

and his application or lack thereof of its teachings. We of course know that the Prophet ﷺ probably learned about those things through revelation, but 'Adee was just beginning to see the truth, so imagine his state of mind when the Prophet ﷺ spoke about Al-Mirbaa' to him.

The Prophet ﷺ did not let up, but instead continued to amaze 'Adee by speaking as if he were reading 'Adee's mind. He ﷺ said, "I indeed think that among the factors that are preventing you (from embracing Islam) are (1) the poverty and hunger you see around me and (2) the fact that the people are gathered against us (in war). Do you know where (the city) Al-Heerah is located?"

"I heard of it but never went there," said 'Adee.

"The time draws near," said the Prophet ﷺ, "when a female traveller will depart from it without anyone to protect her, until she performs *Tawaaf* (circuits) around the Ka'bah (and, throughout her journey, she will not have to fear being harmed by anyone). And the time draws near when the treasures of Kisra ibn Hurmuz (the emperor of the Persian Empire) will be won (by Muslims) through war."

"Kisra ibn Hurmuz?" 'Adee asked, wondering whether it was the same Kisra who was the emperor of a major empire.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "(Yes) Kisra ibn Hurmuz," and repeated his name three times. "And the time draws near when one will search out for someone who will accept his money as charity from him, but will find no one."

As he continued to relate his story to Abu 'Ubaidah ibn Hudhaifah ؓ, 'Adee ؓ said, "I already saw two of those things happen. I saw a female traveller leave Al-Heerah without a guardian and protector until she made it all the way to the Ka'bah, where she performed *Tawaaf* (walked circuits) around it. And I was among the horsemen who attacked Al-Madaain (an area that was a part of the Persian Empire) (and conquered Persia and gained, among the spoils of war, the treasures of Kisra). And by Allah, the third of those events will indeed come to pass (and

did come to pass during the caliphate of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez may Allah have mercy on him). Verily, it is a *Hadeeth* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that he related to me himself."^[1]

According to another narration, 'Adee ibn Haatim ؓ said:

"I set out on a journey until I reached the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Al-Madeenah. I entered upon him while he ﷺ was in his *Masjid*, and I extended greetings of peace to him. He ﷺ asked, 'Who are you?' I said, 'I am 'Adee ibn Haatim.' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stood up and led me to his house. By Allah, he was heading towards it with me, when suddenly he was met by a weak and very aged woman, who accosted him (in order to discuss a matter with him). He ﷺ stopped for her for a long time, and patiently discussed her problem with her; meanwhile, I was saying to myself, 'By Allah, this is not a king (i.e., a king does not act as humbly as this).' Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took me to his house, and once inside, he ﷺ handed me a cushion made of leather and stuffed with fibers. Passing it on to me, he ﷺ said, 'Sit down on this.' I said, 'No, you sit down on it.' He ﷺ said, 'No, you (sit down on it),' and so I sat down on it. For his part, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sat down on the ground. And (again), I said to myself, 'By Allah, this is not the way of a king.'"^[2]

Following are some of the more salient points of this story:

- 1) When 'Adee ؓ was on his way to meet the Prophet ﷺ for the first time, he pictured him to be one of two people: Either a Prophet or a king. Later on, when he saw the Prophet ﷺ standing for a long time with a commoner, an old lady who needed help, he witnessed firsthand the humble character of the Prophet ﷺ, and the notion of him being a king was completely erased from his mind.

^[1] *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, the Book of *Al-Manaaqib*, chapter, "The Signs of Prophethood in Islam"; and *Musnad Ahmad*, the *Musnad* of the *Koofiyyoon*, the Remainder of the *Hadeeth* of 'Adee ibn Haatim. Also, refer to *Saheeh As-Seerah An-Nabawiyyah* (pg. 580).

^[2] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyyah* by Ibn Hishaam (4/236); and to *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* by Ibn Katheer, chapter, "The Story of 'Adee ibn Haatim At-Taaee."

- 2) The Prophet ﷺ hit a right note with 'Adee when he criticized him for not following the religion he believed in, for 'Adee became greatly impressed by the fact that the Prophet ﷺ knew about a detailed-aspect of his obscure and little-known-about religion.
- 3) As soon as the Prophet ﷺ became sure that 'Adee believed in his Prophethood, he ﷺ began to discuss certain obstacles that prevent some people from embracing the truth even when they believe in the truth. One of those obstacles was the notion that Muslims were weak and that their dominion was small when compared to the major empires of the world; another obstacle was the relative poverty of Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ explained that some people might refrain from embracing Islam because they feared joining a nation whose members were poor and were constantly threatened by destruction at the hands of their enemies, enemies who were seemingly more powerful. But then the Prophet ﷺ tried to wipe out such thoughts from 'Adee's mind by depicting for him the near future, the peace and stability that would reign supreme in the region and the riches that the Muslims would win in battle. 'Adee ؓ, already convinced by the truthfulness of the Prophet ﷺ, believed the prophecies he mentioned and, with no more obstacles in his way, embraced Islam. He ؓ then lived on to witness at least two of those prophecies come true; and the third one came true as well, during the brief but blessed period of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez's caliphate.
- 4) In the story of 'Adee ibn Haatim ؓ, there is an important lesson in *Da'wah* (propagating Islam) for all Muslims: 'Adee ؓ was perhaps most influenced by the character of the Prophet ﷺ and by his simple lifestyle. Or in other words, he became impressed because he didn't only hear about the teachings of Islam; but also, he ؓ actually saw them being applied.

Other Events That Took Place In The Year 8 H

Ibn Katheer quoted the following passage from Al-Waaqidee:

“In the same year (the year 8 H), the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent ‘Amr ibn Al-‘Aas ؓ to Jaifar and ‘Amr, the two sons of Al-Jalandee in Azd; *Jizyah* (head tax) was taken from the Magians of those lands and from the Bedouins who lived in neighbouring lands. And in the same year, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ married Faatimah bint Ad-Dahhaak but then parted from her when she sought refuge from him. And in *Dhil-Hijjah*, Maariyah Al-Qibtiyyah gave birth to Ibraaheem, the son of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The other Mothers of the Believers (i.e., the other wives of the Prophet ﷺ) became extremely jealous of her because she was blessed with a male son (of the Prophet ﷺ).”^[1]

Also in the year 8 H, Zainab ؓ died. Zainab ؓ was one of the Prophet’s daughters and was married to Abul-‘Aas ibn Ar-Rabee ؓ. Born ten years prior to beginning of her father’s Prophethood, Zainab ؓ was the oldest of the Prophet’s daughters; oldest after her was Ruqayyah ؓ, then Umm Kulthoom ؓ, and then Faatimah ؓ.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ of course loved Zainab ؓ a great deal. She ؓ was one of the early believers, and she ؓ then migrated to Al-Madeenah six years before her husband embraced Islam. During her migration to Al-Madeenah, she ؓ became extremely weak and sick, and the same sickness that afflicted her then continued to revisit her intermittently until the time of her death. When she ؓ died, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave these instructions to the women who were to undertake the task of washing her body: “Wash her (body) an odd number of times: three times or five times. And add some camphor in the final washing.”^[2]

^[1] Refer to *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* (4/374).

^[2] Refer to *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, the Book of Funerals, chapter, “What Things are Recommended to be Washed an Odd Number of Times”; to *Saheeh Muslim*, chapter, “Washing the Body of the Deceased”; and to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyyah* by Abu Shohbah (2/490).



**The Tabook Expedition (9 H),
Which Is Also Known As The
“The Expedition Of Distress”**



1

The History Of The Battle, Its Names, And Its Causes

Its History And Its Names

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ departed for this expedition in *Rajab* of the year 9 H^[1], approximately six months after he returned from the siege of At-Taaif. This expedition is famously known as the Tabook expedition, a name that was given to it based on the destination of the Muslim army, the Tabook water source. The story of how the battle was named is related in a narration that can be found in *Saheeh Muslim*; according to that narration, Mu'aadh ؓ related that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Tomorrow, you will, *In Sha Allah* (Allah Willing) go the spring of Tabook, and you will not reach it until forenoon. Whosoever among you reaches it (first), let him not touch (i.e., take) anything from its water until I come."^[2] Tabook is situated in northern Hijaaz, approximately seven-hundred and seventy-eight miles away from Al-Madeenah, via the paved roads of today. Tabook was a part of the land that was controlled by the Qudaa'ah tribe, a tribe that was then loyal and answerable to the Roman Empire.^[3]

The expedition to Tabook has another name as well, the

^[1] Refer to *Tafseer At-Tabaree* (14/540-542) and to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah Fee Dau Al-Masaadir Al-Asliyyah* (pg. 614).

^[2] *Saheeh Muslim* (4/1784); *Hadeeth* number: 706.

^[3] Refer to *Al-Mujtamai' Al-Islaamee* by Al-'Umaree (pg. 229).

Expedition of Distress, a name that is mentioned in Chapter *At-Taubah* of the Noble Qur'an:

﴿لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ
الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبَ فَرِيقٍ مِّنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ
إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾﴾

“Allah has forgiven the Prophet ﷺ the Muhajiroon (Muslim emigrants who left their homes and came to Al-Madeenah) and the Ansaar (Muslims of Al-Madeenah) who followed him (Muhammad ﷺ) in the time of distress (Tabook expedition, etc.), after the hearts of a party of them had nearly deviated (from the Right Path), but He accepted their repentance. Certainly, He is unto them full of Kindness, Most Merciful.” (Qur'an 9: 117)

According to a narration that is related by Imam Bukhaaree (may Allah have mercy on him), Abu Moosa Al-Ash'aree ؓ said, “My companions sent me to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, in order for me to ask him to provide them with riding animals, for they were with him in the Army of Distress, which was headed out for the Tabook expedition...” And Imam Bukhaaree gave the chapter that discussed this expedition the title: “Chapter: The Tabook Expedition, which is (also Known as) the Expedition of Distress.”^[1]

The expedition was given this name because of the severe hardships the Muslims endured throughout their journey to Tabook: The weather was extremely hot; their destination was far off; they did not have enough riding animals to carry all of the soldiers; they quickly ran out of water; and they didn't have enough wealth to properly equip themselves.^[2] In 'Abdur-Razzaaq's *Tafseer*, Ma'mar related from Ibn 'Aqeel that the Muslims became so thirsty during the Tabook expedition that they would slaughter a camel and drink the water that was found in its stomach.^[3] A similar account is

^[1] *Saheeh Bukhaaree* (4415).

^[2] Refer to *As-Siraa' Ma'as-Salbiyyeen* by Abu Faaris (pg. 83).

^[3] Refer to *Fathul-Baaree*, to the explanation of *Hadeeth* number: 4415; and to *Muhammad ﷺ, the Battle of Tabook or Al-'Usrah* by Muhammad Ar-Ridaa.

related from 'Umar ibn Al-Khattaab ؓ, who said, "We left for Tabook with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in a period of sweltering heat. We stopped somewhere to make camp, and we became so thirsty that we thought our necks would break apart (as a result of the dryness)..." He ؓ then went to explain how the situation became so desperate that one of them would slaughter his camel and squeeze out any water he could find, and drink it.^[1]

The expedition went by a third name as well, one that Az-Zarqaanee (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned in his book *Sharh Al-Mawaahid Al-Ladaniyyah*.^[2] The name he mentioned was "Al-Faadahah," which can roughly be translated to mean, "The Unmasking." The expedition was named thus because it exposed the reality of the hypocrites, unmasking them, if you will, and showing them as they truly were a topic that we will, *In Sha Allah* (Allah Willing), discuss in the upcoming pages of this work.

The Causes Of The Expedition

Historians generally agree that the cause of the expedition was news that reached the Prophet ﷺ by way of the Anbaat. The Anbaat were Arabs who had intermarried with foreigners and whose language got mixed up with foreign languages so that they no longer spoke pure Arabic. Some people from the Anbaat came to Al-Madeenah from Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions) with a shipment of oil, and they also came with important news, the gist of which was: The Romans were mobilizing soldiers from the Lakhim and Judhaam tribes, as well as from other Arab tribes that had adopted Christianity as their religion. The vanguard of their army, according to the Anbaat, had already reached Al-Balqaa, which was situated somewhere between Ash-Sham and Waadee Al-Qura'. The Prophet ﷺ wanted to attack them before they attacked him.

^[1] Refer to *Mujma' Az-Zawaa'id* (6/194).

^[2] Refer to *Sharh Al-Mawaahid Al-Ladaniyyah* (3/62).

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) seemed not to agree completely with that assessment and offered another reason why the expedition took place. He argued that the expedition was simply a part of the overall methodology of *Jihaad* in Islam, in that Muslims were required to spread the message of Islam, and since all of Arabia was under rule of Islam, the next natural step for Muslims was to spread Islam to the nearest land to them. And since the nearest land to the Muslims happened to be controlled by the Roman Empire, whose government stood in the way of the spread of Islam, it was only natural that the Muslims should go there with their army. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلِيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلظَةً ؕ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾﴾

“O you who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are close to you, and let them find harshness in you, and know that Allah is with those who the Al-Muttaqoon (the pious).” (Qur’an 9: 123)

Ibn Katheer made a strong case, especially considering the fact that the Romans were preventing the message of Islam from reaching their lands. Nonetheless, this does not negate or contradict the above-mentioned reason that is mentioned by historians. For in their decision to go out and face the Romans, the Muslims were certainly motivated by the desire not to be attacked in their own homeland. The Muslims were fearful in those days of being attacked by the Ghassaan tribes of Ash-Sham, tribes that were loyal to the Roman Empire. That the Muslims were fearful of such an invasion is proven by what happened one day to ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattaab ؓ. Prior to the Tabook expedition, the Prophet ﷺ had vowed to stay away from his wives for an entire month. Some Companions ؓ were confused by his vow and mistakenly thought that the Prophet ﷺ had divorced them. So one day, a friend of ‘Umar ؓ knocked violently on his door, saying, “Is he asleep.” ‘Umar ؓ, sensing that some emergency had prompted his companion to come in such a manner, became alarmed and

went out to him. His friend ﷺ said, "Something grave has happened!"

"What is it?" asked 'Umar ﷺ. "Have the Ghassaan arrived?" That 'Umar ﷺ reacted this way proves that the Muslims were expecting an attack from the Romans or at least from tribes that were under the rule of the Roman Empire. 'Umar's friend ﷺ answered, "No, it is something greater and more terrifying (that has happened): The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has divorced his wives..."^[1] People became so paranoid because of the circumstances at the time that they completely misinterpreted the Prophet's vow to stay away from his wives for a month.

The Wealth That Was Contributed To Equip The Muslim Army, And The Enthusiasm Of The Muslims To Partake In The Expedition

Because the destination was so far off, and because many Muslims were partaking in the expedition, the Prophet ﷺ needed to gather as much wealth as possible. For he ﷺ feared that his army would not have sufficient provisions and equipment for the journey, unless many generous people stepped forward and donated large percentages of their wealth. To motivate his Companions ﷺ, he ﷺ promised a great reward to those among them who made contributions.

Each person spent according to his means. But of all the contributors, 'Uthmaan ﷺ stood out for setting a good example, and he ﷺ was well rewarded for his generosity. 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Hubaab ﷺ said,

"I was present when the Prophet ﷺ was exhorting people to make contributions for the 'Army of Distress.' 'Uthmaan ibn 'Affaan stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I will, in the way of Allah (i.e., for the Muslim army), provide one-hundred camels

^[1] *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, the Book of Marriage, chapter, "For a Man to Admonish His Daughter"; *Hadeeth* number: 5191; and to *Saheeh Muslim*, chapter, "Al-Eelaa, Secluding Oneself from One's Wives, Giving them a Choice"

fully equipped with their cloth coverings and saddles.' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then continued to exhort the people to make contributions for the army, and 'Uthmaan ibn 'Affaan again stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I will, in the way of Allah, provide two-hundred camels fully equipped with their cloth coverings and saddles.' The Prophet ﷺ then went on to further exhort the people to make contributions for the army, and yet again 'Uthmaan ibn 'Affaan ؓ stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I will, in the way of Allah, provide three-hundred camels fully equipped with their cloth coverings and saddles.' I then saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ descend from the pulpit and say, 'Whatever 'Uthmaan does after this (moment) will not be held against him. Whatever 'Uthmaan does after this (moment) will not be held against him.'"^[1]

And 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Samurah ؓ related that when the Prophet ﷺ was busy equipping the "Army of Distress," 'Uthmaan ؓ went to him with one-thousand dinars. The Prophet ﷺ took the money and moved it around in his hands, all the while saying, "(Uthmaan) Ibn 'Affaan will not be harmed by what he does after this day." And he ﷺ repeated that phrase a number of times.^[2]

As for 'Umar ibn Al-Khattaab ؓ, his sights were set on outdoing Abu Bakr ؓ for once in the performance of good deeds. This time around, he ؓ truly thought that he was going to outdo Abu Bakr ؓ by donating one-half of his wealth to the Muslim army. 'Umar ؓ later said:

"One day (prior to the Tabook expedition), the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ordered us to give charity; the timing of his request happily coincided with me having a (sufficient) quantity of wealth. I said (to myself), 'If there is any day on which I will outdo Abu Bakr, it will be this day.' I then went with one-half of my

^[1] Refer to *Sunan At-Tirmidhee*, chapter, "Manaaqib" (5/625,626); Hadeeth number: 3700; and to *Musnad Ahmad*, the Beginning of *Al-Madaniyyoon Musnad*, the Hadeeth of 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Hubaab As-Salamee.

