic and to protect Makkah alone was not sufficient when the world outside was being affected by the call of truth and the Qur'an had also prophesied:

*"That we gradually reduce the land (in their control) from its outlying borders." -(XXI : 44)*

The most vulnerable point was the occasion of Hajj when men from all parts of Arabia thronged Makkah and encamped there and the Prophet went over to each camp one by one and delivered his message. When the time of Hajj approached the opponents of the Prophet gathered and discussed plans to counter the effect of the Prophet's mission and on the advice of Walid bin Moghira it was decided that although the Prophet was neither a soothsayer nor affected by a jinn, nor was he unbalanced mind, nor a poet or a sorcerer and his talk was sweet and touching but they should organise a campaign to refute the Prophet by alleging that he was sorcerer and his words were magical and he was creating dissensions between men and class, husband and wife, brother and brother and father and son. This plan was put through but its effect was contrary and the voice of the Prophet reached all corners, and the people who did not know it at first learnt that a movement of this type had been launched and its sponsor was Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The working of these two opposing movements can be seen from the following statement of Rabia bin Ubada.

"At Mina I was present as a young boy with my father I saw that the Prophet went to each camp of the clans and called the people with the words: 'I am a Prophet sent to you by God. I tell you to worship God and do not assign any partner to Him and abandon the worship of all other idols, and have faith in me, believe me and cooperate with me till I clearly expound to you all for which God has appointed me."

Rabia reports that a man in a robe followed the Prophet and as soon as he had finished, this man in the robe advanced and said, "O men of the clan, this man is prohibiting you from the worship of Lat and Uzza and leading you astray. So do not listen to him and do not follow him." On Rabia's enquiry, his father said that this man was no other than the Prophet's uncle Abu Lahab. On the occasion of Hajj gatherings, the Prophet made public speeches and Abu Lahab who followed him threw bagfuls of dust over the Prophet and cried "Do not be deceived by him. He is against the worship of Lat and Uzza."

In view of this widespread hostility, Abu Talib composed a poem and hung it in the Kaabah in which he said that while he himself had not accepted the religion of Muhammad he could in no way forsake him and would stake his life to defend him.

Every newcomer to Makkah was watched. Men were deputed to prevent him from meeting the Prophet. One such instance was of Tofail bin Umar Dausi who was a talented poet. When he went to Makkah, men of the Quraish surrounded him and said, "O Tofail, you have come to our city, but the activities of Muhammad (PBUH) have become intolerable to us. He has disrupted our unity and subverted our interests. His words are like magic. He is creating dissensions between father and son, husband and wife and brother and brother. So we implore you not to come under his spell and the best thing would be not to talk to him or listen to him." Tofail said these men did not leave him till he promised not to talk or listen to the Prophet and whenever he went to the Kaabah he plugged his ears with cotton wool. But one day, while the Prophet was praying near the Kaabah, he went and stood near him and thought of himself that he had commonsense, was a poet and could discriminate between good and evil. So he would surely listen to what the Prophet said and accept it if it was reasonable and reject it if it was not. Tofail was thus arguing within himself when the Prophet finished his prayer and

was returning home. Tofail followed him and related to him the whole story saying that he was perplexed by this message and requested the Prophet to explain his mission which the Prophet did and recited some verses of the Qur'an which charmed Tofail so much so that he promptly accepted Islam and on returning home he propagated the message with such enthusiasm that his entire clan accepted Islam.

Another instance is of Aasha bin Qais who was also a prominent poet and was in the same way jeered by the Quraish. In fact, he had come with the avowed object of accepting Islam but the Quraish did not leave him till he promised to return home that year and return next year if he wanted to accept Islam. Unfortunately, Qais died before he could return to Makkah the following year.

Another story concerns Arashi from whom Abu Jehl had bought a camel but did not pay its price. Arashi went from one man to another entreating them to intervene and secure his due from Abu Jehl. No one had the courage to do it and some of them in jest pointed to the Prophet, that he alone could do it. Knowing Abu Jehl's hostility to the Prophet they thought that they would be able to humiliate the Prophet. But when he went to the Prophet he asked him to follow him, knocked at the door of Abu Jehl and on his enquiry said that he was Muhammad (PBUH) and asked Abu Jehl to come out. He did and promptly paid the price of the camel to the complainant. Imagine the effect of this incident on Arashi and on the people of Makkah!

When the Prophet's message reached Medina through migrants, groups of people came to Makkah, listened to what the Prophet said, heard verses of the Qur'an which moved them and overwhelmingly they accepted Islam. The Quraish pursued them and tried to wean them away but they remained firm. The second pledge of Aqaba with the people of Medina was taken in great secrecy in the darkness of night because of the hostility of the Quraish but when those who had taken the pledge returned to their camp the chiefs of Quraish attacked them and questioned them if they were taking Muhammad (PBUH) to Medina and creating dissension among the people of Makkah. The *Ansar* of Medina settled the matter by keeping the fact of the pledge a secret but the Quraish kept a watch on the caravan of Medina and at last caught two of its members who were deputed as preachers to their community.

One of them, *Munzar bin Amr*, was a weak man and escaped somehow but the other, Sa'ad bin Ubadah was caught by the Quraish, brought to Makkah, bound hand and foot and was severely beaten, Jubair bin Mutim and Haris bin Harb rescued him.

Nazr bin Haris was one of the prominent leaders of opposition to the Prophet who devised a novel plan to wean away Prophet's supporters. He often used to visit Iran for his business dealings and from there brought stories of ancient heroes of Iran in addition to fiction of the region and collected people around him to listen insisting that the stories of *Rustam* and *Asfandiar* were more interesting than the terse tales of *Aad* and *Thamud* related by the Prophet. The Qur'an presents the character of the man in the following words:

*"And there are among men those who purchase idle tales without knowledge (or meaning), to mislead (men) from the path of God and throw ridicule (on God's signs)."* -(XXXI:6)

He also engaged a singing girl to entertain those who were found to show some learning towards the Prophet. And strangely enough, it was this very Nazr bin Haris who had once spoken to Abu Jehl at a meeting of the Quraish:

"O the clan of Quraish, you are faced with a problem which in future will not give you any means of escape Muhammad (PBUH) was once a fascinating child among you. More honest than any among you, and more trustworthy. When he started greying at the temples, he delivered to you his message. Now you say he is a sorcerer, he is a soothsayer, he is a poet, he is mad. None of these allegations is true. O the clan of Quraish, just ponder over the stand you have taken, for by God something great is in store for you.

This proves that the man had full comprehension of the Prophets' message potentialities and his opposition was deliberate and carefully thought out. But appeals to passions and emotions could not stand before a solid constructive programme and a firm movement and died out not long afterwards. After failing in all attempts of violence and propaganda and realising the great future of this movement, its opponents began to make moves for a compromise and bargaining but a movement based on solid principles has no room for such compromises. One of the compromises was that the Prophet should not say anything against their idols and their prevailing religious practices and confine himself to preach moral precepts or anything else he liked. This meant the continuation of the existing social structure and political and religious leadership of the Quraish and as it meant the end of the Islamic movement, it was promptly rejected.

Another compromise move is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows:

*"Bring us a reading other than this or change it." -(X:15)*

The Prophet replied to it in the words of revelation:

*"I have no authority to make any changes in the Qur'an myself. I cannot follow anything except what is revealed to me. I fear retribution of the great day (Resurrection) if I disobey my Lord." -(X:15)*

*"Who doth more wrong than such a one as forges a lie against God or denies in his sign." -(X:17)*

Another proposal of compromise put before the Prophet was that he should turn out the low class people who surrounded him and had become leaders of the movement for men of higher status who could not sit with them. If the prophet cleared the place for men of status they would flock to him. The motive behind the move was not any anxiety to join the movement but to deprive the Prophet of the services of those who stood by the movement under the most severe persecution and were struggling in the service of the mission and the Qur'an saw through the deception and revelations came to the Prophet that those who were praying to God day and night should not be deprived of the Prophet's company in order to placate the opponents of the movement:

*"And lower thy wing to the believers who follow thee." -(XXVI:215)*

The Qur'an even snubbed the Prophet for showing scant attention and affection towards a blind follower of his (Ibn Umm-Maktum) during the Prophet's crucial meeting with the elite of the Quraish. Once at a meeting of Quraish, Utbah bin Rabiah was authorized to approach the Prophet with certain proposals. He argued the case very politely laced with some flattery. The proposals were: If in this movement he wanted riches they would collect for him such wealth that he would become the richest man among them.

If he wanted leadership they would make him their chief and take no decision without its consent.

If he wanted to become ruler they would elect him as their king.

If he was under influence of some jinn they would all subscribe to meet the expenses of exorcising him.

The Prophet listened to these proposals and when Utbah had finished, the Prophet recited the first five verses of Surah Ha-Mim which said:

*"Ha-Mim. By the Book that makes things clear, We have made it a Qur'an in Arabic that ye may be able to understand (and learn wisdom), and verily it is in the matter of the Book in our presence, high (in dignity) full of wisdom. Shall we then take away the message from you and repel (you) for that ye are a people transgressing beyond bounds." -(XLIII:1-5)*

Utbah quietly listened to these verses and at the end, the Prophet said: "Now you have heard what I have to say. It is now for you to do as you like." When Utbah returned to his people they were disturbed to see the pallor of his face. Then on their enquiry Utbah said:

"I have never heard such a recitation as this. By God it is neither poetry, nor magic nor soothsaying. Now O clan of the Quraish, accept my word and leave its responsibility to me. You leave this man to do as he likes and do not disturb him. By God, the recitation I have heard is fraught with some very great consequences. If the people of Arabia accept his message, you will be ousted without

any effort. But if he dominates over Arabia, his kingdom will be your kingdom and his power yours and you will become the most fortunate of men through him."

The Quraish ridiculed Utbah and said:

"O father of Walid! You also come under magic!"

Another effort was made in which leaders of the clan like Utbah bin Rabia, Shaiba bin Rabia, Abu Sufian bin Harb, Nazr bin Haris, Kaldah Abdul Bakhtari bin Hisham, Aswad bin Muttalib, Zamaa bin Aswad, Walid bin Moghira, Abu Jehl bin Hisham, Abdullah bin Abi Umayya, Aas bin Wail, Nabia and Munabba and Umayya bin Khalf assembled near the Kaabah at sunset and sent for the Prophet who hopefully rushed to them when the offer of Utbah was once more repeated. The Prophet replied:

"My object is quite different from what you have said. I have not come to you with my call for the purpose of amassing wealth, or to secure leadership of the clan or to become your king. In fact God has sent me to you as His messenger and has revealed to me the Law and has ordered me to warn you and to give glad tidings. So I have conveyed to you the injunctions of God and have done my responsibility for your welfare. Now if you accept what I have conveyed to you it will be good for you here and in the Hereafter. But if you reject it, I will patiently wait for the Divine dispensation when God shall decide between you and me."

After this reply the non-believers lost all hope and began to make ridiculous demands. For instance, they said that their country was too small and water was scarce and the living very hard, and added. "So you should ask God to widen our land, remove the mountains surrounding it and produce rivers flowing in it like Syria and Iraq."

Then they asked that God should raise their ancestors from the graves in which there should also be Qusay bin Kelab who was an elder of proved integrity. "We will ask his view about your message if it is true or false. Then if our ancestors are raised and testify to the truth of your message, while you should accomplish what we have demanded, we will endorse your truth and agree that God has really sent you as His prophet to us." Then the said, "If you cannot do any of these things, then bring on us Divine wrath." The Prophet listened to these demands and replied: "I have not been sent for this purpose."

