

Prophet of Mercy

Topic Based Index

- ❖ Story of the Newborn Prophet; Muhammad
- ❖ Resonance of His Call.

Story of the Newborn Prophet; Muhammad

Muhammad's mother was Aamenah daughter of Wahab son of Abd Manaf son of Kilab. She was also a believer in Allah. When Muhammad was born his mother said: 'As soon as I put my child on the ground he leaned with his hands on the ground, raised his head to the skies and looked at the horizons all the while speaking in phrases of monotheism. Then a voice called out to me saying: 'The best of mankind has been born so name him Muhammad.' Then Aameenah the mother of Muhammad sent for Abdul-Muttalib. He came to her and she said: 'A wondrous boy has been born to you.' Then she brought baby Muhammad to him. Abdul-Muttalib looked at him then took him and entered the Ka'bah (f2) and prayed to Allah. Then he left the Ka'bah and returned him to his mother and named him Muhammad. Muhammad was not yet seven years old when his mother died. After his mother's death, his grandfather Abdul-Muttalib assumed guardianship of him.

Because of his knowledge of the status of the child and his faith in him he treated Muhammad with more care and attention than his other children. A group of the Medlaj Clan came to Mecca and when they saw Muhammad they said to his grandfather: 'Take good care of him for we have never seen another of his station.' Abdul-Muttalib said to Abu Talib in his will to heed what they say and take care of him. Muhammad was eight when his grandfather died, and he was taken into the care of his uncle Abu Talib. Abu Talib, chief of the Bani-Hashim clan within the, then became the guardian of Muhammad from his Quraysh [3]. eighth year. Abu

Talib went on to protect and serve Muhammad (s), defending him and honouring him throughout the testing times of his Prophethood, until the last breath of his life.

Muhammad grew up to become a fine young man. He became known for his excellent manners, and because of the honesty in his conduct and dealings he was referred to as al-Saadiq (The Truthful One) and al-Amin (The Trustworthy One). As a youngster Muhammad used to accompany his uncle on his business trips to Syria. When Muhammad (s) reached the age of twelve he journeyed with his uncle Abu Talib as far as Busra. There he was seen by a Christian monk named Georges who recognised him by his description. He took his hand and said: 'This is the chief of the Worlds, God will send him as a mercy to the World's.' Abu Talib said: 'How do you know this?' He said: 'We find mention of him in our books.' He asked Abu Talib to take him back fearing for his safety.

As an adult, Muhammad worked as a trader between the cities of Mecca and Damascus, and earned a great reputation in the process. Having heard of the reputation of Muhammad, Lady Khadijah, one of the noblest of the Quraysh, on one occasion commissioned him to take charge of some of her trading business between the two cities. Lady Khadijah sent one of her servants, Maysarah, along with him to keep an eye on him and report back to her. Having seen his performance in the business, and the returns he had produced as well as his honesty, Lady Khadijah put Muhammad in charge of her business. Although she had many proposals of marriage from various dignitaries of the Quraysh, Lady Khadijah declined them all. It is reported that it was Lady Khadijah who, albeit indirectly and discreetly, made the marriage proposal to Muhammad. Some historians have reported that when they married in 595CE they were both 25.

Lady Khadijah gave birth to three children. All of the Prophet's children were from Khadijah except Ibrahim who was from Mary the Copt, who was born in Medina and lived for a year and ten months. The male children who were all born in Mecca were; al-Qasim which is where Muhammad's epithet (Abul-Qasim; meaning Qasim's father) comes from, and Abdullah. The boys all died young during the lifetime of the Prophet. His only daughter was Fatimah, who married Imam Ali son of Abu Talib, and bore him Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn, Zaynab and Umm Kolthoum, and another son who was named Mohassen by the Prophet before his birth. Fatimah was the only one of the siblings to survive the Messenger of Allah. The Prophet

Muhammad used to say Hasan and Husayn are two Imams (leaders) whether they rise up (against tyranny) or not.

Ali was born to Abu Talib and his wife Fatimah bint Assad in 600CE. Ali's birth was associated with a particularly significant phenomenon. When Fatimah bint Assad was in labour she came to the Ka'bah pleading to God for help with her labour. It is reported by various narrators and recorded by many chroniclers that as she was engaged in her prayers by the southern wall of the Ka'bah, the wall split open and she entered the House, whereby the wall returned to its normal state. Having observed this extraordinary phenomenon, people who were present tried to follow her into the House through the opening but did not succeed. They then tried to go inside the House through its door but could not unlock the door. Reports indicate that she was inside the House for three days, and when she left the House with her newborn she did so in the same manner as she entered the House. The Prophet Muhammad took particular interest in baby Ali, and he played a major role in Ali's upbringing and education. Ali would be the most ardent supporter of the Prophet throughout the difficult years of the Prophet Muhammad's mission to convey the divine message and the teachings of Islam to the masses.