^[2] Refer to *Sunan At-Tirmidhee*, chapter, "Al-Manaaqib"; Hadeeth number: 3702; and to *Musnad Ahmad* (5/63).

wealth, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked, 'What did you leave for your family?' I said, 'An amount that is similar to this.' Abu Bakr ؓ then came with all of his wealth, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked him, 'What did you leave for your family?' He said, 'I left for them Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.' And I said to him, 'I will never outdo you in anything.'"^[1]

Another generous contributor was 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn 'Auf ؓ, who donated two-thousand dirhams, which was one-half of all of the wealth he owned. Other Companions noteworthy for their extraordinarily large contributions were, among others, Al-'Abbaas ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib ؓ, Talhah ibn 'Ubaidullah ؓ, Muhammad ibn Maslamah ؓ, and 'Aasim ibn 'Adee ؓ.^[2]

Muslims understood that the acquirement of wealth can be a good thing, when it is a righteous person who acquires it and then spends it for the cause of Islam. The history of the golden years of Islam abounds with examples of great quantities of wealth under the control of righteous men, and not, as in the histories of other peoples, of men under the control of huge quantities of wealth. The Companions ؓ further understood that *Jihaad* required not just the sacrifice of lives, but also the sacrifice of wealth.

Poor Muslims contributed as well, though they offered their wealth in a shy manner. But of course, they had nothing to be shy or ashamed about, for all that is required of a person is that he gives according to his means. The hypocrites seemed to think otherwise, for they mocked poor Muslims who came forward with their contributions. For example, when Abu 'Uqail ؓ came forward with approximately four handfuls of dates, the hypocrites said, "Verily, Allah does not need the charity of this person!" But then when another man came and gave more than what Abu 'Uqail ؓ gave, they said, "He only did that to show off." Allah ﷻ then revealed the following Verse about them:

^[1] Refer to *Sunan Abu Daawood*, the Book of *Zakaat* (2/312, 313), *Hadeeth* number: 1687; and to *At-Tirmidheeh* in the chapter of *Al-Manaaqib*. And Imam At-Tirmidhee said, "This *Hadeeth* is *Hasan Saheeh*."

^[2] Refer to *Maghaazee* by Al-Waaqidee (3/391).

﴿الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ﴾

“Those who defame such of the believers who give charity (in Allah’s Cause) voluntarily, and those who could not find to give charity (in Allah’s Cause) except what is available to them.”
(Qur’an 9: 79)

And about Ibn ‘Auf ؓ the hypocrites said, “Ibn ‘Auf gave this only to show off.” From these examples, we see that the hypocrites would accuse the rich of showing off on the one hand, and would make fun of the contributions of the poor on the other.^[1]

Poor believers were greatly distressed over another matter: They did not have enough provisions and supplies to go out to perform *Jihaad* alongside their Muslim brothers. For example, it is related that ‘Ulabah ibn Zaid ؓ was moved to tears because he didn’t have enough for the expedition; he prayed during the night, cried, and supplicated to Allah ﷻ. The Prophet ﷺ later informed him that his sins were forgiven.^[2] And though it is true that this narration is related through weak chains, there is an authentic narration that attests to it; and even if this story may not be used as an Islamic proof, it can certainly be used from the perspective of broadening our understanding of the history of the Tabook expedition. At any rate, we do know for certain that a number of poor Muslims did not have the means to travel with the army and were consequently grief-stricken, a reaction that attests to their sincere and strong faith.

Being poor did not prevent poor believers from trying their best to take part in the expedition; for example, just as the Muslim army was leaving for Tabook, Waathilah ibn Al-Asqa’ ؓ ran out into

^[1] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah Fee Dau Al-Masaadir Al-Asliyyah* (pg. 616).

^[2] Refer to *Al-Mujtama’ Al-Madaneey* by Al-‘Umaree (pg. 235) and to *Al-Isaabah*, by Ibn Hajar.

the streets and called out, "Is there any man who will carry me (on his riding animal), in return for which he can have my share (of the spoils)!" An old man from the *Ansaar* ﷺ responded, "I will take his share, but he will have to take turns riding with me; and I will provide him with food." Waathilah ﷺ agreed to the terms, and the old man said, "Then travel (with me), upon the Blessings of Allah."

In a later expedition, the Muslim army won spoils, and Waathilah's share of the spoils consisted of a number of camels. When he ﷺ returned to Al-Madeenah, he went to the old man ﷺ in order to present to him the camels. The old man responded, "Keep your camels, my nephew, for it is not that share of yours that I wanted." Or in other words, "When I said that I will take your share, I meant that I wanted to share your rewards with you, not worldly rewards, but the rewards of the Hereafter." This story illustrates the strong faith of two believers, one who initially gave up his share of any future spoils so that he could have the reward of fighting alongside the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and the other who sacrificed whatever little comfort he was going to enjoy on the long journey to Tabook by sharing his food and riding animal with Waathilah ﷺ, so that he could increase his rewards for the Hereafter. Such was the mind-set of the Prophet's Companions ﷺ, a mind-set that is strange to most people of our era; for their standards of prosperity were rewards of the Hereafter, whereas our standards of prosperity or at least the standards of most of us are worldly rewards.

In another example, the people of the Al-Ash'aree clan sent Abu Moosa Al-Ash'aree ﷺ to the Prophet ﷺ in order to ask him for riding animals, so that they could take part in the expedition. For a short while, the Prophet ﷺ could find nothing on which to carry them, but then he ﷺ was able to procure three camels for them.^[1]

^[1] Refer to *Al-Mujtama' Al-Madane* (pg. 236) and to *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, chapter, "The Saying of Allah: 'Allah Created You and that Which You Do.'"

The Tabook expedition was completely unlike previous expeditions, which involved either sending only a group of Muslims or going to a relatively nearby place; the Tabook expedition, on the other hand, required all Muslims to go, and it involved a long and arduous journey across the desert, a journey that involved traversing more than 700 miles of the desert in conditions of sweltering heat. The weak, the sick, and the poor were literally devastated upon realizing that they could not join the Muslim army for the expedition so devastated that they were moved to tears, a fact that is clearly confirmed in the Noble Qur'an:

﴿لَيْسَ عَلَى الضَّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا
يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ وَاللَّهُ
عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٩١﴾ وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَا أَجِدُ مَا
أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوْا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ
﴿٩٢﴾﴾

“There is no blame on those who are weak or ill or who find no resources to spend [in holy fighting (Jihaad)], if they are sincere and true (in duty) to Allah and His Messenger. No ground (of complaint) can there be against the Muhsinoon (good-doers). And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Nor (is there blame) on those who came to you to be provided with mounts, and when you said: “I can find no mounts for you,” they turned back, while their eyes overflowing with tears of grief that they could not find anything to spend (for Jihaad).” (Qur’an 9: 91, 92)

Some of the people who couldn't go were too sick; others were too old; and yet others did not have the means; but what was common among them all was the sincere desire to perform *Jihaad* and a strong feeling of sadness for not being able to do so. If they did not physically join their fellow Muslims in the expedition to Tabook, their hearts were with them throughout. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ referred to them when he ﷺ said, “Verily, as for a group of people in Al-Madeenah, you have not travelled along a

path or crossed through a valley except that they were with you." The Companions ﷺ asked, "And yet they are in Al-Madeenah?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Yes, they are in Al-Madeenah. Valid excuses prevented them from coming."^[1]

The Hypocrites

The Prophet ﷺ announced that the Muslims should prepare to leave for the Tabook expedition and that they should make contributions for it. His Companions ﷺ responded enthusiastically, giving what they could and taking whatever personal steps they needed to take in order to prepare for the long and arduous journey that awaited them. The entire city of Al-Madeenah was astir, with people moving about and preparing to depart. Some people, however, were inactive, having no intentions of leaving the comfort of their homes; these people were the hypocrites, and if they were active in any sense, it was in the sense of dampening the spirits of Muslims and discouraging them from going out with the Prophet ﷺ towards Tabook. "Do not march forth in the heat," they said to the Muslims. And Allah ﷻ then revealed this Verse about them:

﴿فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خِلَافَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَكَرِهُوا أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا فِي الْحَرِّ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا لَوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلًا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾﴾

"Those who stayed away (from the Tabook expedition) rejoiced in their staying behind the Messenger of Allah; they hated to strive and fight with their properties and their lives in the Cause of Allah, and they said: "March not forth in the heat." Say: "The Fire of Hell is more intense in heat," if only they could understand! So let them laugh a little and (they will) cry much as a recompense of what they used to earn (by committing sins)."
(Qur'an 9: 82)

^[1] Saheeh Bukhaaree, the Book of Al-Maghaazee, Hadeeth number: 4423.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ met one of the hypocrites, Jadd ibn Qais, and asked him whether he was prepared to fight the Romans? Jadd answered, "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, do you give me permission to stay behind and, in doing so, avoid putting me to trial? For by Allah, my people know that there is no man who is more enthralled by women than I am. And I fear that, if I see the women of Banu Al-Asfar (i.e., of the Romans), I will not be able to control myself (but will instead perpetrate lewd acts with them)." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ turned away from him and said, "You have my permission." The following Verse was then revealed about Jadd ibn Qais:

﴿وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَقُولُ أَسْأَلُكَ لِئَلَّا فِي الْفِتْنَةِ سَقَطُوا
وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ﴾ (٤٩)

"And among them is he who says: "Grant me leave (to be exempted from Jihaad) and put me not into trial." Surely, they have fallen in trial. And verily, Hell is surrounding the disbelievers." (Qur'an 9: 49)

Some hypocrites did not even bother to come up with plausible reasons for not being able to go; instead, they went to the Prophet ﷺ with completely fabricated excuses, yet still hoping that the Prophet ﷺ would give them permission to stay behind. And he ﷺ did give them permission to stay behind, as a result of which Allah ﷻ reproached him, saying:

﴿عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذِنْتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ
الْكَاذِبِينَ﴾ (٤٣)

"May Allah forgive you (O Muhammad ﷺ). Why did you grant them leave (for remaining behind, you should have persisted as regards your order to them to proceed on Jihaad), until those who told the truth were seen by you in a clear light, and you had known the liars?" (Qur'an 9: 43)

And of course, one of the hypocrites who remained behind was

the leader of the hypocrite faction in Al-Madeenah, 'Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salool.

It is true that the Prophet ﷺ was not willing to kill the hypocrites; the reader will recall that the suggestion was made to him in the past, but that he refused to kill them on the grounds that he ﷺ didn't want people to say, "Muhammad kills his Companions." That, however, in no way meant that hypocrites were allowed to act with impunity; to the contrary, Muslims kept a close eye on them to make sure that they didn't undermine the safety and security of Al-Madeenah's inhabitants. So prior to the Tabook expedition, when the hypocrites gathered in the house of the Jew Suwailim and invited people to visit them there in order to dissuade them from going to Tabook, Muslims quickly found out about their activities and sent word to the Prophet ﷺ.

The Prophet ﷺ did not take their treason lightly, but instead sent someone to burn down Suwailim's house.^[1] This of course was a decisive step that was intended as a stern message to the hypocrites: Their nefarious activities and attempts to deter people from accompanying the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to Tabook would not be tolerated. The Prophet ﷺ acted wisely, for had he ﷺ allowed them to continue to sow dissension among the ranks of the Muslims, there is no telling what harm they could have caused.

Verses of the Noble Qur'an discuss the attitude of the hypocrites before, during, and after the Tabook expedition. In regard to prior to the expedition, one particular Verse discusses how they stayed behind and sheds light on their way of thinking. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَسَفَرًا قَاصِدًا لَاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَكِنْ بَعَدَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السُّعْيَةُ
وَسَيَّحِلُّونَ بِاللَّهِ لَوْ اسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا مَعَكُمْ يُهْلِكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾﴾

"Had it been a near gain (booty in front of them) and an easy

^[1] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah Fee Dau Al-Masaadir Al-Asliyyah* (pg. 618).

journey, they would have followed you, but the distance (Tabook expedition) was long for them, and they would swear by Allah, "If we only could, we would certainly have come forth with you." They destroy their ownelves, and Allah knows that they are liars." (Qur'an 9: 42)

We learn from this Verse that the hypocrites stayed behind because of the difficult nature of the journey; for had the journey been easy and had the gaining of war booty been almost guaranteed, they certainly would have went with the Prophet ﷺ. So it is if Allah ﷻ was saying to the Prophet ﷺ in this Verse: O Muhammad ﷺ, had you invited them to partake in some worldly gain, and had the journey been an easy one, they would have followed you; but being that was not the case, they stayed behind. This Verse, therefore, exposed their way of thinking and refuted the false excuses they had offered to the Prophet ﷺ.

The aforementioned Verse was revealed before the Prophet ﷺ returned from the Tabook expedition; nonetheless, in it, Allah ﷻ informed Muslims about what the hypocrites would say after the Prophet ﷺ returned with his army to Al-Madeenah: "And they would swear by Allah, 'If we only could, we would certainly have come forth with you.' They destroy their ownelves, and Allah knows that they are liars." Or in other words: The hypocrites will falsely swear by Allah, saying, 'O believers, had we been able to come out to perform *Jihaad* with you at Tabook, we would have done so; and the only reason we stayed behind was that we were forced to do so: certain extenuating circumstances prevented us from leaving our homes.' But little did they appreciate the facts that they were destroying their own selves and that Allah knew that they were liars. And "destroy themselves" in the above-mentioned Verse means that they were harming themselves in this world and setting themselves up for a severe punishment in the Hereafter. Incidentally, Ibn 'Aashoor pointed out that this Verse indicates that one heads down the path of destruction when one intentionally makes a false oath.^[1]

^[1] Refer to *Tafseer At-Tanweer Wat-Tahreer* (10/209).

In the very next Verse, Allah ﷻ reproached the Prophet ﷺ, saying:

﴿عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذِنْتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَّبِعَنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ
الْكَذِبِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾﴾

“May Allah forgive you (O Muhammad ﷺ). Why did you grant them leave (for remaining behind, you should have persisted as regards your order to them to proceed on Jihaad), until those who told the truth were seen by you in a clear light, and you had known the liars?” (Qur’an 9: 43)

Mujaahid^[1] said, “This Verse was revealed about a people who said (unto one another), ‘Ask the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for permission (to stay behind), and if he grants you permission, sit where you are (and don’t go). And if he doesn’t grant you permission, then sit where you are (and don’t go).’ These people were one of the groups of hypocrites, and among them was ‘Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salool, Al-Jadd ibn Qais, and Rifaa’ah ibn At-Taaboot; and in all, there was a total of thirty-nine of them. And they all offered false excuses.”^[2]

Allah ﷻ reproached the Prophet ﷺ, explaining that he should have abstained from giving permission, but should have instead waited till things became clearer, so that he could see who among them had offered a valid excuse, and who among them were liars.^[3] In the following two Verses, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿لَا يَسْتَعِذْنَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أَن يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّمَا يَسْتَعِذْنَكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَرْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ﴾

“Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day would not ask your leave to be exempted from fighting with their properties and their lives, and Allah is the All-Knower of Al-Muttaqoon (the pious).

^[1] Refer to *Tafseer Ibn Katheer* (2/360).

^[2] Refer to *At-Tahreer Wat-Tanweer* (10/210).

^[3] Refer to *Hadeeth Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem*.