When the Prophet left the meeting Abdullah bin Abi Umayya also followed declaring that since "the Prophet rejected all the proposals put to him he would not believe in him even if he saw him ascending the sky by a ladder and coming down the same way bringing with him four angels testifying to the truth of his message. By God, he would never accepted him."

When in the course of the Prophet's preaching amongst the clans, the chief of the clan of Banu Amir, Bayhara bin Firas, came to the Prophet and listened to his message and turning to his clansman said: "If I could take this young man with me the whole of Arabia would fall under my rule," and then turning to the Prophet asked him, "If we accept your message and you overcome your opponents, do you promise to leave this movement in my hands after your death?" The Prophet's reply was, "It is up to God to appoint whomsoever he likes as my successor." On this reply Bayhara tauntingly said, "How plausible! To think that we face the onslaughts of your opponents, but when you achieved victory its fruit go to others. Go away. We want nothing to do with your movement."

It is clear from this incident that Bayhara realised the force behind the Prophet's mission and its potentialities and on the other hand the implication of this mission. If the Prophet were a non-political preacher or moral reformer on mystic lines he would have simply said, "What are you dreaming, my friend! This is just a reform movement of godly men. Where is the question of benefits or chieftainship or succession in this?" But the Prophet had full knowledge of the comprehensive nature of his movement and its political dimensions, which Bayhara also understood too well.

These ulterior designs were intended either to make the Prophet stoop to save his party from persecution and thereby weaken the tempo of his movement or if he was found unyielding, then the Quraish could propagate that he was so hot-headed that he did not agree to any of the hundred and one compromise proposals placed before him. The situation was so critical that the Qur'an again and again asked the Prophet to stand firm and on one occasion assured him of Divine help:

*"And had We not given thee strength thou wouldst nearly have inclined to them a little. In that case We should have made thee taste an equal portion (of punishment) in this life and an equal portion in the Hereafter."* -(XVII: 74-75)

## EXTREME OUTRAGE

Violence against the Prophet and his followers had begun as soon as his message was publicly declared but after the failure of peace missions and attempts at bargaining and more so after the death of Hazrath Khadija and Hazrath Abu Talib, the lava of violence erupted with greater force; instead of weakening the mission, those who joined the movement emerged as sterling gold. The biggest target of violence was, of course, the Prophet himself. What his other companions and followers suffered has not been remembered fully, but whatever has been recorded by historians, is most heart-rending. Some instances are briefly quoted hereunder.

It is obvious that apart from the persecution the Prophet himself had suffered his sensitive heart was immensely pained and bruised by the sufferings of the poor people who had joined his movement.

Khabbab ibn-ul-Irs Tamimi was sold as a slave in pre-Islamic days to Umm-e-Numar. He accepted Islam when the house of Arqam was the centre of the movement from where the Prophet used to organize it. The hooligans of the Quraish threw Khabbab on live cinders and a man stood over him to prevent him from turning sides. The fire cooled under him. Later he once showed his back to Hazrath Umar which was all white due to this atrocity. He was an iron-smith by profession and when after accepting Islam he demanded his dues from the people, they said that he would not get a single shell until he had forsaken Islam. This was economic strangulation but his reply was: "Even if you die and rise again I will not recant."

Hazrath Bilal was a slave of Umayya bin Khalaf and when he accepted Islam was thrown on the burning sand at noon time and a heavy stone was placed over him. When Umayya said he would die like this if he did not forsake Islam, his reply was only "One, One god". Umayya got further enraged and tightening a rope round his neck asked children to drag him in the streets. Sometimes he was wrapped in cow-hide and sometimes he was forced to put on steel armour and seated in the hot sun. At last Hazrath Abu Bakr purchased him in return for another slave and freed him.

Ammar bin Yasir was from the clan of Qahtan. His father Yasir went to Makkah with his two brothers in search of a missing brother. His two brothers returned home but Yasir remained in Makkah and married there. His entire family accepted Islam and suffered cruel persecution. Ammar was thrown on burning sand and severely beaten till he became unconscious. His parents also suffered untold oppression. They were thrown in the water and forced to lie on live cinders. The Prophet used to console them and raised their morale with assurance of better end.

Summaiyya, the mother of Ammar, on accepting Islam was cruelly stabbed to death by Abu Jehl. Yasir, the father of Ammar, died as a result of most cruel oppression. Suhaib had also accepted Islam at the same time as Ammar and he was beaten so severely that he lost his mental balance. At the time of migration the Quraish permitted him to go to Medina on the condition that he leave all his belongings in Makkah. Suhaib agreed and left without taking anything with him.

Abu Fakih Juhani was a slave of Safwan bin Umayya and accepted Islam at the same time as Hazrath Bilal. When Umayya heard of it he tied his legs with a rope and dragged him on the burning sand.

On the way they saw a beetle and Umayya asked Abu Fakih if that was his God. Abu Fakih said, "My God is Allah, Who is also your God." On this Umayya strangled with such force that he seemed to have died. But he survived. Once a very heavy stone was put on his chest which brought his tongue out. Sometimes he was chained and thrown on hot sand. He was also purchased and freed by Hazrath Abu Bakr.

Lubaina was a slave girl whom Hazrath Umar, before accepting Islam, used to beat mercilessly till he himself became exhausted. Zunaira was also a slave girl of the house of Hazrath Umar who used to cruelly beat her. Once Abu Jehl beat her with such force that she lost her eyes. Hazrath Abu Bakr bought and freed her.

Nahdia and Umm-e-Abis were also slave girls who were cruelly treated on accepting Islam.

Hazrath Usman who deserved respect for his age and status was bound and beaten by his own uncle Hakam Ibn-ul-Aas on his accepting Islam.

Hazrath Abu Zarr on accepting Islam rushed to the Kaabah and proclaimed his conversion whereupon the Quraish fell upon him and beat him so severely that he fell down unconscious. Prophet's uncle, Hazrath Abbas, rescued him. But next day he again went to Kaabah and reiterated his conversion and suffered severe beating.

When Hazrath Zubair ibn-ul-Awwam accepted Islam his uncle wrapped him in a mat and passed smoke through his nose but he continued to declare firmly, "Now I will never return to idol worship."

Saeed ibn Zaid was a cousin of Hazrath Umar. Who bound him with ropes on his accepting Islam.

Sa'ad ibn Waqqas also suffered cruel oppression on his accepting Islam.

Abdullah ibn Masud on accepting Islam for the first time loudly recited the Qur'an in the Kaabah. The Quraish ruffians fell on him and mercilessly beat him, but he continued to recite and returned home with a wounded face.

Usman bin Mazoon was not molested in the beginning because he was under the protection of Walid bin Moghira. But when he saw his fellow converts suffering cruel persecution he thought that it did not befit him to remain under the protection of a non-believer and he released himself and when he made public announcement and demonstrated firmness he was so severely beaten that he lost one eye. Walid came to him and said that he would not have lost his eye if he continued to be under his protection, upon which Usman said that he was now under the protection of One Who is much superior in respectability and honour than Walid and so he would not mind even if he had to sacrifice his other eye also.

When Hazrath Umm-e-Shareek accepted Islam her relatives forced her to stand under the hot sun and did not give her water after food. For three days she was kept under this torture and then she was asked to renounce Islam. Her mind had been so upset that at first she did not understand what was wanted and when she understood it she declared: "By God, I am firm in my conviction."

Khalid ibn-ul-Aas on accepting Islam was so severely beaten by his father that his head was fractured. He was also starved but stood firm.

Besides these Hazrath Abu Bakr and Talha, Walid bin Walid, Ayash bin Abi Rabia and Slama bin Hisham suffered extremely cruel oppression. Hazrath Omar's barbarous treatment of his sister and her husband is another example of the rage of the non-believers against the new converts.

But these are, however, just a few examples of the great sufferings and undaunted firmness of all those who joined the Prophet's camp and none who did so escaped the furnace of tortures.

## MIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA

The power of human endurance is not unlimited and the new converts had demonstrated to the world their exemplary behaviour in the face of oppression. On the other hand, the wave of persecution was still mounting and even the Prophet with his unbounded faith in God was beginning to realise that despite his comforting and soothing words, the patience of his small band of followers was on the breaking point. It had become clear that the soil of Makkah was not suited for the growth of the plant of new light and the Muslims were tired of waiting for the promise help of God. The Prophet, however, could not make any move unless revelation came to order it as had happened in the case of the preceding prophets.

Abyssinia was a country where a just ruler was on the throne and the Prophet used to call it. "The land of truth". When the revelation came to the Prophet in the fifth year of his ministration permitting migration from Makkah, a group of eleven men and four women headed by Hazrath Usman left for Abyssinia in the darkness of night. With Hazrath Usman was also his wife Hazrath Ruqayya, a daughter of the Prophet, who blessed with the prospect of the mission making headway elsewhere and as soon as they got the news of their having left Makkah, they sent their men after them but the migrant party had already left the port and was out of reach. The migrants stayed in Abyssinia for few days when they heard that the Quraish had accepted Islam and started back for Makkah, but on the outskirts of the city they found that the rumour was incorrect. Some of them entered Makkah secretly and some under the protection of their supporters. But as was expected, the return of this group inflamed the fire of oppression even more.

Now a larger group of 85 men and women migrated to Abyssinia and found the freedom to pursue their own way of life. The King, Negus, welcomed them but the priests and vested interest around him were not pleased and it was through them that the Quraish cast their nets to poison the mind of the Negus. A deputation of the Quraish headed by Abdullah bin Rabia and Amr ibn-ul-Aas went to Abyssinia with costly presents for the king and his courtiers, bribed the court officers and demonstrated to them that some hot-headed young men of their place had concocted a new religion which was a dangerous to their ancestor's religion as to the people of Abyssinia. Their main object was to achieve their end without the matter being known to the king. But when they had won over the court officials and priests, they went to the king with their presents and told him that they had been sent by the elders of Makkah to secure the return of their men. The priests and courtiers supported the demand but the

king said he could not decide the matter without hearing both sides. The following day both the parties were summoned before the king.

The migrants held consultation and felt hesitant to express their viewpoint before the Negus whose religion was different. But it was decided that whatever the result they would not say single word against what they had been taught by Prophet. And when they reached the king's court they did not prostrate as was customary and on objection being raised by the courtiers the migrants said that they did not prostrate before anyone except God and even to their Prophet they offered simple salutation. History has no parallel to this firmness of faith and conviction!

Now the deputation of the Quraish presented their claim that the migrants, who were absconding criminals and had raised subversion and concocted a new religion, should be handed over to them.

The king asked the migrants what religion besides idol worship and Christianity they had adopted. Hazrath Jafar as spokesman of the migrants sought the king's permission to question the Quraish delegation before presenting their case. And once the permission was granted, the following question and answers took place:

Hazrath Jafar: "Are we slaves of some people or have we deserted our masters that we deserve to be sent back?"

Amr ibn-ul-Aas: "No, they are not slaves but free respectable men."

Hazrath Jafar: "Have we absconded after murdering anyone? If so we may be handed over to the relatives of the murdered person."

Amr ibn-ul-Aas: "Nor they have not shed a drop of blood."

Hazrath Jafar: "Have we stolen anyone's property? If so, we are prepared to compensate."