The Prophet Muhammad used to spend much time in prayer and worship of the one God. This he used to do in a cave, known as Hira, in the al-Noor mountain near the city of Mecca. In 610CE, at the age of forty, Muhammad received the first of the divine revelations when he was engaged in devotion and prayer inside the cave of Hira:

In the name of Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate; { Read in the name of thy Lord who created, Created man from a clot, Read and thy lord is the most noble, Who taught by pen, Taught man what he knew not . . . } **[4]**

The Prophet Muhammad conveyed the news and the Message to Ali and Lady Khadijah. Ali and Lady Khadijah both embraced the new revelation instantly and without any hesitation. Khadijah was thus the first woman to believe in Muhammad (s) and the first woman to pray with him. She supported him wholeheartedly and spent all her wealth in the way of Allah. She was the first woman that the Prophet married and he married no other during her lifetime. She was immensely loyal to the Prophet. The Angel Gabriel ordered him to convey a special greeting and a blessing from God as well as ordering that he give the land of Fadak to Fatimah as an appreciation for what her mother had spent in the way of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad begins

to invite individuals to the new revelation but in secret. There were very few supporters and believers. When the Prophet used to perform a congregational prayer, those who were with him were Lady Khadijah and Ali. This low-key approach continued for three years. Afterwards, on instructions from the Almighty, the Prophet's invitation to Islam started to become more and more public. The Almighty instructs His messenger to begin with his clan,

{And warn your nearest kinsmen} [5].

For this purpose the Prophet Muhammad prepared a banquet and invited the elders and chiefs of the Bani-Hashim, who totalled forty. After they were served with a good feast, the Prophet invited them to Islam, called upon them to support him in his mission, and promised them that whoever does so would be appointed as his successor, but none took up the offer dismissing the Prophet and his mission as nonsense, with the sole exception of Ali. Ridiculing the whole thing, they turned to Abu Talib saying, "Your son will be your commander, you should obey him!" Nevertheless the mission continues unabated albeit with very few supporters.

Resonance of His Call.

The followers of the new religion started to grow, and so does the concern of the Quraysh towards them. The elders of Quraysh send Abu Talib, the trusted uncle of the Prophet to him, asking him to stop his call for this new religion, and in return they would give him whatever he would want. "If you want wealth, we will give you as much as you want, if you want women we will marry you the most beautiful women of Arabia, and if you want position and status we will make you the owner-king over us." When Abu Talib conveys the message of the elders of Quraysh to his nephew-prophet, Muhammad (s) replies, "I swear by the Almighty that if they put the Sun in my right hand and the Moon in my left on condition that I desist from this affair I would not leave it until Allah causes it to prevail or I die in the process." Then Muhammad (s) began to weep and rose and made to leave, but Abu Talib called him and said: 'Come back

my nephew. Say what you like my nephew, for by Allah I will never hand you over to them ever.' The Quraysh realised that it is dealing with a true and determined prophet. From then on, open hostility towards this new religion, its prophet, and its followers started to increase. Lady Khadijah dedicates all her wealth and resources for the cause of her prophet-husband's mission. The extent of this hostility reaches blatant persecution of the followers of the new religion and its prophet.

Then the Quraysh plotted amongst themselves about the companions of Muhammad (s) who had entered Islam with him from amongst the tribes. Each tribe pounced upon any of its own who were Muslims by tormenting them and forcing them from their religion. Abu Talib protected Muhammad (s), and seeing what the Quraysh were doing to the sons of Hashim and Abdul-Muttalib, he called for them to protect Muhammad (s) just as he was protecting him. So they gathered with him and stood up with him, except for Abu Talib's brother Abu Lahab and his sons who had assisted the Quraysh against the Prophet. Then the Quraysh openly decided to kill the Messenger of Allah. When this news reached Abu Talib he gathered the sons of Hashim and Abdul-Muttalib and took Muhammad (s) to his quarter and protected him from those who sought to kill him.

The Quraysh imposes total and complete embargo against the Prophet and his followers in all its forms; social, economic, political, etc. No citizen of Mecca is allowed to buy from or sell to them, no one is allowed to marry anyone of them, or even befriend or socialise with them, not even help them. Nor should a peace settlement be accepted from them ever, nor should they be shown mercy until they hand over Muhammad (s) to be killed. The Quraysh agreed to draw up a document to this effect, and one of them wrote this document in his own hand, which subsequently was afflicted by paralysis, and then they hung the document inside the Ka'bah. The Prophet and many of his followers, and members of the Hashim clan withdrew to Abu Talib and entered the Abu Talib Quarter known as She'b Abu Talib, which had become their virtual open-top prison. Their condition deteriorated as time went by, and although some friends of sympathisers managed to smuggle in some help to the Muslims, but this was few and far between. There they remained in the quarter for three years until they were exhausted.