It is only those who believe not in Allah and the Last Day and whose hearts are in doubt that ask your leave (to be exempted from Jihaad). So in their doubts they waver." (Qur'an 9: 44, 45)

These are the earliest Verses that, in regard to fighting, distinguished between believers and hypocrites.^[1] In them, Allah ﷻ made it clear that true believers, those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, do not ask permission to abstain from performing *Jihaad* without having a valid excuse; instead, that is the way of the hypocrites, a people whom Allah ﷻ described as having 'hearts (that) are in doubt' in doubt about the truthfulness of the Prophet's message; and as being people that waver in their doubts, putting one step forward, and the next backward, never remaining firm upon anything.^[2]

From its earliest stages of preparation, the Tabook expedition served as a sieve to separate the coarser and more hideous characteristics of the hypocrites from the finer and more wonderful qualities of the believers; so that after the Battle of Tabook, the hypocrites could no longer conceal themselves or mingle unnoticed among the Muslims. Furthermore, the Tabook expedition signaled an important reality in regard to the hypocrites: no longer were they to be appeased with kind treatment. They had attempted to stop Muslims from fulfilling their duty and going out with the Prophet ﷺ to Tabook. From Tabook onwards, any such action on their part, or any other action to undermine the safety and security of Muslims, was going to be dealt with in a stern and harsh manner. The hypocrites understood this reality, and thereafter lived in fear, having very little impact on the goings on of Muslim society in Al-Madeenah. They were thus reduced to a state of insignificance; hypocrites they could remain, but an influence on others they could no longer wield.^[3]

^[1] Refer to *Tafseer Al-Maraaghee* (4/127).

^[2] Refer to *Tafseer Ibn Katheer* (2/361).

^[3] Refer to *Nadratur-Na'eem* (1/389).

The Announcement To Depart Is Made

As the time drew near for the expedition, it was announced that individual soldiers should prepare for departure. A total of thirty-thousand soldiers an unprecedented number for the Muslim army answered the call to arms. As for those who hesitated or who were slow to respond, Allah ﷻ reproached them in this Verse:

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ أَنْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
أَتَأْقَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ فَمَا مَتَّعُ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ﴿٣٨﴾﴾

“O you who believe! What is the matter with you, that when you are asked to march forth in the Cause of Allah (i.e., Jihaad) you cling heavily to the earth? Are you pleased with the life of this world rather than the Hereafter? But little is the enjoyment of the life of this world as compared with the Hereafter.” (Qur’an 9: 38)

In another Verse, Allah ﷻ stated that all Muslim men be they young or old, rich or poor were required to take part in the expedition:

﴿أَنْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ
خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾﴾

“March fort, whether you are light (being healthy, young, and wealthy) or heavy (being ill, old, and poor), strive hard with your wealth and your lives in the Cause of Allah. This is better for you, if you but knew.” (Qur’an 9: 41)

The thirty-thousand man army consisted of men from the *Muhaajiroon*, the *Ansaar*, other Arab tribes, and the inhabitants of Makkah.

As should be clear to the reader by now, it was customary for the Prophet ﷺ to conceal the identity of the tribe or people he ﷺ intended to invade; after all, it was obviously better to catch the

enemy by surprise than to fight an army that was prepared and waiting for battle. The Tabook expedition was unique, in the sense that the Prophet ﷺ openly announced where he was headed and which people he intended to invade the Romans [and Christian Arabs in the region of Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions)]. Some scholars inferred from this that a Muslim leader may make known the intended destination of his army if doing so is in the best interests of his people.

In no way was the Prophet's decision to announce his intended destination random or arbitrary in nature; to the contrary, various reasons, most of them tactical in nature, prompted him to reveal the intended destination of his army; and here are some of those reasons:

- 1) The Prophet's intended destination was very distant from Al-Madeenah; his army would be required to traverse vast stretches of the desert before reaching the enemy stretches of the desert that contained very little water and vegetation. This meant that the Prophet ﷺ had to make sure that his soldiers took with them enough supplies and provisions for the journey, which in turn meant that he would have to make them aware of what they were getting themselves into. Or in other words: The more they knew, the better they could prepare for what lay ahead of them.
- 2) The Muslims were going to face an army unlike any army of the Arabian Peninsula. The Romans had many soldiers, who were well-equipped, and who were knowledgeable, skilled, and experienced when it came to the art of war. The Prophet ﷺ, therefore, could not ask one-hundred or two-hundred men to volunteer for the mission; no, he ﷺ needed to ask as many people as possible to go along with him, a requirement that made it all the more difficult, or undesirable, to keep the purpose of the expedition a secret from his Companions ﷺ.
- 3) It was during a season of sweltering heat that the Muslims left for Tabook. The heat and economic circumstances made it

necessary for Muslims to know what lay ahead of them, so that they could take the necessary steps to adequately provide for their families during the period of their absence.

- 4) The need for secrecy was not as pressing as it was in the past. For in the past, the Prophet ﷺ feared being attacked by neighbouring tribes that were enemies of Islam. Around the time of the Tabook expedition, there was no force large enough in Arabia to pose a threat to the Muslim army or to the Muslims left behind in Al-Madeenah; therefore, maintaining secrecy was not something that was going to serve any important purpose. It was only the Romans and the Christian Arabs of Tabook, Daumatul-Jandal, and Al-'Aqabah^[1] that posed a serious threat, and they were the very people towards whom the Muslim army was marching.
- 5) By knowing about their intended destination, the Muslims could understand the serious and grand nature of the undertaking, an undertaking that required a great deal of financial support. With that knowledge, they gave more than they would have given had they not known what the expedition was about, for they probably would have then thought that the Muslim army was attacking only a small tribe and would not require much in terms of financial support. As a result of knowing about their enemy and intended destination, many Muslims such as Abu Bakr ؓ, 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn 'Auf ؓ, 'Umar ؓ, and 'Uthmaan ؓ donated huge sums of wealth to the army. And the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whosoever equips the Army of Distress will have Paradise."^[2]

Although the Prophet ﷺ was focused on the mission that lay ahead of him, he ﷺ did not forget about Al-Madeenah, but instead made sure that things would run smoothly during his absence. He ﷺ appointed Muhammad ibn Maslamah Al-

^[1] Refer to *Ghazwah Tabook* by Muhammad Ahmad Baashmeel (pg. 57).

^[2] *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, the Book of Virtues, chapter, "The Virtues of 'Uthmaan ؓ"; *Hadeeth* number: 3695.

Ansaaree ؓ as governor of Al-Madeenah during his absence, and 'Alee ibn Abee Taalib ؓ as guardian of his family. The hypocrites said about 'Alee ؓ, "Muhammad ﷺ left him behind because he considered him to be a burden and wanted to be free of him so that he could travel lightly." 'Alee ؓ took his weapons and went out to catch up with the Muslim army. By the time he caught up to the army, the Prophet ﷺ had made camp at Al-Jurf.^[1] 'Alee ؓ said, "O Prophet of Allah, the hypocrites claimed that you left me behind because you thought of me as a burden and wanted to be free of me so that you could travel lightly." With these words, 'Alee ؓ was pleading with the Prophet ﷺ to allow him to partake in the expedition. The Prophet ﷺ said, "They have lied, but instead I have appointed you as my successor for those whom I have left behind. So return and be my successor over my family and your family. Are you not pleased to be to me what Haaron was to Moosa, except that there is no Prophet after me?"^[2] These words of course had a soothing affect on 'Alee ؓ, who obeyed the Prophet ﷺ and returned to Al-Madeenah.^[3]

Some people make a grave mistake when they say that, by appointing 'Alee ؓ to be his successor, the Prophet ﷺ was alluding to 'Alee ؓ becoming his successor, the *Khaleefah*, after his death. This is a completely false interpretation, for the very evident reason that the Prophet ﷺ appointed 'Alee ؓ to a specific task: to look after his family; whereas he appointed Muhammad ibn Maslamah Al-Ansaaree ؓ to a more general task: to be in charge of all of the Muslims of Al-Madeenah during his absence. So, if anything, the Prophet ﷺ was indicating that he wanted Muhammad ibn Maslamah ؓ to become *Khaleefah* after his death, but even that was not the case and was very far from the truth. Whenever the Prophet ﷺ left Al-Madeenah, he ﷺ appointed

[1] Refer to *Zaad Al-Ma'aad* (3/529).

[2] Refer to *Saheeh As-Seerah An-Nabawiyyah* (pg. 589); to *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, the Book of *Al-Maghaazee* (pg. 4416); and to *Saheeh Muslim*, the Virtues of the Companions, chapter, "From the Virtues of 'Alee ؓ."

[3] Refer to *Zaad Al-Ma'aad* (3/530).

someone to be in charge during his absence; this cannot mean that all of his appointed governors were being earmarked for the position of *Khaleefah*, and to make such an argument indicates one's weak understanding of the religion.

When the Muslim army reached *Thunayyatul-Widaa'*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ appointed the various leaders and commanders of his army; he ﷺ further handed out flags and banners to those leaders. The Al-'Adham flag was given to Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq ؓ, and the Al-'Udhma banner was given to Az-Zubair ibn Al-'Awwaam ؓ.

The Prophet ﷺ handed the banner of the Aus tribe to Usaid bin Hudair ؓ and the banner of the Khazraj tribe to Abu Dujaanah ؓ; also, he ﷺ ordered each subtribe of the *Ansaar* to take a banner.^[1] The Messenger of Allah's guide during the journey to Tabook was 'Ilqimah ibn Al-Faghwaa Al-Khuzaa'ee ؓ, a more than competent guide who was well acquainted with the road that led from Al-Madeenah to Tabook.^[2]

Once the Muslims reached their destination, the Prophet ﷺ appointed 'Abbaad ibn Bishr ؓ to be in charge of guarding Tabook, a duty for which 'Abbaad ؓ was responsible from the day the Muslim army arrived at Tabook until the day they left for the return journey. 'Abbaad ؓ and the men under his command would walk throughout the Muslim encampment, but particularly around its perimeter, to make sure that the encampment remained secure.^[3]

As for the narrations that impart information about the journey of the army and the distribution of the flags, Al-Waaqidee was the only historian who related them. And although *Hadeeth* scholars judge him to be a weak narrator, his copious knowledge of *Seerah*

^[1] Refer to *Al-Maghaazee* (3/996) and to *At-Tabaqaat Al-Kubraa* by Ibn Sa'd (2/166).

^[2] Refer to *Imtaa' Al-Asmaa'* (1/451) and to *Sharh Al-Mawaahib Al-Ladaniyyah* (3/72).

^[3] Refer to *Subul Al-Hadyee War-Rashaad* (5/652) and to *As-Siraa' Ma'as Salbiyyoon* (pg. 99).

makes up for his weakness as a narrator, so that taking such narrations from him narrations that have to do with history and not with Islamic law is not a bad or harmful thing.^[1]

Incidentally, the reader would do well to notice how the size of the Muslim army had consistently been increasing over the past few years, a healthy sign for the continually growing nation of Islam, a nation that, by the time of Tabook, could no longer be described as a fledgling one. The keen reader will have noticed how, during each major war, the Muslim army was larger than during the previous war. So, for example, the Muslim army, at the time of Badr, consisted of three-hundred and thirteen soldiers, whereas only a short while later, during the Battle of Uhud, the Muslim army consisted of approximately seven-hundred soldiers. Then in the Battle of Al-Ahzaab, the Muslim army consisted of three-thousand fighters, more than four times the number that participated in the Battle of Uhud. And only a few years later, ten-thousand Muslims were a part of the army that conquered Makkah. With an additional two-thousand fighters from Makkah, the Muslim army marched towards Hunain with twelve-thousand soldiers. And then finally during the Tabook expedition, the Muslim army consisted of at least thirty-thousand soldiers.

The number of horsemen also increased as time went by. First at Badr and then at Uhud, the Muslim army was accompanied by only two horsemen. Only a short six years later, ten-thousand horsemen accompanied the Muslim army as it marched towards Tabook. This sudden jump in the number of horsemen can be attributed to the spread of Islam throughout the Arabian Peninsula in general, and the desert lands of the Peninsula in particular, for the nomadic tribes of the desert sought out the acquirement of horses more aggressively and trained them more vigorously than did dwellers of cities.^[2]

^[1] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyyah As-Saheehah* (2/532).

^[2] Refer to *As-Siraa' Ma'as Salbiyyoon* (pg. 100).

2

What Took Place During The Journey; And Finally Arriving At Tabook

Once commanders of battalions were appointed and flags were handed out, the Muslim army, headed by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, continued its march towards Tabook. Because of the large size of the army, because of the distance that had to be traversed, and because of the sweltering heat and difficult circumstances, it was neither practical nor feasible for the Prophet ﷺ to wait for those who lagged behind, those who were too slow to keep up with everyone else. As a result, certain individual Muslims lagged behind some of them far behind the rear of the army. It could have crossed the minds of some Muslims that those individual were lagging behind on purpose, but instead they thought the best of their Muslims brothers. And every time one of their names was mentioned to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he ﷺ said, "Leave him (i.e., stop discussing him). If there is good in him, Allah will make him catch up to you; and if he is otherwise, then Allah has spared you his trouble."^[1]

The Story Of Abu Dharr Al-Ghafaaree ﷺ

One of the people who lagged behind was Abu Dharr Al-Ghafaaree ؓ. He did not want to lag behind; in fact, he ardently

^[1] Refer to *Al-Iktifaa Bema Tadammanahu Min Maghaazee Rasoolullah ﷺ Wath-Thalaathah Al-Khulafah* by Al-Kilaa'ee (2/276); to *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* by Ibn Katheer, chapter, "Abdullah ibn Ubai and People Suspected of Hypocrisy Stay Behind in the Year of Tabook."

desired to march alongside the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. But his camel was weak and too slow even to keep up with those in the rear of the army. As time went on, Abu Dharr ؓ fell further and further behind, until members of the Muslim army could no longer see even his shadow in the distance. He was left all alone, and was left with very few viable options: he could head back to Al-Madeenah; he could continue riding onwards, but at the pace his camel was riding, the invasion of Tabook would probably be over before he even arrived there; or and this was the most difficult and least viable of the three options he could leave his camel behind, carry his things on his back, and walk on foot until he caught up with the rest of the army. Yet as impracticable as that seemed, it was this last option that Abu Dharr ؓ decided to choose.

Meanwhile, the rest of the army marched onwards. And when someone noticed that Abu Dharr ؓ was missing and mentioned his name, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Leave him (i.e., stop discussing him). If there is good in him, Allah will make him catch up to you; and if he is otherwise, then Allah has spared you his trouble." Later on, after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the rest of the Muslim army had stopped to make camp, someone looked out and saw a faint speck in the distance a faint speck that grew slowly, until it could unmistakably be recognized as a man walking all alone in the desert. The Muslim who saw the man approaching on foot said, "O Messenger of Allah, here is a man who is walking all by himself on the road." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Be Abu Dharr!"

When the figure approached and his features could be discerned, some people said, "By Allah, O Messenger of Allah, he is indeed Abu Dharr." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "May Allah have mercy on Abu Dharr: he walks alone, he will die alone, and he will be resurrected alone."^[1]

This supplication contained in it a prophecy that came true years

^[1] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyyah* by Ibn Hishaam (4/178); to *Kanzul-'Ummaal* by Al-Muttaqee Al-Hindee; and to *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* by Ibn Katheer.

later, during the caliphate of 'Uthmaan ibn 'Affaan ؓ. By the time 'Uthmaan ؓ became *Khaleefah* of the Muslim nation, Muslims enjoyed riches and prosperity to a greater extent than ever before. Wealth became abundant and multitudes of people from foreign nations entered into the fold of Islam. The story is long to tell, but it is sufficient here to simply mention that Abu Dharr ؓ yearned for the past for simpler times, when Muslims led simpler lives and spent more time making sacrifices for the cause of Islam. In short, he ؓ became disillusioned by some of the forms of materialism he saw around him, especially in recently conquered lands.

Longing for the simple life, Abu Dharr ؓ took his family with him and settled down at a place called Ar-Rabdhah, a barren spot in the desert. There he led a harsh and rustic lifestyle and dedicated his last days to the worship of Allah ﷻ. When Abu Dharr ؓ fell gravely ill and was lying on his deathbed, he ؓ gave the following instructions to his wife and servant, "When I die, wash me, enshroud me, and then carry me until you reach the side of the road, which is where you should lay me down. Then, when the first travelling party passes by, say to them, 'This is Abu Dharr.'" When Abu Dharr ؓ died, his wife and servant followed his instructions to the letter. And when the first travelling party passed by, its members did not see Abu Dharr's dead body on the side of the road until they almost ran him over with their riding animals.