Amr ibn-ul-Aas: "No, they do not owe a single coin to anyone."

Having thus proved their moral uprightness Hazrath Jafar, as spokesman of the migrants, represented as follows:

"Your majesty! We were ignorant people, worshipping idols, eating carrion, oppressing neighbours, brother fighting brother, the strong dominating the weak, when amidst us was raised a man whose nobility, integrity and trustworthiness were already well-known. He invited us to Islam, taught us to abandon idol worship, speak truth refrain from bloodshed, not to misappropriate the property of orphans, give comfort to neighbours, not to defile chaste women, offer prayers, keep fasts and give alms. We believed in him and renounced our bad habits whereupon our people became hostile to us and swore to take our lives. So we fled here with our lives and our faith. If our people had permitted us to live in our homes peacefully we should not have left them."

Negus was moved by this frank talk and he asked Hazrath Jafar to read some portion of the Book revealed to their Prophet. Hazrath Jafar recited some verses of Sura Mariam which brought tears to the eyes of the Negus and he cried, "By God, the verses and the Bible are lights from the same lamp." Further, he said "I am sure Muhammad (PBUH) is the same Prophet whose advent was prophesied by Jesus Christ, and I thank God that he is born in my lifetime."

At the same time he decided that the migrants would not be turned back. The meeting was ended and the intrigue of the Quraish had failed. After mutual consultation they decided to make another effort. They thought that as the Negus was a Christian, if the migrants were asked to express their views about Jesus Christ it was likely that religious prejudice might be aroused and he would turn out the migrants. When the migrants were summoned before the king the next day they also had the same forebodings, but they finally decided to speak out the truth regardless of consequences, and Hazrath Jafar said before the Negus:

"Our Prophet has told us that Jesus was the servant of God and His Word." The Negus picked up a straw from the ground and said, "By God, Jesus is not different even by this straw from what you have said of him."

Courtiers and priests who had been won over with present and bribes smarted under the blow but the Negus did not care for them and ordered that the presents brought by the Quraish should be returned to them. Thus their intrigue failed.

## THE CONVERSION OF UMAR

Perhaps the most dramatic chapter of the oppression of the converts by the Quraish is provided by the pre-Islamic attitude of Umar and it may be said to his credit that his conduct before Islam and after was not motivated by any material consideration but just as it was his duty to preserve the

existing social structure and thereafter in the sincere service of the new cause he had espoused. That he accepted the truth as soon as he comprehended it shows that he was a realist and not biased by any extraneous consideration. He was a young man of 27 when Islam was proclaimed and it soon penetrated into his own house. His brother-in-law Saeed had already embraced Islam and through him his wife Fatima, the sister of Umar, also accepted the new faith. An influential member of the family, Nuaim bin Abdullah had also responded to the call of Islam. At first Umar was unaware of these developments but as soon as he was informed about it, his rage knew no limits. We have already described how mercilessly he beat his slave girl Lubaina and now he resolved to strike at the very root of Islam and kill the Prophet. So he started, sword in hand, determined to kill the Prophet. On the way he met Nuaim bin Abdullah to whom he mentioned what he was going to do, on which Nuaim told him first to take care of his own house. Umar immediately rushed to his sister's house. She was reading verses of the Qur'an and on hearing Umar's footsteps she stopped and concealed the material on which the verses were written. Umar asked her what she was reading and when she tried to evade him he burst out and said that he had learnt that both she and her husband had forsaken their religion. Then he fell upon his brother-in-law. When his sister intervened, she received such a severe beating that she began to bleed and with blood stains all over her body she cried out, "Umar, you may do whatever you like but cannot give up Islam." A blood-stained woman, and that too his own sister, in tears and declaring such firm determination, conquered the strength of Umar and his heart was moved. He asked her to recite before him what she was reading. She brought out the verses of the Qur'an and began to recite and Hazrath Umar was at once transformed when his sister reached the verse: "Declare your faith in God and his Prophet." Hazrath Umar called out: "I witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad (PBUH) is His servant and Prophet." Thus enlightened with true faith, he walked to the house of Arqam which was the centre of Islam and gave his pledge to the Prophet. The conversion of Hazrath Umar raised the morale of the Muslims.

It may be noted here that so long as Hazrath Umar was against Islam he worked sincerely and zealously to oppose it, but when he joined the faith, he devoted himself with equal sincerity and zeal in its service. Thus the conversion of a man of such character was a great acquisition and a turning point in the history of Islam. It may also be noted that although his confrontation with his sister and brother-in-law was the immediate cause of his conversion, there were also other factors in the background which gradually helped to change his mental attitude. He was not a blind witness to the affairs of Makkah; there were many incidents that touched his heart and prepared the ground for his conversion. He was receiving daily reports of the progress of the Islamic mission and the character of the Prophet and his followers and the mean and fraudulent game of his opponents. There was much discussion in Makkah which also should have influenced his frame of mind. Besides these general features there were also some particular incidents which must have touched his feelings. One of those was when umm-e-Abdullah, daughter of Abi Hashma, was preparing to depart for Abyssinia with the caravan of the migrants, Hazrath Umar went to see her and tried to dissuade her from leaving. But when she said that the cruel persecution was now beyond endurance and she resolved to leave, Hazrath Umar was so moved that everyone who saw him at the time felt pity on him. It is not unlikely that this shock might have prepared the ground for his ultimate conversion.

The conversion of Hazrath Umar was of great significance because it took place at a time when the forces of oppression working against the Muslims were at their peak and his conversion created a great stir in Makkah, because Umar immediately challenged the opponents of Islam. He selected Jamil bin Mamar Jamhi, and announced through him that he had joined the new faith. This man went to the gate of the Kaabah and cried aloud that Umar had become a Sabi. Hazrath Umar who was just behind shouted that he was wrong.

He had become a Muslim and confessed that there is one Allah and Muhammad (PBUH) is His servant and Prophet. The Quraish then attacked him and beat him with all severity and released him only when Aas bin Wail Sahmi rescued him and took him under his protection. Hazrath Umar also went to the house of Abu Jehl and knocked at his door and when he came out he informed him of his conversion on which Abu Jehl immediately shut his door saying "God's curse on you and your news!" Then Hazrath Umar advanced further and offered the prayer in the Kaabah publicly alongwith other Muslims. Before

this Muslims used to pray secretly. Hazrath Umar was again beaten for this but the way was cleared for Muslims to pray openly in the Kaabah itself.

Thus, while the oppression against the Muslims was mounting with ever-increasing intensity, new converts were coming to its fold and important personalities were being weaned away from the group of oppressors. One event of importance in this connection is the conversion of Hazrath Hamza. This man, the only one among the surviving uncles of the Prophet, who was intelligent, brave and influential despite religious differences was very affectionate towards the Prophet. Being just two or three years older than the Prophet, the uncle and nephew were friends from the childhood. Once Abu Jehl assaulted the Prophet near the mountain of Safa and abused him which the Prophet patiently bore and did not retaliate. Incidentally, the slave girl of Abdullah bin Judan who was an eye-witness to the whole incident reported it to Hazrath Hamza who was returning from the hunting with bow and arrow, and remarked! "Oh! I wonder how you would have felt if you had seen the pitiable condition of your nephew." Hazrat Hamza went straight to the meeting where Abu Jehl was sitting with other. He struck the head of Abu Jehl with his bow, saying, "Did you abuse Muhammad? If so, I also go over to his faith and I repeat whatever he says." A man of Bani Makhzoom clan rose to support Abu Jehl who stopped him saying that he had much abused his nephew. Now with the conversion of Hazrath Hamza the importance of Islam was greatly enhanced.

## BOYCOTT AND CONFINEMENT

When every kind of oppression failed to stop the spread of Islam and when all efforts to remove the protection of Abu Talib from the Prophet were unsuccessful, the Quraish hatched another plot to socially boycott the entire clan of Banu Hashim, to have no relations with them, to stop all provisions reaching them and to have no dealings with them till Banu Hashim handed over the Prophet to them with permission to kill him. In the seventh year of the Prophet's preaching, all the clans of the Quraish joined in an agreement to boycott Banu Hashim nature of which is beyond description. The entire clan moved to Sha'ab Abi Talib and suffered confinement for the sake of the Prophet's call to truth. The confinement lasted for three years during which they suffered indescribable miseries. They ate leaves of trees, boiled and drank the juice of dried skins, and when their children cried in hunger their cries reached far and wide, the Quraish heartlessly gloated over it. Once Hakim bin Hazam secretly sent some wheat to the imprisoned people but the surveillance was so strict that Abu Jehl saw it and tried to snatch it away, but incidentally Abul Bakhtari intervened and allowed the wheat to be delivered. Also Hisham bin Amr used to send occasionally some provisions secretly. At last the move to end the boycott was initiated by Hisham bin Amr and when he secured support from some others he challenged the boycott agreement but Abu Jehl opposed him. But the supporters of Hisham stood by him and it was resolved by majority that the boycott agreement be annulled despite the chagrin of Abu Jehl. When they went to remove the document from the gate of the Kaabah it was found that its text was eaten away by white ants leaving only the words: "In the name of God our Lord".

The tenth year of the Prophet's mission was a year of sorrow. His first bereavement was the death of his uncle Abu Talib, whose protection was like a fortress against the hostility of the entire Quraish. The loss of this protector left the Prophet without any material support in the midst of his enemies. The same year his wife Hazrath Khadija died. Her moral support and mature advice was a solace to the Prophet in the most critical times. She used to conduct business in foreign trade and the Prophet looked after her interests which after their marriage became more intimate. She wholeheartedly cooperated with the Prophet in all his endeavours and helped his cause financially and when the call came she gave away all her wealth in the service of Islam and lived a poor life. Her death disrupted his home life as his outside life was shattered by the death of his uncle.

How the Prophet would have felt at these bereavements can well be imagined, but at the same time the fire of hostility of the Quraish against the unprotected Prophet rose with greater fury. Mischievous children were asked to follow the Prophet and clap and shout. Dirt was occasionally thrown over his head on his way and thorns were strewn before his door. Sometimes he was smothered to suffocation and often publicly assaulted and filthy abuses were hurled at him. Dust was thrown on his face and some people even spat at him. On one occasion Umm-e-Jamil, wife of Abu Lahab came with the dubious aim to kill the Prophet but could not spot him and eased her heart by using hot words before Hazrath Abu Bakr. She also recited the following verses:

"I have disobeyed Muzammam and hated his religion." She used Muzammam for Muhammad (PBUH) as mutilation of name was considered worst degradation among the Quraish. But when the Prophet heard of it, he said that her abuses did not affect his as she abused Muzammam while he was Muhammad. One Abu Jehl also swore to kill the Prophet with the blow of a heavy stone but was so overawed by the prophet that he could not do it.

Once a mob fell upon the Prophet and severely assaulted him. While his enemies were sitting together and talking about the Prophet, declaring that his activities had now become quite intolerable, the Prophet happened to pass that way and they asked him if he had said such and such things. The Prophet with his usual moral courage affirmed that what he said was nothing but truth, whereupon the mob pounced upon him from all sides and he was brutally manhandled. When the attackers got tired the Prophet again boldly warned, "I have brought this message to you that you are about to be butchered" - meaning thereby that their atrocities were soon to recoil on them.