The voices of the children could be heard from the quarter crying of hunger. They also increased the pressure on those who had entered Islam but had not entered the quarter. The trials became grave and the Muslims were severely shaken. It is reported that Ali son of Abu Talib used to secretly leave the quarter in disguise and fetch foodstuff to the besieged, carrying it on his back, into the quarter. On one of the divine revelations made to him, Muhammad (s) informed his uncle Abu Talib that God had sent woodworms to their document that had eaten every word except the name of Allah. Having heard this Abu Talib said: 'No by the falling stars, you have not lied to me.' Abu Talib set out with a group of the clan of Abdul-Muttalib until he reached the vicinity of the Ka'bah, which was full of the people of Quraysh. He spoke and said to them: 'Something has occurred which may be a cause for a settlement between you and us so bring out your document. They said: 'The time has come for you to accept and recant. Only one man has caused the split between us and you, and you have put your people in jeopardy because of him.' Abu Talib said: 'I propose a matter for you in which there is fairness. My nephew has told me and he has not lied to me, that Allah distances Himself from this document and has erased all your treachery and enmity and all that remains written is His name. If it is as he has said then by Allah, we will never hand him over to you until the last of us dies. If what he has said is false then we will hand him over to you so that you may kill him or spare him as you wish.' They said: 'We agree.' Then they opened the document and found it as they had been told but some of them clung to their falsehood and obstinacy and said: 'This is sorcery from your companion.' Then some of those who had made the pact spoke and tore up the document.

The clan of Hashim then felt safe enough to emerge from their quarter and once more mingle with the people. This was in the tenth year of the noble prophethood, circa 620CE. It was less than six months after the end of this trial when Abu Talib passed away. Then the Prophet's wife Lady Khadijah also died only three days after Abu Talib according to some accounts. Muhammad (s) was very saddened and named this year the 'Year of Sorrow'. The loss of Abu Talib and Lady Khadijah dealt a severe blow to the Prophet at a time when he needed these two most. The death of Abu Talib cleared the last hurdle for the Quraysh, and if the presence of Abu Talib imposed certain limits and drew some red lines for the Quraysh that they could not cross, now his death leaves them free to do what was the unthinkable to the Prophet while Abu Talib was alive. With the death of Abu Talib, the trials meted out by his tribe to Muhammad (s) grew more naked and audacious. When the Prophet was praying by the Ka'bah, one of

the idolaters approached and violently tried to strangle him. The Quraysh encouraged the foolish ones to throw dirt on the Prophet's face and head. They used to throw filth and blood and thorns at his door. Ommayah ibn Khalaf used to insult the Prophet until his face became red but still the Prophet would not say anything to him. When a fool threw the dirt in the face of Muhammad (s) he entered his house with the dirt still on his head. Fatimah began to clean the dirt from his head and crying and Muhammad (s) saying: 'Do not cry my daughter, for Allah will protect your father.'

He also said: 'The Quraysh could not harm me until Abu Talib died.' It is related from Khabab who said: 'I approached the Prophet when he was reclining in the shade of the Ka'bah. This when we had received some harm from the Polytheists. I said to him: 'O Messenger of Allah, will you not invoke Allah?' He sat up red of face and said: 'Among those who came before you there were those whose skins would be scraped off with combs of iron down to the bone and this did not divert them from their religion. Allah will complete this matter until a rider may travel from San'a to Hadramaut with nothing to fear but the wolf getting to his sheep.'

The Quraysh and their allies made the decision that Muhammad must be physically eliminated in order to finish with him and his religion once and for all. But whoever does this would have to deal with the consequences and face the wrath of the respectable Bani-Hashim clan. In order to divide the guilt between as many clans and tribes as possible, forty clans are made to be involved in the task. The best warrior from each clan is chosen for the task. They are instructed to storm the house of Muhammad and every single one of them is to ensure to strike Muhammad with his sword at least once. This is so that if Bani-Hashim, Muhammad's clan, were to seek revenge for his blood, they would be confronted with forty clans, and thus making it impossible for them to

In 622CE, after some thirteen years of calling the people to Islam, Muhammad (s) left Mecca for Medina. The Prophet Muhammad asked Ali son of Abu Talib to stay