The travelling party consisted of a group of people from Kufah, and among them was the eminent Companion 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ؓ. "What is this?" 'Abdullah ؓ asked, when the travelling party suddenly stopped and found the two mourners with the corpse of Abu Dharr ؓ.

"It is the funeral of Abu Dharr," someone in the group responded. When 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ؓ heard this reply, he began to cry, and he ؓ said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ spoke the truth: 'May Allah have mercy on Abu Dharr he walks alone, he will die alone, and he will be resurrected alone.'" 'Abdullah ؓ then descended from his mount and personally participated in and supervised the burial of Abu Dharr Al-Ghafaaree ؓ.

This story highlights:

1. The sincerity of Abu Dharr ؓ, who was willing to travel on foot in the sweltering heat just so that he could participate in *Jihaad* alongside the Messenger of Allah ﷺ;
2. The truthfulness of the Prophet ﷺ, who, in a miracle that Allah ﷻ blessed him with, foretold the manner in which Abu Dharr ؓ was going to die.
3. The knowledge and powerful memory of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ؓ, who, after so many years, still remembered the exact words of regarding the death of Abu Dharr ؓ.

The Story Of Abu Khaithamah ؓ

On a scorching hot day, Abu Khaithamah ؓ returned to his garden and found that both of his wives were waiting for him. Each wife was in a shaded structure, and each wife had cooled water and prepared a meal for him. Standing at the door of his garden, Abu Khaithamah ؓ looked in wonder at what his two wives had done for him, but at the same time, he began to think about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who had already left (perhaps a few days earlier) for Tabook. Having given the matter a great deal of thought, Abu Khaithamah ؓ exclaimed, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is in the sun, the wind, and the heat (of this harsh season), while Abu Khaithamah sits in a cold shade, enjoys prepared food and the company of beautiful women, and remains a resident alongside his wealth. This is not justice!" Still standing at the door of his garden, he ؓ said to his wives, "By Allah, I will not enter either of your shades until I catch up to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so prepare my provisions for me."

His wives did as they were told, and additionally, his camel was brought to him. And without anyone to help or accompany him, Abu Khaithamah ؓ set out for the long and arduous journey to Tabook; but then Allah ﷻ blessed him with a Companion, 'Umair ibn Wahb Al-Jumhee ؓ. Unlike Abu Khaithamah ؓ, 'Umair ؓ did not initially lag behind; as soon as he found out about the

expedition, he ﷺ made preparations and then went out in search for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; perhaps, some scholars say, he was coming from Makkah. At any rate, while 'Umair ﷺ was searching the desert for any signs of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and Abu Khaithamah ﷺ was trying to catch up with the Muslim army, the two men met, and decided to accompany one another for the rest of the journey. By the time they caught up with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he ﷺ had already made camp at Tabook.

Before approaching the Muslim encampment, Abu Khaithamah ﷺ had a few words to say to 'Umair ﷺ. On the one hand, he did not want to openly say to 'Umair ﷺ that he had initially stayed behind in Al-Madeenah, but on the other hand, he did not want 'Umair ﷺ to share in his blame by reason of association; and so he ﷺ simply said to 'Umair ﷺ, "Verily, I have perpetrated a sin, so I will not hold it against you if stay behind me and allow me to go (first and alone) to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ."

'Umair ﷺ did as he was advised to do, and Abu Khaithamah ﷺ proceeded alone, until the people in the Muslim encampment began to call out to one another: "Here is a rider approaching on the road." The Prophet's immediate reaction was to say, "Be Abu Khaithamah!" And the people responded, "By Allah, O Messenger of Allah, he is indeed Abu Khaithamah." Upon entering the encampment, Abu Khaithamah ﷺ descended from his riding animal and went directly to the Prophet ﷺ and extended greetings of peace to him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to him, "You had come close to destroying your own self, O Abu Khaithamah." Abu Khaithamah ﷺ then told the Prophet ﷺ his story, and the Prophet ﷺ responded by saying kind words to him and supplicating for him.^[1]

A Few of the Lessons and Morals of this Story

1) The Conscience of a Muslim

Like everyone else, a true believer falls into error; but unlike everyone else, he slips only temporarily, and then springs back up

^[1] Refer to *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* (5/8).

onto his feet, becoming stronger than he was prior to falling into error. Allah ﷻ explained this reality in the following Verse:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَٰئِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ﴾ (٢٠١)

“Verily, those who are Al-Muttaqoon (the pious), when an evil thought comes to them from Shaitaan (Satan), they remember (Allah), and (indeed) they then see (aright).” (Qur’an 7: 201)

And Abu Khaithamah ؓ exemplified the same reality when, after having first fallen into error, he rebounded with stronger faith than he had before. He ؓ fell into error when he stayed behind in Al-Madeenah, even though he had the strength and resources he needed to make the journey to Tabook; or in others, he stayed behind without having a valid excuse to do so. But then, as is described in the above-mentioned Verse, he saw aright again, picturing in his mind the hardships the Prophet ﷺ was enduring while he was at home with his two wives and with his meals prepared for him. A lesser man would have repented and let matters stand there, but Abu Khaithamah ؓ could not do the same; instead, he ؓ had to go out into the desert and catch up with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, even if that meant traversing more than seven-hundred miles of the desert all by himself. Exemplifying the characteristics of the true believer, Abu Khaithamah ؓ first fell into error and then was quick to see aright again, after which he ؓ repented and promptly made up for his mistake.

2) The Prophet’s Knowledge of His Companions ؓ

The Prophet ﷺ mixed with everyone from his Companions ؓ, travelled with them, spoke to them and, consequently, knew them very well. Thus he ﷺ knew their qualities and their shortcomings; he ﷺ knew who among them was a person of character, and who among them was not. The Prophet ﷺ showed his profound knowledge of his Companions ؓ, when, of all the people who stayed behind in Al-Madeenah, he ﷺ intuitively knew that it was

none other than Abu Khaithamah ؓ who was approaching and who was making up for his initial mistake. And the same happened earlier, when the Prophet ﷺ knew that Abu Dharr Al-Ghafaaree ؓ was showing his worth by catching up to the Muslim army on foot.

3) The Effectiveness of a Leader's Reproach

Abu Khaithamah ؓ went repentantly to the Prophet ﷺ and extended greetings of peace to him. Yet in spite of Abu Khaithamah's sincerely contrite feelings, the Prophet ﷺ knew that he had to reproach him in a merciful way, in order to let him know how serious his mistake would have been had he not done something to make amends for it. And so the Prophet ﷺ said to him, "O Abu Khaithamah, you had come close to destroying your own self!" These words had to be said, and they were followed by kind words and supplication from the Prophet ﷺ. It is thus that the Prophet ﷺ taught us that a leader should not remain silent when his subordinates make mistakes. Silence hurts them and others; rather, a leader should strive to correct any mistake he sees, all the while showing an appropriate degree of mercy and compassion.

Arriving At Tabook

When the Prophet ﷺ arrived at Tabook, he ﷺ found not even a trace of the large armies of Rome and of loyal Arab Christian tribes. The Prophet ﷺ certainly gave them ample time to bring their forces to Tabook, for he ﷺ made camp there for twenty nights; but even had he ﷺ stayed longer, they still would not have come. For the Romans were forced to show that they had no desire to enter into battle against the Muslims; and even Arab Christian tribes preferred to lay low while the Prophet ﷺ was at Tabook.

As for the rulers of cities that were scattered all along the borders of Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions), they decided to surrender peacefully, to sign peace treaties, and to promise to pay

the Muslims a mandatory head tax the *Jizyah*; for example, the king of Ailah sent gifts to the Prophet ﷺ a white mule and a robe and agreed to pay the *Jizyah* tax.

Ukaidir, the king of Daumatul-Jandal, also signed a treaty with the Muslims and agreed to pay the *Jizyah* tax. But his case was different in that he did not voluntarily go to the Muslims; instead, he made up his mind to make peace with them after he was captured by them. The Prophet ﷺ had sent out a unit of four-hundred and twenty horsemen to Daumatul-Jandal. Headed by Khaalid ibn Al-Waleed ؓ, the men of the unit managed to capture Ukaidir ibn 'Abdul-Malik Al-Kindee, who was out of the city on a hunting excursion. It was after Ukaidar was taken to the Muslims that he agreed to pay the *Jizyah* tax.

Incidentally, while Ukaidir was in the Muslim encampment, the Muslims became impressed by his elaborate and expensive-looking robe. Seeing their reaction, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Are you impressed by this? For by the One Who has my soul in His Hand, the handkerchiefs of Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh ؓ in Paradise are better than this."^[1]

It is related that, during the attack on Ukaidir, Khaalid ؓ and his men ؓ captured eight-hundred female prisoners, one-thousand camels, four-hundred pieces of armour, and four-hundred spears.^[2]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also signed treaties with the peoples of Jarbaa, Adhrah, and Maqnaa,^[3] who all agreed to pay the *Jizyah* tax. The people of the tribes that agreed to pay the *Jizyah* tax were Christians, and each treaty they signed with the Prophet ﷺ didn't simply mean that they would pay a head tax once a year, but also that they would live under the rule of the Muslim nation. And in

[1] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishaam (4/180); to *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, chapter, "Accepting Gifts from Polytheists"; and to *Saheeh Muslim*, the Virtues of the Companions, chapter, "From the Virtues of Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh ؓ."

[2] Refer to *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* (5/17). It should be duly noted that the chain of this narration is weak in more than one regard.

[3] Refer to *Al-Maghaazee* (3/1032).

signing treaties with all of the small kingdoms that were situated in the northernmost part of the Peninsula, the Prophet ﷺ ensured that the northern border of the Muslim nation became secure. Those kingdoms, which had previously been loyal to the Roman Empire, thereafter served as a bulwark for the Muslim nation. For many years in the past, the people of those kingdoms, even though they had outwardly become Christians, resented and feared their overlords from the Roman Empire. They remained loyal to the Romans only because they feared them and hoped to gain some small scraps of provisions from them for their livelihood. It is because of their relationship with the Romans that most of them went willingly to the Prophet ﷺ in order to sign treaties with him.

By gaining the loyalty of those kingdoms, the Prophet ﷺ was able to establish a strong buffer zone between the Romans and the Muslims of Arabia. And during the era of the rightly-guided Khaleefahs, the very same kingdoms were launching points for the Muslim army during the conquests of Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions).

The Muslims Pass By The Land That Was Once Inhabited By The People Of Thamood

Abu Kabshah Al-Ansaaree ؓ related that, during the Tabook expedition, the Muslims passed by and then raced towards the homes that were formerly inhabited by the people of Thamood. The people of Thamood, it must be remembered, persistently refused to worship Allah ﷻ and were consequently destroyed.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ heard about what the Muslims were doing, he called out to everyone, announcing that the prayer was about to commence. Abu Kabshah ؓ later said, "I went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who was holding on to his camel, all the while saying, 'Why are you entering upon a people upon whom Allah became angry.' One of the men among them called out, 'They amazed us, O Messenger of Allah.' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Shall I not warn you about something that is more amazing than that: A man

among you who informs you about what happened before you and about what will happen after you. So be upright and good, for (otherwise) Allah, the Possessor of might and majesty, will not at all mind you being punished. And there will come a people who will not ward off anything from themselves.”^[1]

According to a narration that was related by Ibn ‘Umar ؓ, the Muslim army stopped at Al-Hijr, the land of Thamood; Muslim soldiers drew water from the well of Al-Hijr and used the water to knead their dough. But then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, having found out about what they had done, ordered them to spill all of the water they drew out and to feed the camels any dough that had been contaminated by that water; and he ﷺ ordered them to instead draw water from the well that was meant for camels.^[2]

And he ﷺ said, “Do not enter the homes of those who had wronged their own selves, unless you go inside crying; such is the precaution you must take in order to avoid being afflicted with what they became afflicted (Allah’s punishment).” The Prophet ﷺ then spurred his riding camel onwards, and continued to make it ride at a very fast pace until the abodes of the people of Thamood were behind him.^[3]

The ancient land and homes of the people of Thamood were not and are not to be taken lightly; the Prophet ﷺ took the matter so seriously that he ﷺ forbade his Companions ؓ from benefiting from even the wells that were used by them. The land of Al-Hijr was a place upon which descended the punishment of Allah ﷻ; so if the Companions ؓ were to remain there at all, they would, the Prophet ﷺ made it clear, have to cry in order to avoid the punishment of Allah ﷻ.

^[1] Refer to *Al-Fathul Rabbaanee* (21/195); to *Musnad Ahmad*, the *Musnad* of the *Ash-Shamiyyoon*, the *Hadeeth* of Abu Kabshah Al-Anmaaree; to *At-Tabaraanee* in his *Mo’jam Al-Kabeer*; and to *Mujma’ Az-Zawaaid* by Al-Haithamee.

^[2] Refer to *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, the *Book of Prophets*, *Hadeeth* number: 3379; and to *Saheeh Muslim*, the *Book of Az-Zuhd* and *Ar-Raqaaiq*, chapter, “Do not Enter the Homes of Those Who Wronged Themselves.”

^[3] Refer to *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, the *Book of Prophets*, *Hadeeth* number: 3381; and to *Saheeh Muslim*, the *Book of Az-Zuhd* and *Ar-Raqaaiq*, chapter, “Do not Enter the Homes of Those Who Wronged Themselves.”

Allah ﷻ informed us about the people of past nations only so that we can take heed and learn from their mistakes. When we pass by the former abodes of those people, the lesson should be more intense, our reflection deeper, and our fear of Allah's punishment greater. It was for this very reason that the Prophet ﷺ hurried his pace and wrapped himself up in his garment when he passed by the abodes upon which descended the anger and wrath of Allah ﷻ.^[1] And it was for the same reason that he ﷺ said to his Companions ﷺ, "Do not enter the homes of those who had wronged their own selves, unless you go inside crying; such is the precaution you must take in order to avoid being afflicted with what they became afflicted (Allah's punishment)."

The Death Of The Companion 'Abdullah (Dhul-Bijaadain) ﷺ

'Abullah ibn Mas'ood ﷺ said, "I woke up in the middle of one particular night while I was with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the Tabook expedition. I saw a flame to one side of the encampment, and so I followed it to see what was there. When I reached it, I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Abu Bakr ﷺ, and 'Umar ﷺ. There too was 'Abdullah Dhul-Bijaadain Al-Muzanee (i.e., his corpse), and he was dead.... The Prophet ﷺ said (to Abu Bakr ﷺ and 'Umar ﷺ), 'Bring closer your brother.' They did so, and when the Prophet ﷺ prepared to place him in the side compartment of his grave, he ﷺ said, 'O Allah, I am this night pleased with him, so be pleased with him as well.'" The narrator of this *Hadeeth* related that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ﷺ then said, "Oh, would that I was the dweller of this grave."^[2]

This story illustrates how the Prophet ﷺ was faithful to his Companions ﷺ, for, while being the leader of the entire Muslim

^[1] Refer to *Suwar Wa-'Ibar Minal-Jihaad An-Nabawee Fil-Madeenah* (pg. 480).

^[2] Refer to *Saheeh As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* (pg. 598); to *Al-Isaabah* by Ibn Hajar, who said, "Bukhaaree related it in its entirety with the same narrators. Although it is true that the men who narrated this *Hadeeth* are all trustworthy, the chain of the narration is disconnected."

nation, he ﷺ was the one who went inside of 'Abdullah Al-Muzanee's grave in order to bury him. To be sure, 'Abdullah Al-Muzanee ؓ died a martyr; he had sacrificed everything, leaving all of his worldly possessions behind him, in order to perform *Jihaad* alongside the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Therefore, by personally burying 'Abdullah Al-Muzanee ؓ and by supplicating for him, the Prophet ﷺ was showing by example how a martyr should be honoured.

We learn two rulings from the story of 'Abdullah Al-Muzanee's death: First, it is permissible, based on the timing of 'Abdullah Al-Muzanee's burial, to bury the dead in the middle of the night; sometimes, doing so might even be recommended, for it is *Sunnah* to bury the dead as quickly as possible. And second, a certain kind of envy is permissible in Islam, and here I am referring to the desire to have something good befall you just as it befell someone else. This is proven by the saying of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ؓ, "O, would that I was the dweller of this grave," for 'Abdullah ibn Masood ؓ said this after he heard the Prophet ﷺ say about 'Abdullah Al-Muzanee, "O Allah, I am indeed pleased with him this night, so be pleased with him as well." This kind of envy is completely different from jealousy, which is pure evil; for jealousy involves wanting someone else to lose a blessing that Allah ﷻ bestowed upon him, and the kind of envy I am referring to here doesn't. In fact, the sentiment that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ؓ expressed is one that is felt by every believer, for what believer would not want to be the recipient of such a wonderful invocation by the Prophet ﷺ.