Hazrath Usman relates an incident that Aqaba bin Mueet, Abu Jehl and Umayya bin Khalaf used to sit inside the Kaabah and whenever the Prophet passed by them, they abused him. When it happened for the third time, the Prophet became angry and he declared, "By God, you will not give up your ways until Divine curse falls on you," Everyone present there was overawed and shivered. The Prophet then left for his home followed by Hazrath Usman and others. On the way the Prophet spoke as follows:

"Glad tidings for you. God will certainly make his religion victorious and propagate His word and help the faith and these people whom you see before you, will soon be cut down by your hands."

This declaration at this time of desperation indicated the indomitable courage of the Prophet and how magnificently the prophecy was fulfilled in such a short time!

One day the Prophet got up early in the morning and made a round of the city visiting every street and lane proclaiming his mission but he did not find a single person to listen to him or talk to him. In fact, the Quraish who had failed in all their efforts to suppress the Prophet by violence had now decided to discredit him by completely ignoring him: so any person who saw him coming hurried away, while some evil persons ridiculed him and jeered at him. The Prophet returned home with a heavy heart and with a feeling of dejection. The day's experience convinced him that the soil of Makkah had become quite barren and it was no use any longer to sow any seed of enlightenment there. The Prophet, therefore, resolved to go out and work in the neighbouring areas. The first of these places was Taif which was a fertile town with gardens of fruits and green fields and where the people were prosperous and happy. So the Prophet taking Zaid bin Harisa with him left on foot for Taif and preaching at all the places on the way he reached Taif and first met the chiefs of Saqif clan. They were three brothers, viz. Abd Yalil, Masud and Habib, and explained to them his mission and sought their cooperation and help, but their replies were like poisoned arrows:

One said, "If really God had sent you then He wants the cover of the Kaabah to be torn away."

The second said, "Could not God find some other suitable person than you to make him His Prophet?"

The third said, "By God, I will not talk to you at all. For if as you say you're a Prophet, then it is disrespectful to exchange words with you and if you have misrepresented God then you are not fit to talk to."

These replies greatly annoyed the Prophet but he endured it patiently and asked them not to say to others what they had said to him. But these men, on the other hand, incited the street urchins, servants and slaves to drive the Prophet out of the city. And they did more. They abused the Prophet and pelted him with stones mostly on his legs and hurled abuses. The Prophet bled profusely but when he was too weak to walk and sat down they raised him up by his shoulders and pelted again. His feet and footwear were smeared with blood. A large crowd gathered to witness this spectacle and the crowd of miscreants drove him up to the gate of the garden belonging to Utbah and Shaiba, sons of Rabia. The Prophet took the support of a vine creeper and after offering prayers called to his God as follows:

"O God, I come to Thee alone, helpless and without resources. Thou art the most Merciful of all the merciful. Thou art the Sustainer of the weak and helpless. Thou art my Lord To whom art Thou going to entrust me to an unknown enemy who is bitter with me or to an enemy who has dominance over my affairs? But if Thine curse is not on me I do not care for anything. Thy Protection is a great shield for me. In place of Thy curse or anger descending on me I seek the refulgence of Thy face which dispels

all darkness, and which sets right all worldly affairs. I seek Thy will and pleasure. No force or strength can come except from Thee."

In the meantime, the owners of the garden who had witnessed the whole episode arrived and they called their Christian slave named Addas and sent through him a bunch of grapes to the Prophet. Addas presented the grapes to the Prophet who took them, "In the name of God." Addas who had sat before the Prophet asked him what was the creed that he had preached to the people his city. The Prophet asked him where was his native city and what was his religion to which he replied that he belonged to Nineva and he was a Christian. The Prophet then said, "You belong to the sacred city of Jonah, son of Matta," and Addas asked in surprise how he knew Jonah, son of Matta and the Prophet said, "He was my brother. He was a Prophet and I am also a Prophet." On this Addas touched the Prophet's feet and rubbed his eyes on them and when on his return he was snubbed by his masters of defiling his religion, Addas said, "O my master, there is nothing better than this on the earth. He told me something which no one but a prophet could know."

From Taif the Prophet came to Nakhla and stayed there for some time and then came to the cave of Hira and sent word to Mut'im bin Adi seeking his protection. Under the Arab custom no one seeking protection could be refused even if he was an enemy and so Mut'im accepted and sent his sons to go armed and bring the Prophet to the Kaabah and then announced from the back of a camel that he had given protection to the Prophet.

Zaid bin Harisa, who carried the Prophet on his shoulders when he had become unconscious due to loss of blood, asked the Prophet on the way to curse those people to which the Prophet replied, "Why should I curse them?" If they have not accepted Islam, future generations will certainly accept it."

The experience of Taif was such that it touched the most excruciating torture that human beings could endure, physically as well as mentally, and it was usually on such occasions that Divine help came to the prophets. The Qur'an says. "They encountered suffering and adversity and were so shaken in spirit that even the Apostle and those with him cried. When (will come) the help of God? Ah! Verily, the help of God is (always) near." -(II 214)

## ASCENT TO HEAVEN

As a compensation, the Prophet was honoured by the Ascent to Heaven and the "Revelation which God willed." The Prophet was called to Allah's presence and witness the Reality with his own eyes. The story of the ascent is narrated in the Qur'an from which it appears that it was revealed to him that "The truth has come and the falsehood vanished." It was also revealed that he would be forced to leave Makkah but his enemies would not remain in peace for long. And he was taught the prayer of migration which is thus "O my Lord! Take me out (of the present state) by the gate of truth and let me enter (the stage) by the gate of truth and grant me from Thy presence, Thy help and authority to aid (me)." There is a prophecy in this that the time after migration will be of power and domination and at the same time fundamental principles of Islamic system are given on the basis of which the new society and new culture was to be built. A warning was also given that on gaining power, they should not go the way of the Israelites. All this can be found in the second Sura of the Qur'an.

The Ascent to Heaven was the greatest event between the episode of Taif and migration to Medina and it created a great stir in Makkah. The Prophet stated before a public gathering his observations and gave such definite details of the visit to Jerusalem that were later confirmed.

After facing disappointment at Makkah, Taif proved even worse than Makkah. Then news came from Medina that it was prepared to become the centre of Islamic movement and the headquarters of the Prophet of Islam. In the eleventh year of the Prophet's ministration a deputation of six men from Medina came to the Prophet and pledged their support. The following year a larger deputation of twelve men came and after detailed talks pledged their support at what is called the first pledge of Aqaba and on the occasion of Hajj a much larger group came and in the second pledge of Aqaba at a secret meeting in the darkness of night a full-fledged political agreement was arrived at and the people of Medina, later called the Ansar, expressed their willingness to face the hostility of the entire world in the cause of Islam.

## FAREWELL MAKKAH

In the midst of all-round hostility and mounting force of oppression, the great event of ascension provided new strength to the Prophet and his small band of followers and the pledge of Ansar opened a new chapter. It was clear that Makkah had now become quite intolerant and it had lost the honour of becoming the centre of Islamic movement which was now bestowed on Medina. What Makkah lost, Medina gained. In the meantime, a revelation gave implicit permission to migrate. While the Prophet was still waiting for a clear injunction he allowed his followers to migrate to Medina and streams of people began to flow towards it. In a short time several quarters of the city were deserted. Once Abu Jehl and some elders passed by the deserted house of Banu Jashs clan and Abu Jehl sadly remarked:

"What has our cousin gained? He has disrupted our society, destroyed our unity and created a schism among us."

Now there were hardly any Muslims left in Makkah except those who were forcibly detained by the Quraish or were suffering tortures. The Quraish realised that at last the Muslims had got a place of refuge and one by one they were migrating there. Soon Muhammad (PBUH) would also go beyond the reach of their influence, would organise himself and then return with force to settle accounts with them. So they collected in the public hall called Dar-un-Nadva to consult about the future plan of action against the Prophet. Several proposals were made and rejected. One of the proposals suggested that the Prophet should be confined in a house with an iron gate, but then it was thought that his voice would be heard even outside the gate and it was likely that his followers on become stronger would get him released, and so the proposal did not find full support. Another proposal was to ex-communicate the Prophet and then no one should care what he did outside. This was also rejected on the ground that his sweet words would enlist more followers and they would pose a threat. Then Abu Jehl proposed that stout men chosen from every clan, and armed with swords should all strike the Prophet together at the same time so that the responsibility of his blood was shared by all the clans and the Prophet's clansmen would not be able to take revenge on them all. This proposal was unanimously approved and the meeting dispersed after passing this resolution. The Qur'an makes the following comment on the happenings of this meeting:

*"Remember how the unbelievers plotted against thee to keep thee in bonds, or slay thee, or get thee out (of thy home). They plot and plan and Allah too plans, but Allah is the best of planners." - (VII : 30)*

Among the closest associates of the Prophet left behind in Makkah were Hazrath Abu Bakr and Hazrath Ali and when clear revelation came permitting migration, the Prophet went to the house of the former and confidentially informed him that permission had come for migration. Hazrath Abu Bakr sought the Prophet's permission to accompany him which he readily granted and the former was so overjoyed that his eyes were filled with tears. Hazrath Abu Bakr had already readied two she-camels by proper feeding and offered to the Prophet anyone of them which he liked as a gift. But the Prophet insisted on buying one and paid for the she-camel he selected which was named Jadaa. As advised by the revelation, the Prophet did not sleep in his house that night and asked Hazrath Ali to occupy his bed without any fear. He then gave him the things which people kept in his custody and directed him to deliver them to their respective owners next morning. Then he returned to the house of Hazrath Abu Bakr. His daughter Asma tore away her waist-band and wrapped some food at one end of it and tied the mouth of water bucket with the other. Then the caravan of two left in the dead of night.

Thus the greatest benefactor and sympathizer of the humanity was leaving Makkah that day. He was leaving that day those streets and lanes which he had frequented since his childhood, had loved the city so much and where he had made the call to truth because of which he suffered abuses and tortures. He was also leaving that centre of spirituality where he had prostrated thousands of times and prayed for the well-being of his people. The Will of God and his life's mission demanded this sacrifice and he willingly offered it. Before leaving Makkah he cast his eyes at the Kaabah and declared: "By God, you are the most sacred spot in the sight of God and I would have never left you if I was not forced to leave."

The route was chosen by the Prophet himself and Abdullah bin Oraiqat was hired as a guide. The travellers remained in the cave of Saur for three days. Abdullah bin Abu Bakr used to bring his goats to the cave at night and the Prophet and his companion took their milk according to their need.

The Quraish who had kept an all-night vigil over the Prophet's house were distressed to find that the Prophet had left and after unleashing their ire on Hazrath Ali they left. The Quraish then sent

their men in pursuit and announced a reward of 100 camel to anyone who could capture the Prophet or his companion, dead or alive. The pursuers at one time reached near the entrance of the cave and Hazrath Abu Bakr was fearful. The Prophet pacified his companions and said, "Have no fear, for God is with us." Emerging from the cave the Prophet took to the longer route by the sea shore to avoid the pursuit and Suraqa bin Jusham, coveting the prize announced, followed this routed and approaching the travellers he galloped his horse but its feet stuck in the dust and did not come out when Suraqa repented, apologized, and appealed for promise of safety from the Prophet. It is most remarkable that under these outwardly desperate conditions the Prophet told Suraqa. "O Suraqa, how happy will you feel when the bracelets of the emperor of Iran will be on your hands?" The Prophecy was fulfilled on the conquest of Iran during the caliphate of Hazrath Umar.