behind to deal with a number of issues, and Ali volunteered to sleep in the Prophet's bed acting as a decoy. Muhammad (s) manages to slip through those who were surrounding his house just before they stormed it. When they stormed the house to kill him they found Ali instead in the Prophet's bed with no sign of their target. On his way out of Mecca, Abu Bakr came across the Prophet as he was leaving the city, and asked the Prophet where he was going at that time. The Prophet Muhammad could not tell him other than the truth, and thereafter Muhammad (s) asked him to join him on his migration to Medina, in order to keep the news of this mission secret until he is out of danger. With first daylight, the forty brave warriors set off in pursuit of the Prophet by following his track. They used an expert guide to help them track him, and the guide led the warriors to the cave of Thawr, some five miles outside Mecca, where the Prophet Muhammad and his companion were actually inside, but the pursuers did not enter the cave. It is reported that the pursuers did not enter the cave since by the time they had arrived, through divine intervention, a spider had spun its web across the opening of the cave, and a pigeon had placed its nest near there, after the two had entered the cave. The chasers did not attempt to enter the cave on the presumption that had anyone entered the cave, the spider web and the pigeon nest would have been disturbed. Having failed to capture the Prophet, the Quraysh announced a reward of 100 camels for anyone capturing him or giving information leading to his capture.

The Prophet Muhammad left Mecca on the eve of the first day of the lunar month of Rabi'-I, and arrived at the outskirts of Medina, some 400 km north of the city of Mecca, on Monday the 12th day of the same month. Another task that Ali ibn Abu Talib had to do when the Prophet had left Mecca was to return any goods and valuables that people had given to the Prophet for safekeeping. Many of those who were the Prophet opponents also used to give their valuables to the Prophet for safekeeping every time they went on a long journey and such like. This is because the Prophet was recognised for his trustworthiness even towards his foes; they could not trust their best friends for safekeeping of their valuables, but they trusted Muhammad al-Amin (the trustworthy one). Ali returned all the goods and valuables that were given to the Prophet for

safekeeping, including those of the Prophet's foes. When Ali had returned all the goods he was given by the Prophet Muhammad to their rightful owners, he went to the roof of the Ka'bah and yelled at the top of his voice, "if anyone has any claim against Muhammad, or had entrusted him with anything that he has not got back yet, then they should come forward." It is reported that nobody did. Having discharged all his tasks in Mecca, Ali set off for Yathreb together with his mother Fatimah bint Assad, Fatimah the daughter of the Prophet, and Fatimah daughter of Zubair.

Muhammad arrives in Madinah. When the news of the Messenger's exodus from Mecca to Medina reached the Muslims in Medina, they began to go every morning to the lava fields and wait there until the heat of noon drove them back. Many days they waited until one day when they had returned to their houses it so happened that a Jewish man was looking out from his fortress when he saw the Prophet shimmering in the haze. No sooner had he sighted him than he hailed the Muslims at the top of his voice saying: 'O Muslims, here is your Master whom you await!' The Muslims immediately rushed to meet Muhammad (s) on the crest of the lava fields. He then kept going until they had reached Qubaa where he stopped with the clan of Amr ibn Awf. The Muslims hailed 'Allahu Akbar' (God is Greatest) with joy at his arrival. The Prophet stopped at Qubaa for three days awaiting the arrival of Ali. He did not want to enter the Medina without Ali. The Prophet remained with Ali with the clan of Amr ibn Awf for a day or two. During his stay in Qubaa he established the mosque of Qubaa, and thus it was the first ever established in Muslim era. And on the Friday, the Prophet entered the Qubaa mosque and led the Muslims in the Friday prayers and gave a sermon. And this was the first Friday sermon ever given. The Prophet prayed in the direction of Jerusalem and one hundred men prayed behind him. After performing the prayers, the Prophet mounted his camel, along with Ali who never left his side, and the rest of Muslims and headed towards Medina. Once in Medina, Muslim families invited Muhammad (s) to stay with them. In order not to turn down the request of any one of them, the Prophet decided that he would stay with the family that his she-camel would stop by their house. He said: 'Let her be for she is being ordered.' The camel kept on walking until she reached the door of the house of Abu Ayyub, who happened to be amongst the poorest in Medina.

Then Abu Ayyub hurried to the Prophet's baggage and took it into his house. Abu Ayyub's mother, who was blind, said: 'O if only I had sight so that I could see my master the Messenger of Allah!' The Prophet Muhammad then called to Allah for her and her eyes opened. This was the first of his miracles in Medina. It is said that when Muhammad (s) entered Medina, it was the most joyous occasion ever witnessed by the people. One eyewitness said: 'I saw the day when he entered Medina and I have never seen a brighter or better day than that day. And I saw the day he died and I have never seen a worse or darker day than the day on which he died.'

Note:

In above document, certain words have been abbreviated to reduce repetition throughout the text.

(s) Peace be upon him and his Progeny

(a.s) Peace be upon him

Resources

- **2:**The Ka'bah is a cubical structure symbolising the House of God that was built by the Prophet Adam on instructions from the Almighty God in an uninhabited valley, which in turn brought about the creation of the holy city of Mecca around it.
- **3:** The Quraysh is a collection of clans and tribes all of whom are blood related.

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- **4:** The Holy Qur'an, The Clot (96): 1-5
- **5:** The Holy Qur'an, The Poets (26): 214