Incidentally, Ibn Hishaam related the story that explains why 'Abdullah Al-Muzanee ؓ was nicknamed 'Dhul-Bijaadain.' I should first, however, point out that Dhul-Bijaadain literally means the possessor of two Bijaads, and a Bijaad is a coarse garment. When 'Abdullah Al-Muzanee ؓ embraced Islam, his people persecuted him. Wanting to be saved from being tortured at their hands, he ran away and migrated to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Al-Madeenah. When he left them, however, he had

nothing left to wear other than a Bijaad garment, which was not enough to cover his entire body. And so when he drew near to Al-Madeenah, he tore his Bijaad garment in two, wearing one part to cover the lower area of his body and the other to cover the upper part of his body. Thus properly covered, he ﷺ entered Al-Madeenah and went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. It was because of this incident that he ﷺ was thereafter called "The possessor of two Bijaads (Dhul-Bijaadain)."^[1]

Some Of The Miracles That Occurred During The Tabook Expedition

1) Allah ﷻ Sends a Cloud to the Muslims After the Prophet ﷺ Suppliated for Rain

After the Companions ﷺ passed by the former homes of the people of Thamood, they ran out of water. This prompted them to complain about their situation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who invoked Allah ﷻ for rain. Allah ﷻ then sent a cloud to them and it continued to rain until the thirst of every person in the army became quenched; they were even able to fill their canteens and containers with water for the next stage of their journey. This was certainly a miracle for which the believers became thankful; the hypocrites, however, reacted differently. The Muslims went to one particular hypocrite who accompanied the army and said, "Woe upon you! Is there any proof after this that one could want?" "It was only a passing cloud," he retorted. A party among the hypocrites accompanied the Muslim army, and they showed their true colours throughout the expedition, as we will, *In Sha Allah*, discuss in some of the following sections of this work.

2) News of a Missing Camel

At some point during the journey to Tabook, the Prophet's camel strayed, and the Companions ﷺ went out to look for it. While

^[1] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishaam (4/182).

some of the Companions ﷺ were out searching for the camel, the Prophet ﷺ was with a man named 'Umaarah ibn Hazm ﷺ, a man who held the distinctions of having made the Pledge of Al-'Aqabah and of having participated in the Battle of Badr. And while the Prophet ﷺ and 'Umaarah ﷺ were together, a group of men were sitting beside 'Umaarah's riding animal, and seated among those men was Zaid ibn Al-Lusait, who was a hypocrite. Zaid ibn Al-Lusait said to those who were with him, "Does not Muhammad claim he is a Prophet? And does he not inform you about (news from) the heavens? Yet he does not even know where his camel is!"

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the Muslim encampment, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to 'Umaarah ﷺ, "Verily, a man has (just) said, 'Here is Muhammad, informing you that he is a Prophet, and claiming that he informs you about news that pertains to the heavens, yet he does not even know where his camel is.' Verily, by Allah, I only know what Allah teaches me, and He has indeed guided me to it (to the lost camel): It is in this valley, in such and such narrow pass; it was held back because its reins got stuck in (the branches of) a tree, so go to it, and bring it back to me." They went, found it exactly where the Prophet ﷺ told them it would be, and took it back to the Prophet ﷺ.

'Umaarah ﷺ then returned to his part of the campsite, to where he had left his riding animal and belongings. He ﷺ said to the people that were gathered around his things, "By Allah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ just informed us about something that is truly amazing," after which he ﷺ went on to tell the rest of the story. One of the men said, "By Allah, it was Zaid who said that! He said it shortly before you came!" 'Umaarah ﷺ approached Zaid ibn Al-Lusait and began to poke him in the neck, all the while saying, "O servants of Allah, come to me, for there has been, while I did not perceive it, a deceitful person seated in the midst of my things. Leave my campsite, O enemy of Allah! And do not ever again keep company with me."

Ibn Ishaq wrote, "Some people claimed that Zaid repented

afterwards, and some people said, 'He continued to be accused of evildoing until he died.'"^[1] And Allah ﷻ knows best.

3) The Prophet ﷺ Warns His Companions ﷺ about the Coming of a Severe and Violent Wind

While the Prophet ﷺ was at Tabook, he ﷺ informed his Companions ﷺ that a violent wind was on the way, and he ﷺ ordered them to take certain safety precautions: They were to remain as low upon the ground as possible, and they were to tie up all of their animals. And sure enough, the violent windstorm did come, and with such ferocity that it carried objects to far-off places in the air.^[2] Imam Muslim (may Allah have mercy on him) related in his *Saheeh* that Abu Humaid ﷺ said, "We continued travelling until we reached Tabook, and once there, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'Tonight, a violent wind will blow down upon you, so let no one among you stand up; and whosoever among you has a camel, let him tie its reins up.' (And just as the Prophet ﷺ had foretold,) the violent wind blew down upon us. A man (disobeyed the Prophet's command and) stood up, and the wind carried him away until it cast him down beside Mount Taiy."^[3]

4) The Miracle of the Tabook Spring, a Miracle Whose Effects are Felt Until this very Day

Mu'aadh ibn Jabal ﷺ related that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Verily, tomorrow you will, *In Sha Allah* (Allah Willing), reach the water source of Tabook, and you will not reach it until forenoon. Whosoever among you reaches it (first), let him not touch any of its water until I come." Mu'aadh ﷺ said, "When we went to it, we found that two men had beaten us to it. And the spring was like a *Shiraak* (a part of a shoe; what is important is that the expression

^[1] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishaam (4/177).

^[2] Refer to *As-Siraa' Ma'as Salbiyyoon* (pg. 141).

^[3] Refer to *Saheeh Muslim*, with the commentary of Imam An-Nawawee (15/42) and to *Mukhtasir Muslim*, *Hadeeth* number: 1543.

means that there was very little water): (only) some water was flowing from it." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the two men, "Did you touch any of the water?" They said, "Yes." The Prophet ﷺ cursed them and said a number of things to them. Then little by little, the people scooped out water from the spring with their hands and poured it all in one place. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used the water to wash his face and hands, and allowed the used water to drop back into the spring, which suddenly began to flow with an abundance of water, so much water, in fact, that every person in the three-thousand man army quenched his thirst.^[1]

And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to Mu'aadh ibn Jabal ؓ, "O Mu'aadh, the time draws near when and if you live long, you will see it for yourself this place will be filled with gardens."^[2] The area of Tabook and the valley that contained the spring were bleak, desolate places; there was too little water for any vegetation to grow. But upon the hands of His Messenger ﷺ, Allah ﷻ blessed the land by making an abundant quantity of water flow through it. This miracle served not just to help the thirsty army of the Prophet ﷺ, but also to bless people of ensuing generations. The Prophet ﷺ told Mu'aadh ؓ that, after the passing of only a short while, Tabook was going to become a land of verdant gardens, trees, and plentiful crops; and after a short while passed, this prophecy came true. And until this day, Tabook is noted for its superior gardens, vegetation, and crops, all of which attests to the truthfulness of the Prophet ﷺ and of his message.

5) Increasing the Quantity of Food

Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudree ؓ said, "During the Tabook expedition, when the people became afflicted with hunger, they said, 'O Messenger of Allah, if you would give us permission to slaughter our camels, we would eat and take oil from the fat (of the

^[1] Refer to *Saheeh Muslim*, with the commentary of Imam An-Nawawee (15/41) and to *Mukhtasar Muslim*, Hadeeth number: 1530.

^[2] Refer to *Saheeh Muslim*, with the commentary of Imam An-Nawawee (15/41) and to *Al-Fathul-Rabbaanee* (21/196).

camels).” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Then do so,” but ‘Umar ؓ came and said, “O Messenger of Allah, if they do that, we will have a shortage of riding animals. So instead, ask them to bring their extra provisions, and then invoke Allah to bless them...”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked for a leather mat; one was handed to him, and he spread it out onto the ground. He ﷺ then asked the people to bring their extra provisions. One man came with a handful of corn; another came also with a handful of corn; and yet another brought a piece of bread, until a small quantity of food had been gathered onto the mat. Next, the Prophet ﷺ asked his Companions ؓ to bring their containers and to fill them up with the food on the mat. Miraculously, the food increased, so that the Muslims were able to fill every single container in the encampment; other than the food that was stored in the containers, every single soldier ate to his fill; and still, there was some food left over. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that I am indeed the Messenger of Allah; any servant (of Allah) that meets Allah with these two (testimonies of faith) without feeling doubtful (about them), will not be kept apart from Paradise.”^[1]

What The Noble Qur’an Says About The Activities And Attitude Of The Hypocrites During The Tabook Expedition

1) The Hypocrites Mock Pious Muslims

One day during the Tabook expedition, a man said in a gathering, “In my view, our reciters (i.e., those who recite the Qur’an) are the most desirous among us for food, the biggest liars, and the most cowardly when it comes time to fight.” Another man in the gathering said, “You have lied; you are a hypocrite, and I will

^[1] *Saheeh Muslim*, the Book of Faith, *Hadeeth* number: 27.

indeed inform the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (about what you said).” When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ heard about what the first man had said, Verses of the Qur’an were revealed.

‘Abdullah ؓ said “I saw him (i.e., the man who said the above-mentioned lies) clinging to a rope that was attached to the camel of the Messenger of Allah, while he was being hit with stones, and while he was saying, ‘O Messenger of Allah, we were only talking idly and joking.’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ answering him, “Was it at Allah, and His *Ayaat* (proofs, evidences, Verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and His Messenger ﷺ that you were mocking?”

According to the narration of Qataadah, ‘Abdullah ؓ said, “While the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was on his expedition to Tabook, a group of hypocrites, who were riding ahead of him, said, ‘This man (they were referring to the Prophet ﷺ) wants to conquer the castles and fortresses of Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions)? Never will that happen! Never will that happen!’ Allah ﷻ informed His Prophet ﷺ about what they had said, and the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said, ‘Confine these riders.’ He ﷺ then went to them and said, ‘You said such and such?’ They swore (by Allah), saying, ‘We were only talking idly and joking.’ And Allah ﷻ then revealed the Verse:

﴿يَحْذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ أَنْ تَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُورَةٌ تُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلِ اسْتَهْزِئُوا إِنَّا اللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَا تَحْذَرُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾﴾

“The hypocrites fear lest a Soorah (Chapter of the Qur’an) should be revealed about them, showing them what is in their hearts. Say: “(Go ahead and) mock! But certainly Allah will bring to light all that you fear.” If you ask them (about this), they declare: “We were only talking idly and joking.” Say: “Was it at Allah, and His *Ayaat* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and His Messenger (ﷺ) that you were mocking?” (Qur’an 9: 64, 65)”

The question, “Was it at Allah, and His *Ayaat* (proofs, evidences,

Verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and His Messenger ﷺ that you were mocking," was tantamount to the question: "When you were joking and playing, you found nothing to joke about other than the commands of Allah, Allah's signs, and Allah's Messenger, who came to guide you and take you out of darkness so that he can bring you into the light?" Then, in the next Verse, Allah ﷻ informed them that their mocking about such things brought them into disbelief:

﴿لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ إِنَّ نَعْفَ عَنْ طَائِفَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ نُعَذِّبُ طَائِفَةٌ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾﴾

"Make no excuse ; you have disbelieved after you had believed . If We pardon some of you , We will punish others amongst you because they were Mujrimoon (disbelievers, polytheists, sinners, criminals, etc.)." (Qur'an 9: 66)

This Verse means: Do not make this excuse to defend your crime, for being playful is not an excuse to perpetrate the greatest crime a person can commit: disbelief. And even if We forgive some among you because they repented such as Mukhasshin ibn Humayyir We will punish certain others among you for their crime and for refusing to repent for it.^[1]

2) Harming the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Believers, and Attempting to Assassinate the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

Allah ﷻ revealed the following Verse about the hypocrites:

﴿يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ مَا قَالُوا وَلَقَدْ قَالُوا كَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ وَكَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِسْلَامِهِمْ وَهَمُّوا بِمَا لَمْ يَنَالُوا وَمَا نَقَمُوا إِلَّا أَنْ أَغْنَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ فَإِنْ يَتُوبُوا يَكُ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَإِنْ يَسْتَوَلُّوا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٧٤﴾﴾

^[1] Refer to *Tafseer Al-Maraaghee* (3/153).

“They swear by Allah that they said nothing (bad), but really they said the word of disbelief, and they disbelieved after accepting Islam, and they resolved that (plot to murder Prophet Muhammad ﷺ) which they were unable to carry out, and they could not find any cause to do so except that Allah and His Messenger had enriched them of His Bounty. If then they repent, it will be better for them, but if they turn away, Allah will punish them with a painful torment in this worldly life and in the Hereafter. And there is none for them on earth as a Wali (supporter, protector) or a helper.” (Qur’an 9: 74)

Ibn Katheer related that Ad-Dahhaak said, “On one of the nights of the Tabook expedition, a group of hypocrites intended to attack the Messenger of Allah ﷺ while he was riding; the co-conspirators consisted of somewhere between thirteen and nineteen men, and this Verse (i.e., Qur’an 9: 74) was revealed about them.”^[1]

And according to the narration of Al-Waahidee, Ad-Dahhaak said, “The hypocrites (i.e., some of them) went out with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to Tabook, and when they would be alone among themselves, they would curse the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ, and they would (verbally) attack the religion (of Islam). Hudhaifah ﷺ conveyed what they would say to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who said to them, ‘O people of hypocrisy, what is this (saying) that has been conveyed to me from you?’ They swore (by Allah) that they said none of those things, and Allah revealed this Verse (Qur’an 9: 74) to expose their lies.”^[2]

Also in the above-mentioned Verse, Allah ﷻ referred to their plot to murder the Prophet ﷺ: “And they resolved that (plot to murder Prophet Muhammad ﷺ) which they were unable to carry out.” They resolved to execute their plot at Al-’Aqabah, when the Prophet ﷺ was returning from Tabook. Hudhaifah ibn Al-

^[1] Tafseer Ibn Katheer (2/372).

^[2] Refer to *Asbaab An-Nuzool* by Al-Waahidee (pg. 251).

Yamaan ؓ and 'Ammar ؓ were together steering the camel of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ until they reached Al-'Aqabah, when twelve riders suddenly appeared and blocked their way. Hudhaifah ؓ pointed out to them; he ﷺ yelled out, and they turned away and fled. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ later asked Hudhaifah ؓ and 'Ammar ؓ whether they recognized the riders, and they both responded, "No, O Messenger of Allah. They had their faces covered, but we did recognize their riding camels." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Those men will remain hypocrites until the Day of Resurrection. Do you know what they intended to do (before they were scared off)?" Hudhaifah ؓ and 'Ammar ؓ said, "No." The Prophet ﷺ said, "They wanted to crowd around me at Al-'Aqabah and throw me off of it (off of its cliff)." Allah ﷻ said about those hypocrites: "And they could not find any cause to do so except that Allah and His Messenger had enriched them of His Bounty," which means: There is nothing in the message of Islam or in the sending of the Prophet ﷺ that should make them upset or desirous of revenge, unless it be that they are upset about the fact that Allah and His Messenger ﷺ enriched them with a share of the spoils of war that the Muslims won in battle. But are not such worldly things that which they are most desirous of in the first place?

And to establish the proof against them, Allah ﷻ offered them the opportunity to repent and warned them that, if they didn't repent, He ﷻ would punish them both in this life and in the Hereafter: "If then they repent, it will be better for them, but if they turn away, Allah will punish them with a painful torment in this worldly life and in the Hereafter. And there is none for them on earth as a *Wali* (supporter, protector) or a helper."

3

The Return From Tabook To Al-Madeenah; And The Noble Qur'an Discusses Those Who Stayed Behind From The Expedition As Well As About *Masjid Ad-Diraar*

Having spent twenty nights in Tabook, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned to Al-Madeenah; and on the way back, he ﷺ ordered that *Masjid Ad-Diraar*, the *Masjid* that was built by the hypocrites, be destroyed.