## LIFE AT MEDINA- HISTORY TAKES A TURN

Before entering into the details of the Prophet's life at Medina, it will be of interest to describe briefly the conditions there at the time of the arrival of the Prophet. This town was colonised by the Jews and was named Yasrib and as their population increased, new control grew around the place and small fortresses were built by them, so that the entire area remain under the occupation and control of the Jews. Another element of the population of Medina was the Ansar whose ancestor was Qahtan and when after the deluge of Iran on population dispersed, two brothers, Aus and Khazraj came to Medina and settled there. Other people might have followed them but the new element of the population of Medina sprang mainly from these two brothers. In the beginning the new element intended to remain aloof from the Jews but due to their domination they were forced to make peace with them in a subordinate position. Unfortunately, an adulterer chief named Fatyun rose among the Jews who ordered that every newly married bride should have shared bed with him on the first night. The Jews and Ansar obeyed this order but one of the Ansar named Malik bin Ajla revolted, killed Fatyun and fled to Syria. When the ruler of Syria, Abu Jabla heard the story of the misdeeds of the Jews, his army attacked and after killing many Jews and most of their leading men, completely subdued them. This broke the power of the Jews, and the Ansar who were rewarded by the Syrian king became uppermost.

Since the *Ansar* lacked unity, frequent clashes occurred between the clans of Aus and Khazraj. At the historic Battle of Boas between the two clans, most of the leading men of both the sides were killed. This greatly weakened both. They sought alliance with the neighbouring clans. In this connection they also approached the Quraish of Makkah but did not succeed and the Jews continued to dominate them. there were also factors which contributed to the dominance of the Jews: they were unified by a religion moral code, a code of religious laws and some traditions and a common pattern of offering prayers while the *Ansar* did not possess any of these. An interesting fact to be noted here is that the Jews used to threaten the *Ansar* that the last Prophet was soon to arise and with the support of the Prophet, they would fight with them. This prophecy had also raised some hope among the *Ansar* and they anxiously waited for the advent of this Prophet to secure his support before the Jews could approach him. In fact, the feelings of inferiority among the *Ansar* had made them more receptive and responsive to a new movement.

Even before the Prophet's migration to Medina, the ground was already prepared there for the peaceful penetration of Islam and with the six people who came to Makkah in the eleventh year of the Prophet's mission one of the trusted followers of the Prophet, Mus'ab bin Umair bin Hashim, was sent to Medina to instruct the new converts in the basic principles of Islam, teach them the Qur'an and prayers and good conduct and propagate Islam among non-Muslims. Two young men of the *Ansar*, Sa'ad bin Muaz and Usaid bin Hudair who were leaders of Bani Abdul Ashhal clan accepted Islam at the hands of Mus'ab which gave further strength to the Islamic group. Even before the first pledge of Aqaba the first group of six representatives of the *Ansar* which came to Makkah at the time of Hajj and had a lengthy discussion with the Prophet returned to Medina after making the following declaration:

"We have separated ourselves from our community which is immersed in degradation and disruption. Perhaps your personality will unify us again. We will go to them and call them to your faith and put before them the impression which we have received about it. If God brings them round and they accept this faith, you will become more powerful than anyone."

Thus the movement which was considered disruptive by the people of Makkah was taken by the people of Medina as a unifying force.

In the first pledge of Aqaba the six representatives of the *Ansar* declared:

"We will not assign any partners to God. We will not steal or commit adultery, will not slay our children, will not knowingly make false allegations and will never disobey the Prophet."

But it was in the second pledge of Aqaba at the time of Hajj the following year that a definite defensive alliance was made with a larger number of *Ansar* who met the Prophet secretly. The Islamic movement had, in the meantime, advanced in Medina. While the *Ansar* bound themselves to remain firm and face all dangers and risks in the cause of Islam, the Prophet had promised to live with them and share their joys and sorrows and never to leave them. One of the clauses of the contract was that the *Ansar* declared:

"We will listen to every order of the Prophet in ease or strain happiness or misery and obey it, and give preference to the Prophet's order over everything else and we will not mind the criticism of the people in our quest to follow the Divine Path."

Abbas bin Ubada warned the *Ansar* in the following words:

"O men of the clans of *Ansar*! Do you realise with what man you are taking the pledge? It is an alliance for peace and war with the people."

And the deputations said they fully realised their responsibility:

"Yes, we are accepting this pledge despite the risk of destruction of our properties and loss of our leaders in fighting."

Along with the pledge, the foundation was also laid for a collective system, after consultation with the members of the deputation the Prophet appointed a committee of nine men of the Khazraj clan and three of the Aus clan to look after all the affairs of their respective clans. The appointment of this committee gave a start to the construction of an organized social order.

The Quraish were greatly disturbed when this news reached them and men were sent in pursuit of the deputation which was now beyond their reach. They, however, caught Sa'ad bin Ubada and Manzar bin Umar and poured their wrath over them, but the matter had gone out of their hands. Nevertheless, when those who had accepted Islam began to march towards Medina individually or in groups were cruelly and mercilessly manhandled by the Quraish. The stories of those whose belongings were snatched from them, their relatives separated and their conveyances taken away are most heart-breaking, but only one instance will suffice to give an idea of the brutality of the Quraish and the unflinching faith of the new converters. The first migrant who left Makkah for Medina was Abu Salam Abdullah ibn-ul-Asad Makhzoomi. His wife and children accompanied him seated on a camel. His wife was of the clan of Banu Moghira. Just when the party was departing her relatives rushed and caught the camel carrying the wife and children and took them back saying that they would not allow her to wander about with her migrating husband. Then the people of the clan of Abu Salama came up and snatched away the child from her mother and thus husband, wife and child were separated from one another and Abu Salama was left alone. His wife used to visit daily and weep at the place where she was separated from her husband and child and it was only after a year that someone took pity on her and seating her with her child on a camel drove it towards Medina. She was thus travelling unguarded when Usman bin Talha met her on the way and took her to the suburbs of Medina. Such harassments were of daily occurrence and yet the Muslims continued to march towards Medina. Gradually Makkah was depopulated of the Muslims and the only persons who remained were the Prophet with some of his closest associates and some others forcibly detained by the Quraish. Later the Prophet also left with Hazrath Abu Bakr.

## MEDINA WELCOMES THE PROPHET

Medina had already received the message of Islam with the first pledge of Aqaba. The second pledge had given it momentum. In a short time with the exception of one or two clans, every house of *Ansar* had given its best blood for the service of Islam and the vitality of this new blood gave a new impetus to the movement. The people of Makkah were deeply agitated on finding that Islam had secured a foothold in Medina where it would flourish outside their influence and in due course would come down upon them with full force to settle accounts. In spite of all their vigilance to prevent the Muslim's migration to Medina and efforts to bring back those who had left, Makkah was almost denuded of those who were enlightened by the new message. Hazrath Umar had also left under the greatest secrecy accompanied by Ayash bin Abi Rabia and Hisham bin Aas bin Alwail, but Abu Jehl bin Hisham

and Haris bin Hisham who were deputed to capture them succeeded in prevailing upon Hisham, who in spite of every effort by Hazrath Umar to proceed decided to return. Hazrath Umar gave him a sturdy she-camel asking him to use it to rush to Medina if he found himself in danger. But as soon as he was out of the city he was deprived of the she-camel and brought to Makkah bound hand and foot and was tortured- the Quraish boasted that they had given the migrants what they deserved. It was only when Hazrath Umar sent him a letter with the Qur'anic verse:

*"O my servants who transgress against their souls! Despair not of the mercy of God: for God forgives all sins for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (XXXIX:54)*

that he understood and immediately left for Medina.

Now it was for the Prophet himself that the *Ansar* began to wait day and night as stipulated in the second pledge of Aqaba. They came out of the city every morning and watched the route from which the Prophet was expected to come and returned disappointed only when the heat of the noon became intolerable. One day while they were about to return, a Jew watching from the upper storey of his house saw the Prophet's party coming and called out to *Ansar* that the person for whom they had been waiting had arrived. Ever since the news came that the Prophet had left Makkah there was no other talk in Medina except that the Prophet was coming and even children were innocently joyous about it. So the enthusiasm on the arrival of the Prophet at Medina was unbounded, and the whole city was happy.

First the Prophet halted at Quba, a suburb of Medina three miles away, and was welcomed by the family of Amr bin Auf whose house was in fact the centre of Islamic movement and the honour of playing host to the Prophet went to him. At Quba the Prophet halted for fourteen days and Hazrath Ali also joined him here after he had returned the property kept with the Prophet to its respective owners in Makkah. In Quba the Prophet laid the foundation of a mosque. While building the mosque, the Prophet worked with the others and handled heavy stones. All those engaged in construction recited:

"Successful are the men who build mosques and recite the Qur'an standing and sitting and keep awake in the night for prayers."

The Prophet reached Quba on 8<sup>th</sup> Rabi, 11 Nabavi (23<sup>rd</sup> September, 622 A.D.) and entered Medina on 12<sup>th</sup> Rabi, 1 Hijra. His mother's relatives at Medina made special preparations to receive him. Women stood on roof-tops singing:

Full moon has risen on us from the Wada hilltops. Our thanks are ever due to Allah.  
Young girls ran about in groups, beating drums and singing.

We are the daughters of Bani Najjar. Welcome to you, O Muhammad.  
The Prophet selected the house of Hazrath Abu Ayyub Ansari and stayed there for seven months.

Soon after his arrival, the Prophet started his missionary work and the first thing was the building of the mosque for which the site was acquired by Hazrath Abu Ayyub who paid its price to its two orphan owners. This mosque, called the Prophet's Mosque, was intended not only for prayers but also as the centre of Islamic movement, as a court, a consultation centre, a democratic hall, and an official guest house. In the building of it the Prophet again worked with others. The worker's songs was:

If the Messenger of Allah is working and we remain sitting all our work is wasted.  
And also:

There is no life but the abiding life of the next world, O Allah have mercy on *Ansar* and migrants.  
The most important item in the constructive work was to expand missionary activities and in the seven months of the Prophet's stay at Hazrath Abu Ayyub Ansari's house this work had greatly

expanded. Now the Prophet renewed this missionary endeavour with public speeches. In his first speech he declared:

(After the praise of Allah) "O you people! Earn something for your souls. Understand, by God, everyone of you shall have to face death and he will have to leave his people without a provider. Then he will be questioned by his God when there will be no one to intercede? He will be asked: Did not our Prophet reach you and deliver Our Message? Then what have you earned for your soul? He will then look around and will not see anything, so that there will be nothing for him but the Hellfire. So anyone who can do good, should do it, however small it may be, to save himself from the fire. But if he cannot do even this much he should at least save himself just by a good word. For the reward of good is from ten to seven hundred times. May you have safety and may Allah's blessings and mercies be showered on you!"

His second public speech was as follows:

"All praise is for Allah and I praise Allah alone and seek His help. We all seek Allah's protection from the mischief's of our hearts and evil actions. Whomsoever Allah gives guidance cannot be driven to the wrong path by anyone. And whosoever is deprived of God's guidance cannot find any other guide. I witness that God is One without a partner and none else is worthy of worship and obedience. There is no doubt that the best of books is the Book of Allah. Whosoever has made it dear to his heart and who has been led to Islam after unbelief and whosoever from among the whole of the humanity has chosen it for his heart secures felicity. It is the best narrative and most effective also. You like what is liked by Allah and love Him with all sincerity. Do not show indifference to the word of God and let not your hearts be hardened against. Since it is a fact that Allah selects the best from among His creatures, He has specified the best from among the acts and selected the holiest and the most significant of narrations. And among whatever man has been given there is some permissible and some prohibited. So take up the service of God. Do not assign any partner to Him and save yourself from his wrath to the best of your ability. And confirm before God all those pious words which you speak and through God's mercy strengthen the bonds of affection amongst you. Certainly God is enraged if the pledge given to Him (faith) is broken. May you live in safety."