As the Prophet ﷺ approached Al-Madeenah, children came out to *Thaniyyatul-Widaa'* to meet him. The Prophet ﷺ then entered Al-Madeenah, prayed two units of prayer in his *Masjid*, and sat down for those people who wanted to come and meet him, and here I am referring to those who stayed behind from the Tabook expedition. They all wanted to meet with the Prophet ﷺ and to present to him their excuses for having stayed behind. In all, there were four categories of people who stayed behind:

- 1) Those who had Islamically valid excuses for remaining behind; these Allah ﷻ excused.
- 2) Those who did not have valid Islamic excuses for remaining behind, but who were nonetheless forgiven by Allah ﷻ because they sincerely repented.
- 3) Bedouin hypocrites who lived in the lands that surrounded Al-Madeenah.
- 4) The hypocrites of Al-Madeenah.

Those Who Had Valid Islamic Excuses

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا
يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ وَاللَّهُ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٩١﴾ وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَا أَجِدُ مَا
أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوْا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ
﴿٩٢﴾﴾

“There is no blame on those who are weak or ill or who find no resources to spend [in holy fighting (Jihaad)], if they are sincere and true (in duty) to Allah and His Messenger. No ground (of complaint) can there be against the Muhsinoon (good-doers). And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Nor (is there blame) on those who came to you to be provided with mounts, and when you said: “I can find no mounts for you,” they turned back, while their eyes overflowing with tears of grief that they could not find anything to spend (for Jihaad).” (Qur’an 9: 91, 92)

In these Verses, Allah ﷻ made it clear that those who had valid Islamic excuses were not blameworthy and that there was no sin upon them for having stayed behind. Who were these people? Some scholars mention only some of the categories of people who had valid excuses, but the truth is that anyone who was not able to make the journey to fight feeble old men, blind people, people who were chronically ill, and poor people who did not have enough money to make the journey had a valid Islamic excuse. But Allah ﷻ did nonetheless mention a condition for there being no sin upon them: They had to be

﴿إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ﴾

“If they are sincere and true (in duty) to Allah and His Messenger.”

In the second of the two above-mentioned Verses, Allah ﷻ mentioned a special category of people, saying:

﴿وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَا أَجِدُ مَا أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ﴾

'Nor (is there blame) on those who came to you to be provided with mounts, and when you said: 'I can find no mounts for you.'

They were given special mention because of how they reacted to not being able to perform *Jihaad* alongside the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Allah ﷻ:

﴿تَوَلَّوْا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾﴾

"They turned back, while their eyes overflowing with tears of grief that they could not find anything to spend (for Jihaad)."

Those Who Stayed Behind Without Valid Excuses, But Then Were Forgiven By Allah ﷻ

There are three Verses in the Qur'an that discuss this category of people:

1) Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَأَخْرُونَ اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَءَاخَرَ سَيِّئًا عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾﴾

"And (there are) others who have acknowledged their sins, they have mixed a deed that was righteous with another that was evil. Perhaps Allah will turn unto them in forgiveness. Surely, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful." (Qur'an 9: 102)

These people stayed behind from the Tabook expedition without a valid excuse, but they differed from the hypocrites in that they didn't come up with false excuses; instead, they acknowledged their mistakes, they repented, and they hoped for forgiveness from Allah ﷻ. "Righteous" in "they have mixed a deed that was

righteous” refers to the good deeds they performed prior to the Tabook expedition, such as acts of worship and the *Jihaad* they performed alongside the Prophet ﷺ in previous battles. And the meaning of “with another that was evil” is clear; it refers to how they stayed behind from the Tabook expedition. But even that evil act they followed up with a good deed: they repented.

It is important to note here that acknowledging a mistake does not constitute complete repentance; rather, two additional components are required for one’s repentance to be complete: One must regret what happened in the past, and one must make a firm resolve never to commit the same mistake again in the present or future. The people we are discussing here fulfilled all of these conditions.

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿سَيِّئًا عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

“Perhaps Allah will turn unto them in forgiveness.”

The word ‘Asa is correctly translated as ‘perhaps’; nonetheless, when it is used in reference to Allah ﷻ in the Noble Qur’an, it means something that will certainly happen. When a human being offers someone hope for something, he will most likely fulfill that hope if he is generous and kind in nature. When Allah ﷻ gives hope for something, that thing has to happen, since He ﷻ is the Most Generous of the generous ones, and since He is

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

“Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful.”

2) Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَأَخْرُوجُ مُرْجُونَ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِمَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ وَإِمَّا يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾﴾

“And others await Allah’s Decree, whether He will punish them or will forgive them. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.”

(Qur’an 9: 106)

Those that “await Allah’s Decree, whether He will punish them or will forgive them” refers to three people in particular Hilaal ibn Umayyah ؓ, Ka’ab ibn Maalik ؓ, and Muraarah ibn Ar-Rabee’ ؓ. They wanted to go out with the Muslim army, but for some reason didn’t; they didn’t have a valid excuse, but at the same time they were not hypocrites. Far from it, in fact, for they were very sincere Muslims. When the Prophet ﷺ returned, and people began to present their excuses, those three said, “We have no excuse; all that we have is the mistake we made.” They offered no excuse, and they didn’t do as the people of the As-Siwaaree did tie themselves up to the columns of the *Masjid*, waiting for their repentance to be accepted. The Prophet ﷺ ordered the general population of Muslims to stay away from the aforementioned three Muslims. Fifty nights passed by and throughout that time they had no idea whether Allah ﷻ would forgive them or not.^[1]

3) Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلَفُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ
وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَن لَا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ
عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَسْتُوْبُوْا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١١٨﴾﴾

“And (He did forgive also) the three [who did not join the Tabook expedition (whom the Prophet ﷺ] left (i.e., he did not give his judgment in their case, and their case was suspended for Allah’s Decision) till for them the earth, vast as it is, was straitened and their ownelves were straitened to them, and they perceived that there is no fleeing from Allah, and no refuge but with Him. Then, He accepted their repentance, that they might repent (unto Him). Verily, Allah is the One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful.” (Qur’an 9: 118)

This Verse particularly refers to the same three Muslims: Hilaal ibn Umayyah ؓ, Ka’ab ibn Maalik ؓ, and Muraarah ibn Ar-Rabee’ ؓ. In an upcoming section, we will discuss their story at

^[1] Refer to *Tafseer Al-Aaloosee* (11/17).

length, *In Sha Allah* (Allah Willing), because of the various lessons and morals it contains.

Bedouin Hypocrites Who Lived In The Lands That Surrounded Al-Madeenah

This Verse was revealed about Bedouin hypocrites:

﴿وَجَاءَ الْمُعَذِّرُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ وَقَعَدَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٠﴾﴾

“And those who made excuses from the Bedouins came (to you, O Prophet ﷺ) asking your permission to exempt them (from the battle), and those who had lied to Allah and His Messenger sat at home (without asking the permission for it); a painful torment will seize those of them who disbelieve.” (Qur’an 9: 90)

We learn from this Verse that there were two groups of Bedouin hypocrites: The first group consisted of people who gave false excuses, and the second consisted of people who did not even bother to come up with false excuses, but instead remained comfortable in their homes, without having any valid reason to stay behind from the expedition. In the above-mentioned Verse, Allah ﷻ warned them of a severe punishment:

﴿سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ﴾

“A painful torment will seize those of them who disbelieve.”

The Hypocrites Of Al-Madeenah Who Stayed Behind From The Tabook Expedition

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خِلَافَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَكَرِهُوا أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ
وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا فِي الْحَرِّ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا لَوْ
كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلًا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَإِنْ

رَجَعَكَ اللَّهُ إِلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِنْهُمْ فَاسْتَدْتُوكَ لِلخُرُوجِ فَقُلْ لَنْ تَخْرُجُوا مَعِيَ أَبَدًا وَلَنْ تُقَاتِلُوا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا إِنَّكُمْ رَضِيتُمْ بِالْقُعُودِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَاقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْخَائِلِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

“Those who stayed away (from Tabook expedition) rejoiced in their staying behind the Messenger of Allah; they hated to strive and fight with their properties and their lives in the Cause of Allah, and they said: “March not forth in the heat.” Say: “The Fire of Hell is more intense in heat,” if only they could understand! So let them laugh a little and (they will) cry much as a recompense of what they used to earn (by committing sins). If Allah brings you back to a party of them (the hypocrites), and they ask you permission to go out (to fight), say: “Never shall you go out with me, nor fight an enemy with me; you agreed to sit inactive on the first occasion, then you sit (now) with those who lag behind.” (Qur’an 9: 81-83)

We learn from these Verses that the hypocrites not only stayed behind, but were happy to stay behind, as opposed to sincere believers, who became grief-stricken when they found out that they would not be able to participate in *Jihaad* alongside the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The hypocrites warned Muslims not to go to Tabook, not to march forth in the heat. But Allah ﷻ informed them that the destination they were headed towards, the Hellfire, is much ‘more intense in heat, if only they could understand!’

Next, Allah ﷻ told the hypocrites that they could laugh as much as they wanted to, even for the rest of their lives if that is what they desired; but even if they laughed throughout their entire lives, it would be little compared to how much they will cry in the Hereafter. This world is fleeting; the Hereafter is everlasting.

Then Allah ﷻ instructed the Prophet ﷺ to inform the hypocrites, in effect, that it was too late for them they had gone too far, and their situation was never going to improve:

﴿فَإِنْ رَجَعَكَ اللَّهُ إِلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِنْهُمْ فَاسْتَدْتُوكَ لِلخُرُوجِ فَقُلْ لَنْ تَخْرُجُوا مَعِيَ أَبَدًا وَلَنْ تُقَاتِلُوا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا إِنَّكُمْ رَضِيتُمْ بِالْقُعُودِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَاقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْخَائِلِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾﴾

“If Allah brings you back to a party of them (the hypocrites), and they ask you permission to go out (to fight), say: “Never shall you go out with me, nor fight an enemy with me; you agreed to sit inactive on the first occasion, then you sit (now) with those who lag behind.”

By now, the astute reader should have noticed a stark contrast between the stern punishment that the Prophet ﷺ gave to sincere believers who stayed behind they were completely cut off from society for fifty nights and the leniency with which he ﷺ dealt with the hypocrites who were not punished after they came forward with their excuses. Why were the two groups treated so differently? Well, the hypocrites were beyond hope; they did not deserve the tough love that is given to a person when it is hoped that he will change. On the other hand, the sincere believers who stayed behind from Tabook repented; harshness towards them was in fact merciful treatment, since they were given a period during which they could become purified from their sins, and come out with stronger faith than they ever had before. Moreover, although it is true that they went through a period of misery that lasted for fifty nights, they were then honoured in a manner that they could never have imagined: Allah ﷻ revealed Verses of the Qur'an in which He ﷻ announced their forgiveness Verses that will continue to be recited on the tongues of men until the Day of Resurrection. Punishment for them, therefore, was a form of mercy; whereas leniency towards the hypocrites was actually the harshest punishment they could have received, for it was a way of saying, “You are beyond hope; you are being given a period respite now, but the Hellfire will certainly be your ultimate destination; and not only will you be in the Hellfire, you will be in its lowest depths.” Being that the hypocrites were given a period of respite, the Prophet ﷺ was ordered to deal with them based on their outward actions. For it was not befitting for him ﷺ to have punished them in this world for their hidden lies.

Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) summed up the matter quite succinctly when he said, “This is the way in which the Lord ﷻ punishes His servants. He ﷻ disciplines His believing

servant whom He loves...for the smallest of mistakes, so that believing servant always remains vigilant and wary. As for the one who has fallen from the eye of Allah, the one whom Allah wishes to humiliate, Allah leaves him to his sins. Every time such a person commits another sin, Allah ﷻ gives him another blessing.”^[1]

Masjid Diraar

The following Verses of the Noble Qur'an were revealed during the Prophet's return journey from Tabook:

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِرْصَادًا لِمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَيَحْلِفُنَّ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا لَمَسْجِدٍ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

“And as for those who put up a mosque by way of harming and disbelief, and to disunite the believers, and as an outpost for those who warred against Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) aforetime, they will indeed swear that their intention is nothing but good. Allah bears witness that they are certainly liars. Never stand you therein. Verily, the mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety is more worthy that you stand therein (to pray). In it are men who love to clean and to purify themselves. And Allah loves those who make themselves clean and pure (i.e., who clean their private parts with dust [i.e., to be considered as soap) and water for urine and stools, after answering the call of nature.” (Qur'an 9: 107, 108)

To understand the reason why these Verses were revealed, we have to go back and study the background of a man named Abu 'Aamir Ar-Raahib. Abu 'Aamir was from the Khazraj tribe, one of the two native tribes of Al-Madeenah, and during the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, he became a Christian. He had always been a

^[1] Refer to *Zaad Al-Ma'aad* (3/578).

revered chieftain of his tribe, but he soon became a learned Christian scholar and a devoted worshipper as well.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ migrated to Al-Madeenah, the people of the Aus and Khazraj tribes embraced Islam; but Abu 'Aamir refused to become a Muslim, and he was a very vocal opponent of Islam and of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. As the days went by, Islam became more and more dominant in Al-Madeenah; and soon the Muslims proved that they were a force to be contended with in the region when they defeated the polytheists of the Quraish at Badr. By then, even the people who were opposed to Islam in Al-Madeenah outwardly became Muslims, though they inwardly harboured their disbelief. These people became the hypocrites. Abu 'Aamir, however, chose not to be one of them; he wanted to outwardly remain a polytheist, and so he fled Al-Madeenah and made his way to the polytheists of the Quraish, with the intention of helping them in their war against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He played a major role on the side of the polytheists in the Battle of Uhud; he took the initiative to dig holes on the battlefield, and the Prophet ﷺ later fell into one of them and then sustained certain injuries. And prior to the commencement of the battle, Abu 'Aamir went to his people from the *Ansaar* and tried to convince them to change sides. Once they found out what he had to say, they answered, "May Allah not bless you, O evildoer, O enemy of Allah." He responded, "By Allah, evil has afflicted my people ever since I left them."

When Abu 'Aamir had decided to flee from Al-Madeenah, the Prophet ﷺ invited him to Islam and recited the Qur'an to him. But none of that had any effect on him; the more he was advised, the more rebellious he became; the more he was treated with kindness, the deeper he fell into his disbelief. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ supplicated to Allah ﷻ to make Abu 'Aamir die as an outcast, and his supplication was answered.

After the conclusion of the Battle of Uhud, Abu 'Aamir went to Haraq, the Emperor of Rome, and asked for his help in his war against the Prophet ﷺ. He stayed in Haraq's court for a while,

and was promised the help he wanted; meanwhile, he wrote to his hypocrite friends in Al-Madeenah, people who were loyal to him because they were of the same tribe and, more importantly, because they shared a common enemy. In his letters to them, Abu 'Aamir promised them that he would soon bring an army to help them destroy the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ, and he ordered them to build a command-post, a stronghold of sorts, a place from which they could organize their activities.

In response to his request, they began constructing a *Masjid* right beside *Masjid Quba*. They finished constructing it before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ departed for the Tabook expedition, and they asked him to visit them and pray in their *Masjid*. They knew that if the Prophet ﷺ prayed in their *Masjid*, he ﷺ would, in effect, be putting a stamp of legitimacy onto it. They mentioned to him that they had built it for weak and sick people who would be saved from a longer walk to *Masjid Quba*, especially during the cold days of winter. But Allah ﷻ protected the Prophet ﷺ, and he never prayed in their *Masjid*. He ﷺ was about to go to Tabook, and so he ﷺ said to them, "Verily, we are about to go out on a journey, but when we return, Allah Willing."

But when the Prophet ﷺ was returning from Tabook and only a day's journey or less separated him from Al-Maeenah, Jibreel ﷺ descended with news about *Masjid Diraar* (the *Masjid* of the hypocrites; *Diraar* literally means something that is harmful), informing the Prophet ﷺ about the evil intentions of those who built it and of their desire to use it as a base from which they could sow dissension between the believers regarding *Masjid Quba*, which was built, from the very first day, upon foundations of piety. As a result of this news, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent men to *Masjid Diraar* and ordered them to make sure that it would be destroyed before he returned to Al-Madeenah. This, as Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) explained, is the reason why the above-mentioned Verses were revealed.