## ISLAMIC STATE

The third politically constructive act was to knit the Jews of Medina and the Muslims into one social system for which a written agreement was made which may justly be called the first written constitution of the world. Some of the provisions of this agreement were as follows:

The Overlordship of Allah and the Divine law were given fundamental importance in the organised society of Medina.

The final political, legal and judicial authority was given to the Prophet.

In the matter of defence the entire population of Medina and its neighbourhood was united into a single unit with no loopholes for any element to support the Quraish, while in the matter of defence also the central and decisive authority was vested in the Prophet.

This constitutional agreement laid the foundation of an Islamic state and Islamic system of life and when we look at it and other subsequent developments and agreements we realise that the Prophet possessed unparalleled political vision and persuasive ability and that he was not a mere saint or anchorite but had the capacity to manage the affairs of the world and was fully competent to carry out such responsibilities with tact and wisdom.

The greatest event of the Prophet's life at Medina was his organisation of brotherhood between the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar*. The small population of Medina had to absorb hundreds of migrants who were pouring in as refugees with few provisions and inadequate clothing.

Whenever such situations arose in history very grave political and economic problems had to be faced and Pakistan had experienced similarly at the time of the partition of the country, but the solution which the Prophet gave it and the great sacrifice of the *Ansar* made in implementing it is most remarkable and unparalleled in history. The Prophet established brotherly relations between each *Ansar* and migrant and the *Ansar* responded to it by handing over half of their property and belongings, houses, groves and corn fields to their migrant brothers. Some of them who had more than one wife even went to the extent of divorcing one of them to give her in marriage to his migrant brother. In return, the migrants upheld their self-respect. Unwilling to be a burden on their benefactors, the

*Muhajirin* asked their *Ansar* brethren to show them the way to the market and agricultural lands so that they would maintain themselves by working, trading or farming. Then there was a group of young migrants particularly those who were unmarried who wanted to devote themselves to preaching and educational work and they were assigned a portion of the Prophet's Mosque. They were called men of the order of *Suffa* (platform), and their maintenance was the responsibility of the entire society.

## THE TREACHERY OF THE JEWS

The Jews soon adopted the same attitude as the Quraish of Makkah and threw all their weight on the side of the idol worshipping Quraish as against Muslims who were religiously very near the Jews. In fact, when they concluded the agreement with the Prophet they were under the impression that these uprooted persons numbering a few hundred would soon come to their fold and their dominant position would absorb them. But they became perturbed when they found Islam entering into their own strongholds. At first, some common men among the Jews were attracted to Islam which they did not mind, but when men of learning and status among them began to accept the new faith they resolved to oppose it. How Islam penetrated among the Jews can be seen from one or two instances which are recorded here. One of their prominent men, Abu Qubais bin Abi Anas was dissatisfied with Jewish society as it was at that time and first accepted Christianity and not being satisfied with that, built a mosque in his house which no one who was not clean was allowed to enter. He announced that he was serving and worshipping the God of Abraham. He was an elderly man and undaunted in telling the truth. Possibly he had discussions with the Jews, who might have tried to retain him in the Jewish society, but he revolted and soon after the arrival of the Prophet in Medina he went over to him and embraced Islam. Another learned man belonging to the Jewish clan of Qainqa, who was also a religious leader but had heard of the preaching of the Prophet, was attracted to Islam. He brought his entire household into the Islamic fold. His Jewish name was Hussein bin Salam but on accepting Islam, he changed his name to Abdullah bin Salam. The high position which he held among the Jews was a great shock to them when he became a Muslim as he knew all the weakness of his community and would be very dangerous if relations between the Jews and the Muslims became estranged. A third prominent Jew, also a well-known rabbi, joined an army of the Prophet in the Battle of Uhad declaring that it was his duty to stand by the side of justice and truth.

These cracks in the citadel of the Jewish society disturbed their equanimity and despite their being a contracting party in a social agreement they organised themselves into a hostile camp. The Prophet found the Jewish group much worse than the Quraish, for the Quraish hostility was open and frank but the Jews having entered into an agreement with the Prophet could not revolt openly and resorted to treacherous methods. The hostility of the Quraish aimed at maintaining their dominance but the hostility of the Jews was based on the fear of losing their superiority. The former emerged from a superiority complex and the latter from an inferiority complex. The working of the Jewish mind can best be illustrated from an episode related by Hazrath Safia, daughter of Huyayy bin Akhtab, who later became the Prophet's consort. She said that she was the most loved child of her father and uncle but when one day they returned after meeting the Prophet at Quba late in the evening and seemed to be quite tired, they did not attend to her and her uncle was heard asking her father, "Is he the promised Messiah?" Her father swore by God that he was certainly so. The uncle again asked, "Did you quite recognise him and are you sure?" And on the father's affirmative reply, he asked, "Now what will be your attitude towards him?" And the father replied, "Hostility, hostility by God, hostility till the end of my life."

Another instance illustrating their mentality was their attitude on the death of Abu Amama Asa'ad bin Zorara, a prominent associate and enthusiastic worker in the early stages of Islam. The Prophet had appointed him head of Banu Najjar. He died soon after the Prophet's arrival in Medina and his death created a big gap in the ranks of the brave soldiers of Islam. The Prophet was much grieved on his death but the Jews started the Propaganda that if the Prophet were really appointed by God, he would not have been deprived of the services of such a zealous worker. With a painful heart the Prophet said, "The death of Abu Amama was inevitable. They are traitors who say that if I was really a prophet I would not have allowed such an associate of mine to die, for before God's will neither can I avoid death nor prevent the death of my associates." When the people of Banu Najjar came to the

Prophet and asked him to appoint another chieftain, the Prophet took the responsibility upon himself saying. "You are my brethren and I am from among you and I am your chief."

Then, as always happens when a constructive movement is launched, a destructive movement always opposes it and this began in the Muslim camp itself with the People who publicly professed Islam but were secretly in league with its enemies.

Imagine the Prophet's predicament in such conditions. He had a comprehensive and many-sided constructive plan before him but the odds with which he was confronted were overwhelming. He had to rehabilitate hundreds of destitute migrants continuously pouring in; every moment an attack from the Quraish was apprehended for which defensive measures had to be taken and in addition to all this, the Jews and their secret agents among the Muslims were hatching new conspiracies. How critical and delicate were the responsibilities of the Prophet and how he had to face such multifarious and grave problems single-handed! While the message of Islam was spreading and penetrating into unexpected quarters, the internal and external onslaughts of the enemies of Islam were also mounting and taking new forms.

## INSOLVENT QUESTIONS

Failing in their efforts to stop the march of Islam, the Jews tried to involve the Prophet in irrelevant discussions and they put tricky and trifling questions to the Prophet to embarrass him and mislead the Muslims. At a gathering of the Muslims, the Jews asked the Prophet: "If God has created men, then who created God?"

The question was obviously not to clarify any point as the Jews were not ignorant of the nature of God or His creation as their religious books had answered this question. But the Prophet calmly listened to the question and in replying to this awkward question gave simple answer by reciting the verses of Sura *Ikhlas*, which are as follows:

*"Say (O Muhammad) He is God, the One and Only. God the eternal, absolute. He begetteth not nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him."* (CXII: 1-4)

On another occasion a group of rabbis came to the prophet and told him that if he could satisfactorily answer four of the questions they would accept Islam. The questions were not on the basic principles of Islam or concerning problems of worldly life or of reward and punishment, but perplexing as ever. They asked:

1. Why does a child take after his mother when he is from the seed of the father?
2. What is the condition of your sleep?
3. What things had Israel (Prophet Jacob) prohibited for himself and why? And lastly
4. What is the Angel who brings revelation to you?

The Prophet answered each question calmly and at the end of each, the Jews said, "True, by God." They did not contradict any answer except the last one on which the Jews said, "But, O Muhammad! Gabriel is our enemy. Whenever he comes he brings warnings of troubles and disasters for us. We are not on good terms with him. If this enmity had not come in the way, we should certainly have come to you and obeyed you."

The Prophet's reply to this was most significant. He recited the following verse of the Qur'an:

*"Say (O Muhammad) whoever is an enemy to Gabriel should note it well that he brings down the revelations to thy heart by the Will of Allah, a confirmation of what went before and guidance and glad tidings for those who believe."* -(II:97)

The Jews also ridiculed the revelation about Solomon and said that Solomon was not a Prophet but only a sorcerer. This was refuted by the revelation which declared:

*"The blasphemers were not Solomon, but the evil ones teaching men magic and such things as came down at Babylon."* -(II:102)

The Islamic movement took a decisive turn when Divine injunctions came for the change of Qibla. So far the Jews had some solace and a faint hope that in course of time Muslims would return to the religion of Moses but the change of Qibla completely disillusioned them and firmly established the uniqueness of Islam. Jerusalem as mentioned in the Bible was built by Prophet Solomon about four hundred years after Prophet Moses, while the Kaabah was built by Prophet Abraham, eight or nine centuries before Prophet Moses and it was the first centre for the worship of One God.

When the Prophet came to Medina the Qibla was Jerusalem and the object was to smash the sanctum of Arabia as the Arabs could never entertain any sanctity outside their own circle and now the change of Qibla towards the Kaabah crushed the sanctorum of the Israelites. Jerusalem is to the north of Medina and Makkah to the south and the revelation came just when the Muslims were engaged in prayer. But immediately on hearing the revelation the entire congregation turned round and faced the Kaabah. The revelation on the subject read as follows:

*"Now shall We turn thee to the Qibla that shall pleased there turn then thy face in the direction of the sacred mosque: Wherever ye are, turn your faces in that directions." -(II:144)*

The Jews began to say that because of hostility to them, the Prophet had changed the Qibla of the prophets. If he were a Prophet, he would have never done so.

But the believers declared:

*"We heard and we obey.....We believe in the Book: the whole of it, it is from our Lord." -(II:285 and III:7)*

And the revelation also declared:

*"The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakkah (Makkah): full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings. In it are signs manifest: for example the place of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security, pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allah- those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, Allah stands not in need of any of His creatures." -(II:96-97)*

The Jews who did not possess any constructive plan nor were able to lift humanity from degradation, purify its soul or morals, give it any promise of security or even reform themselves had to be deprived of their vaunted superiority and in desperation they resorted to very mean tactics. They used ambiguous words when talking to the Prophet which carried double meanings and by turning their tongues in the mouth emphasised the meaning which was abusive or cursing. In the same way they ridiculed the Muslim's call to prayers by pronouncing its words with mutilation and laughing. Furthermore, when the revelation came *"Who is he that will lend to Allah a beautiful loan which Allah will double unto his credit and multiply many times"*. -(II:245), the Jews instead of taking it in the right sense began to ridicule Allah that He had become such a pauper that He was seeking loan from his servants. Then the Qur'an used the words flies and mosquitoes in the course of some arguments and the Jews laughed at this saying how could this be the word of God when it mentioned such lowly creatures as flies and mosquitoes. The revelation counted this in the following words:

*"God disdains not to use the similitude of things lowest as well as the highest. Those who believe know that it is truth from their Lord; but those who reject faith say: "What means God by this similitude?" -(II:26)*

The Jewish mentality continued to descend deeper and deeper into degradation and now when confronted with the question that it were the Jews who had prophesied the coming of a new prophet with those help they would settle accounts with the *Ansari*, they blatantly said it was not the Prophet for whom they were waiting and if Muhammad was a true Prophet he should bring to them a decisive sign and this should be according to the wishes of the Jews. Their demand was: "O Muhammad, bring to us a written book which should descend from heaven and which we ourselves should be able to read, and then we will follow you." Another demand was: "O Muhammad, if you are really a Prophet of God as you claim to be, then tell your God to talk to us that we may hear Him." The Prophet told them, "You know it well that the Qur'an is from God and that I am the Prophet of God and you have found this written in your Taurah." And the Jews again said, "O Muhammad, it is a fact that when God sends a prophet, He does or him anything that the prophet wants. So you bring to us a written book from the heaven which we can read." Now there was no question of the merits of the Prophet's message, the arguments which supported it, the life which this message envisaged, the nature of his teachings, the social system which was to be evolved by it and the character which its constructive plan intended to build. Leaving all these matters aside the demands was "bring a written book from heaven," and this was taken as a propaganda stunt against the Prophet and whenever they were confronted with the Prophet's message their reply was: "We are ready to have faith in him, but first tell him that if he is the true Prophet he should at least bring to us this sign. True prophets of God always prevail upon God to do whatever they want. And what is this Prophet whose word carries no weight in the heaven above?"

The economy of Median and its material resource were limited and when the ever-increasing flow of migrants from Makkah caused a further strain and the destitute refugees began to build a new life,

most of the workers of the movement had to face acute lack of food and malnutrition which fell to the lot of the Prophet and his family as well. In fact, the largest share went to the Prophet himself. The climate of Medina did not suit the migrants from Makkah. This together with the absence of proper food supply and availability and malnutrition caused many of them to fall ill. Fever kept them confined to be, and made them unable to earn their living. While the Muslims were faced with difficulties and hostilities from all sides and the new state was still in the early stages of construction, its workers were exposed to all strains and stresses- they lacked even proper clothing to cover their bodies, thus undergoing the most severe test. It should be said to the credit of this small group of Muslims who bore all these hardship with exemplary fortitude which their unbounded faith in the movement and their unflinching loyalty to the leader could alone make possible. Notwithstanding the physical afflictions, these men kept their spirits high.

A few examples of these difficult conditions will not be out of place:

Hazrath Abu Bakr while smarting from pain on his sick-bed was reciting the following verse:

“Every morning finds a man with the members of his family, but death is nearer to him than his shoe-lace.”

That is, he finds death nearer than his shoestring.

Hazrath Bilal was restlessly turning sides on his sickbed but he preferred to recall the shrubs and water springs of Medina in the following verses:

“If only I knew I could pass a night in the valley (Makkah) with Jalil and Izkhar shrubs around me. Would that I could come down on the waters of Majna, and Shama and Tufail hills were in sight. Hazrath Amir sensed the death approaching fast but managed to recite:

“I have found death before tasting it,  
And the death of a coward descends from above.”

Hazrath Shaddad was lying ill on bed and the Prophet went to him, and in desperation he told the Prophet that he could be cured if he could find the water of Makkah to drink and the Prophet replied, “You may go. Who stops you? But wherever you go you will remain a migrant.”

When the Muslims went to Makkah at the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiya, under-nourishment and disease had emaciated their bodies so much that non-believers of Makkah taunted them that was what they got from migration. Then the Prophet ordered them to walk erect to conceal their physical weakness.

Hazrath Abu Talha narrates an episode of those days that one day when their situation had gone beyond endurance they went to the Prophet for some solace and showed that in order to contain hunger, they had tied a stone on their stomachs. The Prophet coolly raised his shirt and there were two stones tied to his stomach! Those who had gone to complain were greatly impressed.

One day Hazrath Abu Bakr went to the Prophet with the intention of getting some solace by describing to him his pitiable condition, but then thinking that it would cause distress to the Prophet, remained silent. In the meantime, Hazrath Umar also came and frankly stated that hunger was killing him. The Prophet confessed that his own condition was no better and suggested they should go to Abul Haisham who owned groves and was prosperous. When the three reached there Abul Haisham welcomed and embraced them and put grapes before them on a sheet of cloth which the three ate, drank water and left after blessing Abul Haisham.

Once the Prophet’s close companion, Hazrath Abu Huraira, fell unconscious between Hazrath Ayesah’s room and the Prophet’s pulpit when people thought him to be struck with madness and began to treat him for it. But he was not at all mad as unconsciousness was because of persistent hunger. Once Abu Huraira was with Hazrath Umar discussing the meaning of a verse of the Qur’an when suddenly he became unconscious. Bad food situation had reduced him to this state.

## PUBLIC TREASURY

The Prophet had established a *Baitul mal* (public treasury) in which income from the state resources and charities from those who could afford were collected. Whenever a demand was made for monetary sacrifice *Ansar* and migrants, who were in a sound position to give, contributed generously regardless of their own needs. The Prophet's order was that the needy should be generously helped. But all the collections of *Baitul mal* were insufficient to meet the actual needs and to eliminate starvation. Hazrath Bilal was in charge of *Baitul mal* and in compliance with the Prophet's orders he did not allow any cash or the provisions to remain locked up. Once a massive amount of dirham came and was piled up on a mat and distributed on the spot without leaving a single coin. After everything had been distributed a needy person came and the Prophet ordered that he should be helped by taking a loan. Once the Prophet saw a heap of dates lying with Hazrath Bilal who on enquiry said that he had retained it for an emergency. The Prophet snubbed him and said, "Are you not afraid that for retaining this, you will taste the smoke of the hell on the Day of Judgement? Spend it and do not fear shortage from All-Powerful."

While the Muslims were suffering financial difficulties, the Jews had planned to exploit the situation. Once a non-Muslim came to Hazrath Bilal and offered to advance him money whenever he needed and so Hazrath Bilal began to take loans from him to replenish the meager resources of *Baitul mal*. One day the same man came to Hazrath Bilal, who after making ablutions was going to give the call for prayer, and shouted at him abusing and threatening him that if he did not clear the loan by the end of the month, he would be again taken a slave. Hazrath Bilal was very much upset with this threat and came to the Prophet to narrate the story and proposed that he should hide himself somewhere till arrangements could be made for repayment. But before he could go into hiding he was called by the Prophet next morning, where he saw that four camels loads of wealth had come from the chief of Fadak. So the loan was cleared and the remainder distributed among the needy.

Abu Hadrat Aslami was indebted to Jews and had no means to pay. But the Jews did not give him any respite, took him to the Prophet and insisted that the debt must be cleared then and there. Since he was unable to pay, the Jews snatched away his lower garment and the poor man had to cover his nakedness with his turban.

Hazrath Jabir bin Abdullah, though well-to-do, had to take loans from a Jewish money-lender whenever in need. Once the produce of the dates was poor and the loan could not be paid in time Jabir secured time until the following crop. But the crop was again poor and the Jew refused to give him further time. Jabir came to the Prophet who went to the Jew and appealed to him, but when he was adamant in spite of repeated appeals, the Prophet went to the grove of Jabir and ordered that the trees should be shaken. There was so much fruit-enough and to spare- with which not only Jew's debt was cleared but more dates were left over.

A mail cloak of the Prophet was pawned with a Jewish money-lender and he never had enough money to redeem it.

Once a man who had lent some money to the Prophet came to him and demanded his dues with very harsh words. When the Prophet's companions intervened, the creditor said he was demanding only his dues, whereupon the Prophet told his companions that they should support the man in his demand, and ordered that his account be cleared and something more than his dues was given to him.

Zaid ibn Sa'na was a rabbi who was sincerely observing the Prophet's claim to prophethood and closely witnessing the wants. One day in the presence of Zaid ibn Sa'na, a Beduin came to the Prophet and told him that his clan had accepted Islam and he had promised to them that if they accepted Islam God would make them rich. Instead of that they were faced with severe famine and if they were not helped they might go back to their old religion. Zaid ibn Sa'na offered to pay 80 measures (about 360 gms.) of gold to be repaid with the produce of dates in the next season. On the expiry of the time, Zaid came to the Prophet and demanded repayment in rude manner and harsh words saying, "O Muhammad, you are not paying my dues. By God, I knew well that all children of Abdul Muttalib are defaulters." Hazrath Umar snubbed Zaid and said, "To whom are you talking? If I did not have regard for the Prophet I would have cut off your head with a stroke of my sword." The Prophet pacified Hazrath Umar and said that on such an occasion he should have advised him (the Prophet) to make payment gracefully and told the money-lender to make his demand more politely. "Now go and repay his dues and for your snubbing him, pay him 20 measures of dates more than his dues."

This was the last test of Zaid ibn Sa'na and the conduct of the Prophet won him over. He then introduced himself to Hazrath Umar and making him a witness accepted Islam and gave away half of his wealth and property for the welfare of the Muslims. Zaid was different from other Jewish money-lenders, but the episode shows that difficult times the Muslims had to face. They were forced to borrow and endure the harsh treatment of the cruel creditors.

Not satisfied with their Shylock-like treatment of the indebted Muslims, the Jews and other wealthy non-Muslims decided to strangle the movement of Islam by closing the door of loans or charities on the poor Muslims in the hope that on becoming bankrupt the movement would wither away. The elders of the Jewish community even went to the *Ansar* and advised them not to waste their wealth on Muslims as it would reduce them to poverty, warning them of what might happen in future. The fifth column of the Jews and their agents were holding secret consultations to stop all financial aid to the Muslims. The Qur'an says this is what they said:

*"Spend nothing on those who are with God's Apostle that they may disperse (and quit Medina)" - (LXIII:7)*

The poor Muslims were in the most desperate situation- either no economic aid was made available to them or when available, they were subjected to severe Shylock tactics. But what is to be noted in this connection is the outstanding character of the Prophet and his followers in the face of such meanness of their opponents.

## THE JEWISH FIFTH COLUMN

The Islamic movement had now assumed the status of a state which was developing and growing but the Jews did not possess superior ideology to win the public or a code of morals to meet the higher Islamic culture. Not only this. Their morality was on the lowest ebb and there was nothing to rescue them from their degradation. They were suffering from an inferiority complex which produced envious and hostile feelings among them. But since they could not oppose Islam openly, they resorted to treacherous and mean tactics by which they created a fifth column among the Muslims. Besides their own hostile feelings, the fact was that some people seeing the growing power of Islam and to safeguard their own future began to infiltrate in the ranks of Muslims from the back door which the Jewish evil genius had opened for them and while they publicly professed Islam, they worked among the Muslims with an eye on sabotage. Among the prominent men of the clan of Bani Qainqa who formed this group were Sa'ad ibn Hanif, Zaid ibn Lusait, Noman ibn Ufi ibn Amr, Rafey bin Huraimila, Rifaa bin Zaid bin Tabut, Silsila ibn Burhan and Kinana ibn Surya. The leader of this group was Abdullah bin Ubayy who had gained notoriety in the slander against Hazrath Ayesha as will be described later. What is interesting to note in this connection is that this group consisted mainly of old men with resources whose hearts were hardened and who feared their interests to be at stake. The young man found in this fifth column is Qis ibn Amr bin Sahl.