And as for the meaning of those Verses, Allah ﷻ informed us in them that the hypocrites had four motives for building *Masjid Diraar*:

- 1) They were motivated by their disbelief.
- 2) They wanted to harm Muslims.
- 3) They wanted to disunite the believers, by making as many of them as possible forsake *Masjid Quba* and pray in their *Masjid* instead.
- 4) They intended to make their *Masjid* "an outpost for those who warred against Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ)."

Allah ﷻ thwarted their plan, ordering the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ to never pray in their *Masjid*: "Never stand you therein." Furthermore, He ﷻ ordered his Prophet ﷺ to destroy *Masjid Diraar*. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then gathered a team that consisted of 'Ammar ibn Yaasir ﷺ, Maalik ibn Ad-Dukhshum ﷺ, and others, and he ﷺ said to them, "Go to this *Masjid*, the attendees of which are wrongdoers; then destroy it and burn it (to the ground)." They then went and executed his command.

And so that the hypocrites could not say, "We invited the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to pray but he refused," Allah ﷻ made it clear that he ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ should continue to pray in *Masjids* that are built, from the very first day, upon piety *Masjids* such as *Masjid An-Nabawee* and *Masjid Quba'*. As for the "*Masjid* whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety" in the above-mentioned Verse, Ibn 'Aashoor was of the view that it refers not to a specific *Masjid*, but to *Masjids* that were then built upon piety; and in that sense, the Verse is referring to two specific *Masjids*: *Al-Masjid An-Nabawee* and *Masjid Quba'*.

Allah ﷻ then said about the *Masjid* whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety, "In it are men who love to clean and purify themselves." Ibn Maajah ﷺ related that, when this Verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "O people of the *Ansaar*, Allah has indeed praised you for the manner in which you purify yourselves, so how is it that you purify yourselves?" They said, "We perform ablution for prayer, we take a shower when we enter into a state of major impurity, and we purify ourselves (i.e.,

after releasing our bowels) with water." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Then it is that (for which you were praised), so continue to adhere to the same practices."^[1]

The Lessons and Morals of the Masjid Diraar Incident

1) Regardless of Each Disbeliever's Particular Form of Disbelief, Disbelievers as a Group are Supporters of One Another

Abu 'Aamir was an adherent of Christianity, a religion that has its roots in monotheism; nonetheless, he sided with polytheists in their war against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He became extremely angry when the polytheists lost at Uhud, and he went to the center of idol-worship and polytheism during those times, Makkah, and encouraged its inhabitants to continue their war against the Muslims. So as a Christian, he preferred idol-worshippers to Monotheists, thus exemplifying the meaning of this Verse from the Noble Qur'an:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوهُ تَكُن فِتْنَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٧٣﴾﴾

"And those who disbelieve are allies to one another (and) if you (Muslims of the whole world collectively) do not do so (i.e., become allies, as one united block with one Khalifah chief Muslim ruler for the whole Muslim world to make victorious Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism), there will be Fitnah (wars, battles, polytheism, etc.) and oppression on earth, and a great mischief and corruption (appearance of polytheism)." (Qur'an 8: 73)

^[1] Refer to *Sunan Ibn Maaajah*, the Book of Purification, chapter, "Purifying Oneself (After Going to the Washroom) with Water; and to *Nasbur-Raayah* by Az-Zaila'ee, who said, "Its chain is acceptable, although it is true that 'Utaibah ibn Abee Hakeem has been criticized by some." Abu Haatim said about 'Utaibah, "He is a good *Hadeeth* narrator." Ibn 'Adee said, "I hope that there is no harm in (related from) him," and An-Nasae said that he is weak. Ibn Mu'een related two narrations from him. Al-Haakim related this narration in *Al-Mustadrak* and declared it to be authentic, and Al-Baihaquee related it in his *Sunan*.

2) The Deceptive Ways of Hypocrites

It is very dangerous for Muslims to make compromises with hypocrites and others of their ilk. Muslims might be tempted to appease them by meeting them halfway, not understanding the potentially damaging and far-reaching ramifications of doing so. In the case of the hypocrites that were around during the Prophet's time, they wanted the Prophet ﷺ to pray in their *Masjid* for one reason and one reason only; they knew that, if the Prophet ﷺ answered their invitation, he ﷺ would, in effect, be confirming the legitimacy and validity of their *Masjid*, *Masjid Diraar*. Such are the subtle forms of deception that Muslims must always be wary of when dealing with evil people. As for the Prophet ﷺ, Allah ﷻ protected him and informed him about the evil intentions of the hypocrites. Had Allah ﷻ not done so, the Prophet ﷺ would not have known about the secret, evil intentions of the hypocrites, and he ﷺ would have prayed in their *Masjid*; as a result, the hypocrites would have succeeded in bringing some weak Muslims to their *Masjid*, and would have then tried to have a bad influence on them.

3) A Decisive Solution to the Problem

At times, appeasement is not the best way to deal with evil people; in fact, very often a stern approach is required in order to thwart their efforts, to punish them, and to dissuade them from returning to their evil ways in the future. A perfect example of this is the approach the Prophet ﷺ took in dealing with the problem of *Masjid Diraar*. Had the Prophet ﷺ taken mild action against the hypocrites who built it, there is no telling what mischief they would have then concocted. In fact, anything short of destroying *Masjid Diraar* would have been insufficient action on the part of the Prophet ﷺ. Like a chronic illness that needs to be wiped out completely, for the fear of it returning and growing stronger, the problem of *Masjid Diraar* had to be dealt with once and for all, and that meant not only destroying it, but burning what remained of it as well.

The punishment worked wonders: the hypocrites became so frightened of continuing in their efforts to oppose Islam that they lost almost all hope of achieving their aims. Their level of activity decreased, and their numbers dwindled, so that, by the time the Prophet ﷺ died, very few of them remained in Al-Madeenah. In fact, after the destruction of the *Diraar Masjid*, they ceased virtually all activity; thereafter, they could only inwardly bemoan their situation; outwardly, they were too afraid of becoming exposed to try to openly display their enmity towards the Muslims.

4) What Should be Done About Other Places that are Similar to *Masjid Diraar*?

Scholars have discussed at length the ruling regarding places that are like *Masjid Diraar*, in terms of what should be done about them. Following are just a few examples of what has been said on the topic:

- a) Az-Zamakhsharee said, "It is said that every *Masjid* that has been built for show, for the purpose of vying with other *Masjids*, or for any purpose other than the desire to please Allah ﷻ, in addition to any *Masjid* that is built with unlawfully derived money takes on the same ruling as *Masjid Diraar*."^[1]
Dr. 'Abdul-Kareem Zaidan had this to say about Az-Zamakhsharee's statement: "Even when other places take on the ruling of *Masjid Diraar*, should they be destroyed just as *Masjid Diraar*...was destroyed by virtue of the Prophet's command? I do not think so. We can only go as far as to say that *Masjids* that are built for the said purposes are like *Masjid Diraar* in that they are not built upon piety."^[2]
- b) Imam Al-Qurtubee said in his *Tafseer*, "Our scholars have said that any *Masjid* that is built for show or for the purpose of causing harm takes on the same ruling as *Masjid Diraar*: It is not permissible to pray inside of it."^[3]

^[1] Refer to *Tafseer Az-Zamakhsharee* (2/310).

^[2] Refer to *Al-Mustafaad Min Qisas Al-Qur'an* (2/504).

^[3] Refer to *Tafseer Al-Qurtubee* (8/254).

- c) Sayyid Qutub made an interesting point in his *Tafseer*, a point that can be summarized as follows: *Masjid Diraar* was built during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ in order to harm Islam and Muslims; the same *Masjid* is taking on new forms today: Activities that are purportedly organized for the service of Islam, but that are really intended to hurt Islam and give it a poor image; books that are written supposedly to clarify the teachings of Islam, but that are really written to confuse readers and give them a poor impression of Islam; organizations that are founded supposedly to help Muslims, but that are really established to persecute them; and the list goes on and on.^[1]
- d) Dr. 'Abdul-Kareem Zaidan said, "Anything that outwardly is legislated (in Islam) but that is used to achieve a non-legislated goal takes on the same ruling as *Masjid Diraar*, because it has in common with *Masjid Diraar* the same elements and spirit." Or in other words, anything that is outwardly legislated but that is used by certain people to harm Muslims takes on the same ruling as *Masjid Diraar*. Based on this principle, certain examples that Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim mentioned do not fit the aforementioned criteria and therefore do not take on the same ruling as *Masjid Diraar*. Some examples he mentioned are places wherein evil takes place: such as houses wherein alcohol is imbibed and prostitutes practice their trade. Such places do not fulfill the criteria mentioned above because they are not outwardly legislated. This simply means that they are not like *Masjid Diraar*; nonetheless, they are purely evil places they are evil both outwardly and inwardly and should consequently be closed down. The only issue of contention here is whether or not they should be likened to *Masjid Diraar*.

In our own Muslim societies today, one does not have to look very far before seeing places that are very similar to *Masjid Diraar*: schools for Muslims that are used to convey false teachings about

[1] Refer to *Fee Dhilaal Al-Qur'an* (3/1710, 1711).

Islam; *Masjids* that are built for show; *Masjids* that are used to diffuse incorrect beliefs; relief organizations that are purportedly founded to help poor Muslims, but that are really used to turn them into Christians a problem that is specifically prevalent in Africa and other poor regions; and the list continues endlessly.

The building of *Masjid Diraar* was not simply an incident that took place historically and then ended; no, it was an idea that has taken root in the plans of Islam's enemies, and it is a way of waging war against Muslims that the enemies of Islam try to resort to with impunity.

4

The Story Of The Three Who Stayed Behind From The Tabook Expedition

Many people stayed behind from the Tabook expedition, and we discussed who they were in previous sections. But when one says, “The three who remained behind,” or, “The three who didn’t join the Tabook expedition,” one is referring to these three Companions ؓ in particular: Hilaal ibn Umayyah ؓ, Ka’ab ibn Maalik ؓ, and Muraarah ibn Ar-Rabee’ ؓ. Their story is related in books of *Seerah*, *Hadeeth*, and *Tafseer*; and the narrator of their story is none other than Ka’ab ibn Maalik ؓ. The various narrations of the story share a very similar wording. And *Saheeh Bukhaaree* contains one of the story’s most detailed accounts. Here, then, is Ka’ab’s detailed account of what happened:

“I never stayed behind from any of the Prophet’s expeditions other than the Tabook expedition which is not to mention the fact that I stayed behind from the Badr expedition. But the Prophet ﷺ reproached no one who had stayed behind from that expedition, since he ﷺ had went out with one purpose only: to overtake the trading caravan of the Quraish. Allah then brought the Muslims and their enemy together (for battle), without there having been any prior appointment between them.

And I was present with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the night of Al-’Aqabah (the night during which the *Ansaar* pledged their Islam to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ), when we made a covenant upon Islam. And I would not want to trade that distinction with

the distinction of having participated in Badr, even though people talk more about Badr than they do about the night of Al-'Aqabah. In actual fact, I was never stronger or richer than I was when I stayed behind from the Tabook expedition. By Allah, never before that did I have two riding animals at the same time, but I had two riding animals during that expedition.

And whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wanted to go on an expedition, he would pretend to be going somewhere else until the time came for the Tabook expedition, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ went out in the sweltering heat, when he faced a long journey, vast expanses of desert land to traverse, and many enemies. And so he ﷺ made clear to the Muslims their situation, so that they could make adequate preparations for the expedition. He ﷺ informed them exactly where he ﷺ was heading.

There were many, many Muslims with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; no register could have contained all of their names. Any man that wanted to go into hiding (and not join the expedition) thought that he could remain hidden, so long as revelation from Allah was not revealed about him.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ left for the expedition when fruits were ripe and the shade was good; he ﷺ and the Muslims ﷺ made preparations for the journey. I began moving about, so that I could prepare alongside them, but then I would return (to my home) without having accomplished anything. I would then say to myself, 'I can do it,' but I continued to delay until the others began to work very hard (in preparation for the journey). Soon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Muslims were ready to leave, and I still had not made any preparations. I said (to myself), 'I will make preparations in a day or two, and then I will catch up to them. After they departed, I went out to make preparations (for the journey), but I still returned (to my home), without having accomplished anything. I then went out yet again, and yet again I returned (home), without having accomplished anything. I continued in this manner until they had travelled some distance; I then resolved to depart and catch up to them, and

would that I had done so, but it was not decreed for me. When I would go out among the people after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left I would walk among them, and it would sadden me to see only two kinds of men: someone who was strongly accused of hypocrisy, and someone who was weak and whom Allah excused (from having to join the expedition).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not remember me until he ﷺ reached Tabook. While he ﷺ was seated among the people at Tabook, he ﷺ said, 'What has Ka'ab done?' A man from the Banu Salamah clan said, O Messenger of Allah, he was held back by his two robes and by the desire to look to his right and to his left (an expression that alludes to a person's admiration of one's self and one's clothing).' Mu'aadh ibn Jabal retorted, 'Evil have you spoken! By Allah, O Messenger of Allah, we know only good things about him.' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ remained silent, and while he was sitting there quietly, he saw a man in white clothing who was causing the mirages (in the distance) to disappear (i.e., he was approaching from the desert). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'Be Abu Khaithamah,' and it was Abu Khaithamah Al-Ansaaree. He was the one who gave eight handfuls of dates as charity and was subsequently derided and insulted by the hypocrites.

When I was later informed that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had already embarked upon his return journey (to Al-Madeenah), I became miserable, and began to think about lying (to save myself). I began to say (to myself), 'How can I save myself from his anger tomorrow?' To answer that question, I sought the counsel of every person of sound opinion in my family. When it was said to me, 'Verily, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is almost here,' that falsehood (i.e., the desire to lie) went away from me, and I came to know that I would never be saved through (falsehood and lying), and so I resolved to tell him the truth.

Finally, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ approached, and whenever he ﷺ arrived from a journey, he would begin by going to the *Masjid* and performing in it two units of prayer. Then he would sit down

to meet the people (those that had stayed behind). When he ﷺ did that, those that had not joined in the expedition came and began to present their excuses to him; and they took oaths for him. In total, there were somewhere between eighty-three and eighty-nine men (who went to him to present their excuses). He ﷺ accepted what they outwardly said, took a pledge from them, and invoked Allah to forgive them. And he ﷺ entrusted their secrets to Allah ﷻ.

I went to him, and when I extended greetings of peace (to him), he gave me the smile of an angry person, and he ﷺ said, 'Come here.' I walked towards him, and sat down in front of him. He ﷺ said to me, 'What made you stay behind? Had you not purchased your riding animal?' I said, 'O Messenger of Allah! By Allah, had I been sitting with someone other than you from the people of this world, I would have thought that I could get out of his anger by making an excuse; after all, I have been blessed with eloquence and convincing speech. But, by Allah, I knew that if I told you a lie today, thus causing you to be pleased with me, the time would draw near when Allah would make you angry with me. And if I tell you the truth, you will become angry with me, yet I still hope that Allah will reward me for it (for my truthfulness). By Allah, I had no (valid) excuse! By Allah, I was never stronger or richer than I was when I did not join you (for the Tabook expedition).' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'As for this person, he has indeed spoken the truth. So stand up and wait until Allah renders a judgment regarding you.' I stood up, and certain men from the Banu Salamah clan got excited and followed me. They said to me, 'By Allah, we have never known you to commit a sin prior to this. You were not able to mention an excuse to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as did the others who had not joined him (for the Tabook expedition). Your sin would have been taken care of had (you made an excuse and had) the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (then) invoked Allah to forgive you.' They continued to reproach me in this manner, until I intended to return to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and contradict myself (by saying that, yes, I did have such and such excuse for staying behind). But I first asked them, 'Did the

same happen to anyone other than me?' They said, 'Yes, the same happened to two other men; they said what you said, and what was said to you was said to them.' I asked, 'Who are they?' They said, 'Muraarah ibn Ar-Rabee' Al-'Amree and Hilaal ibn Umayyah Al-Waaqifee.' They mentioned two righteous men to me, both of whom had participated in the Battle of Badr. These were people who deserved to be followed as examples. And so when they mentioned their names to me, I went on my way (without returning to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ forbade the Muslims from talking to us three a prohibition that applied to no one else from the people who had stayed behind (from the Tabook expedition).