Zaid ibn Lusait once fought with Hazrath Umar in the market place and it was he who had taunted the Prophet on the loss of his she-camel saying, "although he claims knowledge of things in the heaven, he does not know where his she-camel is at this time". In reply to this the Prophet had said, "By God I know nothing except what god reveals to me. God has informed me about my she-camel and I say that she is in the adjoining valley with the rope attached to her nose entangled in a bush" and when the people went in search of her, they found her exactly at the same place and in the same condition. Another of the mischief-makers, Rafey bin Huraimila was most prominent in his group so that when he died the Prophet said, "Today one of the chiefs of mischief-makers is dead". Rifaa bin Zaid bin Tabut had also a prominent place in the group when a storm came and people became afraid the Prophet comforted them saying that the storm had been raised to punish one of the leaders of the mischief-makers. When the storm subsided and people returned to Medina, they found that Rifaa had been killed in the storm.

Abdullah bin Ubayy had a grudge against the Prophet because before his advent the people of Medina had wanted to select him as their chief and in fact a crown for him was being prepared. As this plan misfired, he gave vent to the chagrin by joining the group of those who were apparently Muslims but, in fact, Islam's bitterest enemies. Once the Prophet went to see Sa'ad bin Ubada who was ill. He was riding and mule and with him on the same animal was Usama bin Zaid. When they passed a place where Abdullah bin Ubayy was holding a meeting with his confederates, he was annoyed at the

Prophet's coming that way and turned his face away when the Prophet greeted him. But the Prophet stopped, recited some verses of the Qur'an, reminded them of God and warned people against His displeasure. When the Prophet had finished, Abdullah bin Ubayy burst out in the most insolent manner saying. "O man, this manner of your talking is not proper. Sit at home and talk to such people only who come to you, but do not pester those who do not come to you and do not come to this house to talk where it is not liked." One can see how much saturated with poison are these words and how patiently the Prophet bore them. In fact it was not Abdullah who was speaking in that strain, but the entire vanishing ear of ignorance, which was venting its rage against the Islamic movement. In the same gathering was Abdullah bin Ruwaha who retorted. "Why should not the Prophet come? We want him and he must come to our houses and to our meetings. We love him and it is through him that we received guidance and have been uplifted."

But the mischief was not confined to these hypocrites. In fact they were the leaders of the fifth column which recruited others from the Muslims camp, searched people of wavering minds and exploited them, created doubts and suspicions, held secret meetings and poisoned the atmosphere with their scornful acts. They went to the mosques, listened to important talks and reported them in their secret meetings designed to obstruct the progress of Islam. Still their hidden hostility was often unmasked and revelations also warned the Prophet against their mischief. On one occasion their whispering in the mosque became so audible and irritating that the Prophet ordered all of them to leave and when they resisted they were driven out forcibly.

## Allegations and aspersions

The mischief-mongers were, however, constantly expanding the range of their nefarious activities. Any occasion or incident which could provide a handle for false propaganda was exploited to the fullest extent and false allegations and aspersions against the Prophet and his movement were set in motion. On one occasion a rumour was circulated by the Jews that the real aim of the Prophet in launching his movement was to secure the position of Jesus Christ and be worshipped. When a deputation of the people of Najran came to the Prophet it was probably brainwashed by this propaganda as one of the members of the deputation directly put the question to the Prophet, "Do you want us to worship you as Christians worship Jesus Christ?" Another member of the deputation asked: "O Muhammad, do you want this from us and want to call us to this?" The Prophet's reply was, "God forbid that I worship anyone except God or call upon the people to worship anyone else except God. God has never raised me for this purpose nor has He ordered this." The Qur'an also clearly says that knowledge and wisdom given to a prophet do not mean that he should be worshipped instead of God.

After the Prophet's migration to Medina, the vindictive motivations of the Quraish had taken a new turn and consultations held and conspiracies were constantly hatched to wage a war, while their spies roamed around Medina and secret correspondence was carried out with the Jews of Medina. The Prophet also organised a patrol system as a defensive measure and military and non-military parties were daily sent out to watch the movements of the Makkan spies and movements of their military contingents. The aim was to warn the Quraish that Muslims were in no way complacent and that if they disturbed the peace of Medina, this route would be banned for their trade caravans. One such party of eight was sent to Nakhla in Rajab of the second year of migration which was asked to note the military movements and future designs of the Quraish but was not authorized to take any offensive action. This party met a group of Quraish merchants and tension developed during the conversation to the extent that the Muslim party killed one man of the Quraish and arrested others and brought them with all their belongings to Medina. Since the incident took place sometime between the end of Rajab and beginning of Sha'ban the time factor was exploited by non-Muslims of Makkah and Jews and their confederates of Medina to link the incident to the month of Sha'ban and to incite people on that score. Soon a series of vituperative propaganda was unleashed to the effect that, "These people claim to be men of God and yet they do not refrain from bloodshed in the prohibited month." This campaign was very harmful to the new Muslim state and was likely to alienate the sympathies of the public from it. But the Muslim state itself did not approve of the action of its patrol party and released the prisoners, returned their property and admonished the patrol party for its action. Thus corrective

steps were taken to set the matter right but the storm of the propaganda raised by the enemies had to be met with a more convincing answer and the Qur'an said:

*"They ask the concerning fighting in the prohibited month. Say, 'Fighting therein is a grave (offence) but graver in the sight of God is to block access to the path of God, to deny Him, to block access to the sacred mosques, and drive out its worshippers. Uprising and oppression are worse than bloodshed.'" -(II:217)*

It meant that non-believers of Makkah who were themselves guilty of obstructing people from the right path, of denying God and of driving people out of Kaabah, with what face could they come forward as champions of the sanctity of the sacred month?

When the system of *Zakat*, an annual tax on the spare wealth and capital, was established and large amounts were collected and freely distributed among the needy, the Jews who were so far the sole custodians of this wealth and spent the money extracted from the poor on themselves, were angry at this turn of the flow of wealth from the rich to the poor. They accused the Prophet of nepotism and charged that the wealth collected in *Baitul mal* was spent on relatives and friends of the Prophet to consolidate his leadership. Such accusations against the custodian of a public fund were most harmful to any movement. But it would be beyond even the imagination of anybody to level such charges against a person of stature of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who did not only keep a single coin of public money for himself but prohibited the acceptance of charity by his family and the entire class of Bani Hashim.

A heinous aspersion cast against the Prophet was to attribute to him sensuality in connection with his marriage with his cousin Hazrath Zainab. In fact, the Prophet wanted to break two customs of the days of ignorance in respect of marriage and to establish new laws. The first was about status and the second about conventional relationship. Hazrath Zainab was the daughter of the Prophet's aunt (father's sister) and he married her to his freed slave Hazrath Zaid whom he had adopted as his son. But the marriage did not prove happy and despite the Prophet's efforts to save it, it ended in divorce. Now that Hazrath Zainab was left without any support, the Prophet took her as his own wife. Her marriage with a freed slave, herself belonging to the highly connected family of Quraish, gave a new turn to the concept of status that family background alone was not the hallmark of respectability and then the Prophet marrying Hazrath Zainab himself established the other convention that adoptive relationship was not like blood relationship. Hazrath Zainab's first marriage was with a non-Muslim, the second with Hazrath Zaid and it was her third marriage with the Prophet and so she must have been of a mature age and then being the Prophet's cousin she must have been known to him since her childhood and the allegations of the non-Muslims that the Prophet was charmed by the beauty of Hazrath Zainab on seeing her for the first time is not convincing. The Qur'an says in this connection:

*"But thou didst hide in thy heart that which Allah was about to make itself manifest. Thou didst fear people, but it is more fitting that thou shouldst fear Allah. When Zaid had dissolved (this marriage) with her, with necessary (formality), we joined her in marriage to thee: in order that marriage with the wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have dissolved with the necessary (formality) (their marriage) with them, may be no sin for believers. And Allah's Command must be fulfilled. -(XXXIII:37)*

This verse means that change of the convention must be publicly proclaimed.

Since the Islamic social order could not be attacked in public, the non-believers launched a whispering campaign against it and the Qur'an repeatedly cautioned the Prophet against its dangers. The polite manners of the Prophet had encouraged such campaigns and the Qur'an is most outspoken in this respect. These verses concerning it are as follows:

*Turnest not thou thy sight towards those who were forbidden secret counsels, yet revert to that which they were forbidden (to do)? And they hold secret counsels among themselves for inequity and hostility and disobedience to the Prophet. -(LVIII:8)*

*O ye who believe! When you hold secret counsels, do it not for inequity and hostility and disobedience to the Prophet; but do it for righteousness and self-restraint and fear Allah to whom ye shall be brought back. -(LVIII:9)*

*Secret counsels are only (inspired) by the evil one, in order that he may cause grief to the believers; but he cannot harm them in the least, except as Allah permits, and in Allah let the believers put their trust. - (LVIII:10)*

*They may hide (their crimes) from men, but they cannot hide (them) from Allah, seeing that He is in their midst when they plot in the night in words that He cannot approve: and Allah doth compass round all their affairs. -(IV:108)*

*There is not a secret consultation between three but He makes the fourth among them, - nor between five but he makes the sixth, - nor between fewer nor more but He is in their midst wheresoever they be. -(LVIII:7)*

*They have obedience on their lips; but when they leave thee, a section of them meditates all night on things different from what thou tellest them. But Allah records their nightly (Plots). -(IV:81)*

These verses make it clear that secret confabulations should be for advancing the cause of Islam and not for obstructing it and clearly cautioned the Prophet against the designs of hypocrites who were secretly planning to stab in the back.

Another plot of the hypocrites was to seek private audience with the Prophet, while sitting in public and talk to him in whispering way, not to solve any problems but to show their importance and to create the impression in public mind that they had direct approach to the head of the movement. The Prophet in his usual politeness did not refuse anyone who wanted to talk to him privately, but when the practice assumed the form of a conspiracy and much of the Prophet's time was wasted, Divine measures were taken to put an end to this mischief.

*O ye who believe! When ye consult the Apostle in private, spend something in charity before your private consultation. -(LVIII:12)*

Thus a fee was put for private consultation with the Prophet which the miserly Jews would not pay and so a hurdle was placed against the whispering campaign but, in the meantime, the Jews and their confederates opened a new front and began to ridicule and disparage every new turn that the Islamic movement took. For instance, when the Muslims were ordered to restrain their hands from violence, endure all oppression and cruelties of the enemies and devote themselves to prayers and charity (IV:77), the mischief-makers were not satisfied but when order came for raising arms against their aggressors they were afraid of men more than of God. The Qur'an says: "When (at length) the order for fighting was issued to them, behold! A section of them feared men as - or even more than- they would have feared God. They say, "Our Lord! Why hast Thou ordered us to fight'?"

Another front of attack on the Prophet is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows:

*If some good befalls them they say, this is from God; but if evil, they say This is from thee (O Prophet). -(IV:78)*

At the time of reverses, they blamed the Prophet but they would not give him credit if good came their way.

With this mean mentality the mischief-mongers obstructed every movement and even went so far as to say, "We do fear lest a change of fortune bring us disaster."

They meant to convey that so long as the movement was in such hands a disaster might fall upon them any moment.

What mental tortures the Prophet should have suffered in the face of such frontal attacks and secret whisperings can be well imagined. But it was his firm faith in God and truth of his mission that sustained him.