We (three) stayed away from people, and they changed towards us. It reached the point that the earth became strange to me; I no longer recognized it, as if it was not the earth I once knew. We continued upon that state for fifty nights. As for my two companions, they gave up, and they remained seated in their homes, crying (all of the time). As for me, I was the youngest and hardest of the three: I would go out; I would attend the (congregational) prayer; I would walk around the marketplace, yet no one would talk to me. I would even go to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ after prayer and extend greetings of peace to him, while he would be seated in his gathering. And I would say to myself, 'Did he move his lips to return my greetings of peace or not?' I would pray close to him, and I would steal a glance at him. When I would come for my prayer, he would look at me, but when I would turn towards him, he would turn away from me. I felt that the Muslims had been cold and distant with me for an interminable period of time. (Desperate,) I walked (with a purpose) and climbed the wall of Abu Qataadah's garden. Abu Qataadah was my cousin and was the most beloved of people to me. I extended greetings of peace to him, and, by Allah, he did not return my greetings. I said to him, 'O Abu Qataadah, I ask you by Allah, do you know that I do indeed love Allah and His Messenger?' He remained silent. I repeated my question and pleaded with him to answer me, yet he still remained silent. I then

again repeated my question and pleaded with him to answer me, and he finally said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' Tears began to flow from my eyes as I turned around and climbed the wall (to leave).

While I was walking around in the marketplace of Al-Madeenah, a farmer from Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions) one of those who would come to Al-Madeenah in order to sell food appeared and said, 'Who will point out Ka'ab ibn Maalik to me?' The people began to point me out to him; he then came to me and handed me a letter from the king of the Ghassaan tribe. I was able to read and write, and so I read the contents of the letter, which were as follows: 'To proceed: It has been conveyed to us that your companion has shunned you, even though Allah has not placed you in a land wherein your rights should be lost. So come to us, and we will comfort you.' Upon reading the letter, I said, 'This too is a test. I took the letter to an oven and burned it.'

By the time forty out of the fifty nights passed by, it became clear that revelation (regarding my situation) was slow in coming, when suddenly a messenger came to me from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, 'Verily, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ orders you to seclude yourself from your wife.' I said, 'Should I divorce her? Or what else should I do?' He said, 'No, simply seclude yourself from her, and do not go near her.' The same message was sent to my two companions (i.e., Hilaal ؓ and Muraarah ؓ).

I said to my wife, 'Go to your family and stay with them until Allah renders a judgment regarding this matter.' The wife of Hilaal ibn Umayyah went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said to him, 'O Messenger of Allah! Verily, Hilaal ibn Umayyah is a poor, old man who has no servant. Will it displease you if I serve him.' He ﷺ said, 'No (that will not displease me), but do not go near him (i.e., do not have any sexual relations with him).' She said, 'By Allah, verily he does not make a move to do anything. By Allah, he has been crying non-stop from the day he got into this problem until this very day.'

Someone in my family said to me, 'Why don't you ask the

Messenger of Allah ﷺ for permission to be with your wife? He ﷺ did, after all, give permission for the wife of Hilaal ibn Umayyah to serve him?’ I said, ‘I will not ask permission to be with her. I am a young man (who will find it difficult to control his urges while he is with her; therefore, her being away from me is for the best).’

Then ten more nights passed by, so that a total of fifty nights were completed... While I was sitting down upon the condition that Allah described us to be upon my own self was straitened for me, and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for me I heard the voice of a caller who had climbed onto Mount Sala’. The caller said in his loudest voice, ‘O Ka’ab ibn Maalik, rejoice.’ I immediately fell down to perform prostration, for I knew that relief had come. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ performed the *Fajr* prayer, he ﷺ announced that Allah ﷻ had accepted our repentance. The people then came to give us the good news....

When the person whose voice I had heard giving the good news came to me, I removed my two garments and attired him in them as a reward for the good news he gave me. By Allah, I owned no other garment on that day, and so I borrowed two garments, put them on, and headed directly towards the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The people met me in crowds in order to congratulate me for having been forgiven; they would say to me, ‘We congratulate you for having been forgiven by Allah.’ When I entered the *Masjid*, I saw that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was seated inside, and that people were gathered around him. Talhah ibn ‘Ubaidullah stood up, ran towards me, shook my hand, and congratulated me. By Allah, he was the only man from the *Muhaajiroon* who stood up (the narrator said, ‘It was something about Talhah that Ka’ab always appreciated and never forgot’). When I extended greetings of peace to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, his face was radiating with happiness, and he ﷺ said, ‘Rejoice for the best day you have come across ever since your mother gave you birth.’ I asked, ‘Is that (i.e., what you just said about me and about it being the best day of my life) from you, O Messenger of Allah, or from Allah?’ He ﷺ said, ‘No, rather,

it is from Allah.’ And when the face of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would light up, it would become like a piece of the moon, and we would all recognize that.

Having taken a seat in front of him, I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, as I part of my repentance, I would like to give away all of my wealth to charity for Allah and for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (i.e., for them to decide where it will be spent).’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘Hold on to some of your wealth, since that is better for you.’ I said, ‘Then I will hold on the share (of the spoils) that was given to me at Khaibar. O Messenger of Allah, verily Allah saved me only because of truthfulness, so as a part of my repentance, I will speak only truthfully for as long as I live.’

By Allah, from the moment I mentioned that to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ until this very day, I have known of no Muslim whom Allah blessed with truthful speech to a greater degree than me. By Allah, from the day I said that (i.e., from the day I made that vow) to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ until this day of mine, I have never spoken a single lie on purpose. And I indeed hope that Allah continues to protect me for the remainder of my life (as well). Allah, the Possessor of might and majesty, revealed the following (Verses of the Noble Qur’an):

﴿لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ
الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبَ فَرِيقٍ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ
إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلَفُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَن لَّا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا
إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾ يَكَايُهَا الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾﴾

“Allah has forgiven the Prophet ﷺ, the Muhajiroon (Muslim emigrants who left their homes and came to Al-Madeenah) and the Ansaar (Muslims of Al-Madeenah) who followed him (Muhammad ﷺ) in the time of distress (Tabook expedition,

etc.), after the hearts of a party of them had nearly deviated (from the Right Path), but He accepted their repentance. Certainly, He is unto them full of Kindness, Most Merciful. And (He did forgive also) the three [who did not join the Tabook expedition (who the Prophet ﷺ) left (i.e., he did not give his judgment in their case, and their case was suspended for Allah's Decision) till for them the earth, vast as it is, was straitened and their own selves were straitened to them, and they perceived that there is no fleeing from Allah, and no refuge but with Him. Then, He accepted their repentance, that they might repent (unto Him). Verily, Allah is the One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful. O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah, and be with those who are true (in words and deeds).'' (Qur'an 9: 117-119)

By Allah, after Allah guided me to Islam, He never bestowed upon me a blessing that I considered to be as great as guiding me to be truthful with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; for by not lying, I was saved from being destroyed, unlike those who lied and really did become destroyed as a result. Verily, when revelation was descending (from the heavens), Allah spoke more harshly to those that lied than to anyone else. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿سَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ إِذَا انْقَلَبْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لِنُعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ
إِنَّهُمْ رِجْسٌ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ يَحْلِفُونَ
لَكُمْ لَنُرَضُوا عَنْهُمْ فَإِن تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِن تَرْضَىٰ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ
الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾﴾

“They will swear by Allah to you (Muslims) when you return to them, that you may turn away from them, that you may turn away from them. So turn away from them. Surely, they are Rijsun [i.e., Najasun (impure) because of their evil deeds], and Hell is their dwelling place, – a recompense for that which they used to earn. They (the hypocrites) swear to you (Muslims) that you may be pleased with them, but if you are pleased with them, certainly Allah is not pleased with the people who are Al-

Faasiqoon (rebellious, disobedient to Allah)." (Qur'an 9: 95, 96)

We refrained from acting like those whose excuses the Messenger of Allah ﷺ accepted when they took an oath for him. He ﷺ then accepted pledges from them and invoked Allah to forgive them, but he ﷺ postponed making any decision regarding us three, and instead decided to wait until Allah rendered judgment (either for us or against us). It was based on those circumstances that Allah, the Possessor of might and majesty, said:

﴿وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلَفُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ
وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَن لَّا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ
عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾﴾

"And (He did forgive also) the three [who did not join the Tabook expedition (whom the Prophet ﷺ] left (i.e., he did not give his judgment in their case, and their case was suspended for Allah's Decision) till for them the earth, vast as it is, was straitened and their own selves were straitened to them, and they perceived that there is no fleeing from Allah, and no refuge but with Him. Then, He accepted their repentance, that they might repent (unto Him). Verily, Allah is the One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful." (Qur'an 9: 118)

When Allah spoke (in this Verse) about us being left, He ﷻ was not referring to how we stayed behind from the expedition; no, He ﷻ was referring to how the Prophet ﷺ left us (by not rendering judgment in our case) and postponed making any decision regarding our situation, which was not the course of action he ﷺ took regarding those who took oaths for him and presented excuses to him, for he immediately accepted their excuses (and invoked Allah to forgive them, thus ending the matter for them)."^[1]

^[1] Refer to *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, the Book of *Al-Maghaazee*, *Hadeeth* number: 4418; to *Saheeh As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* (pg. 614); and to *Saheeh Muslim*, the Book of Repentance, chapter, "The *Hadeeth* about the Repentance of Ka'ab ibn Maalik ؓ and His Companions ؓ."

The Lessons and Morals of this Story

1) The Clarity of Ka'ab's Narration

Ka'ab ؓ narrated this story in clear and beautiful language; no sentence is wasted, and every word tells (at least in the original Arabic version). Ka'ab's clear and succinct account of his story like other equally eloquent and succinct narrations, such as 'Aishah's narration of the 'great lie incident' makes it worthy of being taught to students not just in Islamic History class, but in a course about Arabic literature as well. It is such stories about the first generation of Islam, and not stories about Laila and Majnoon (the Arabic equivalent of Romeo and Juliet), that should be taught to students at the elementary and high-school levels. That they are not taught in many Muslim schools is a testament to the low-quality curriculum that is being taught to many of today's youth. It is the responsibility of everyone of teachers, school administrators, and parents to make sure that our youth become adequately educated about everything they need to know in order to become good, practicing, and productive Muslims.

2) Truthfulness is the Way to Safety

Ka'ab ؓ, Hilaal ؓ, and Muraarah ؓ realized that lying would bring them only short-term safety and even that would not be true safety, but only a brief respite that would soon be followed by a severe torment. And so each of them decided to tell the truth, regardless of the consequences and the short-term hardships they would have to face as a result. They were truthful because they were very hopeful of having their repentance accepted, and thus, contrary to the many people who lied and who came up with false excuses, they took the road less travelled by, the road of hardships, which they traversed only to come out on the other side with stronger faith than they ever had before. And since it was truthfulness that saved them in the beginning, Allah ﷻ very appropriately ended the Verse about their repentance with a reminder of the importance of truthfulness and of being with those who are truthful:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾﴾

“O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah, and be with those who are true (in words and deeds).” (Qur’an 9: 119)

3) The Effects of a Publicly Orchestrated Cold-Shoulder Campaign

In a Muslim society, there are many benefits that can be derived when all of its members mutually agree to temporarily cut off all ties with individuals who commit certain unacceptable sins that involve abandoning certain obligatory religious deeds or perpetrating certain unlawful deeds. When a system is in place whereby everyone in society can collectively boycott people who perpetrate certain sins, individuals will fear being cast out by society and will consequently avoid perpetrating those sins. And as for those who do perpetrate those sins and are consequently boycotted, they will quickly repent and return to the truth, so that they can reenter society as quickly as possible.

It must be remembered, however, that such a system must be applied only in societies that are similar to the Al-Madanees society of the Prophet’s time societies that are well-established and that possess both a strong Muslim government and a strong Muslim populace. In such societies, it is not feared that boycotting an individual will have a negative impact on him; for we must remember that the goal of boycotting is to benefit the individual who strays by bringing him back to uprightness and righteousness. So if Muslims are weak or represent the minority in a given society, there is no real benefit of boycotting an individual (in most cases), because doing so will only drive him further away from the truth. This and other principles must be adhered to when a decision is made to boycott an individual.

Also, boycotting an individual for his religious benefit differs greatly from boycotting an individual for some worldly reason; the former is acceptable and at times desirable; the latter is

unacceptable and, if it is taken too far, can even be unlawful in Islam. If a Muslim cuts off ties with another Muslim for more than three days, he is perpetrating a deed that is *Haraam* (prohibited in Islam). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "It is not lawful for a Muslim to dissociate himself from his brother for more than three nights, whereby they meet, and each of them turns away from the other. And the better of them is he who initiates greetings of peace."^[1] And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said, "Whosoever abandons his brother for a year, it is as if he has shed his blood."^[2]

4) The Companions' Complete and Unequivocal Obedience to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

The Prophet ﷺ ordered his Companions ؓ to do something that was very difficult for many of them: to boycott three of their brothers in faith Ka'ab ؓ, Hilaal ؓ, and Muraarah ؓ. But as difficult as it was to obey that command, they all obeyed it to the letter, as was attested to by Ka'ab ؓ, who said, "We (three) stayed away from people, and they changed towards us. It reached the point that the earth became strange to me; I no longer recognized it, as if it was not the earth I once knew. We continued upon that state for fifty nights. As for my two companions, they gave up, and they remained seated in their homes, crying (all of the time). As for me, I was the youngest and hardest of the three: I would go out; I would attend the (congregational) prayer; I would walk around the marketplace, yet no one would talk to me."

Ka'ab ؓ then went to the person he loved most, Abu Qataadah ؓ, but not even Abu Qataadah ؓ would respond to his greetings. To be sure, Abu Qataadah ؓ was torn between his love for

[1] *Saheeh Muslim*, the Book of *Al-Birr*, *Hadeeth* number: 2560; and to *Saheeh Bukhaaree*, the Book of *Al-Adab*, *Hadeeth* number: 6077.

[2] Refer to *Musnad Ahmad* (4/220); to *Abu Daawood*, with an authentic chain; to *Al-Jaamai' As-Sagheer* by As-Suyootee, who declared it to be *Hasan* (acceptable); to *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* by Imam Bukhaaree; and to *Mustdadrak* by Al-Haakim.

Ka'ab ؓ and his desire to obey the Prophet ﷺ. The latter desire won out in the end; for even though Ka'ab ؓ pleaded with him many times to speak to him, Abu Qataadah ؓ refused to engage in any conversation with him whatsoever.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the boycott was not the obedience that was shown by those who boycotted the three Companions ؓ, but the obedience that was shown by those three Companions ؓ themselves. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ordered each of them to stay away from his wife until Allah ﷻ announced His judgment regarding their case. They could have acted duplicitously, only pretending to obey his command; but instead they followed his command to the letter. The spirit of the command involved a prohibition only of sexual relations which was why the Prophet ﷺ gave Hilaal's wife permission to serve her husband, so long as she would not have any physical relations with him but even still, Ka'ab ؓ refused to ask permission to keep his wife with him, fearing that his desire to have physical relations with her would overcome him. He ؓ did not want to compound his earlier mistake with yet another one, and so he severed all temptation from the root, ordering her to go and stay with her family until the crisis ended.

5) Complete Loyalty to Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ

The Christian king of Ghassaan was paying close attention to the goings on of Al-Madeenah society; by keeping a close eye on his enemies, he hoped to stumble across the opportunity to sow dissension among their ranks. Such an opportunity came when the Muslims boycotted Ka'ab ibn Maalik ؓ.

The king of Ghassaan sent a messenger with a personalized letter to Ka'ab ؓ; he hoped to ensnare Ka'ab ؓ, to entice him, and to convince him to abandon his religion. He argued in his letter that Ka'ab ؓ did not deserve the ill-treatment he was receiving, and he promised to treat him with honour if he immigrated to the kingdom of Ghassaan.

Immediately recognizing the letter for what it was, Ka'ab ؓ said,

“This too is a test!” According to one narration, he ﷺ added, “My mistake has taken me to such low depths that men from the people of polytheism see me as being easy prey!” Ka’ab ﷺ was completely loyal to Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ, so it never even crossed his mind to accept the king of Ghassaan’s offer. Possessing self-dignity and strong faith, Ka’ab ﷺ did not think it appropriate to even give the king any reply at all not even a negative one; nor would he be satisfied with himself if he simply tore up the letter. Nothing short of completely destroying the letter would be a sufficient response to it, and so he took it to an oven and burned it completely until all that was left of it was ashes. It is with this kind of faith and determination that one comes out of a test or difficulty with greater faith than ever before. Yes, Ka’ab ﷺ endured fifty nights of difficulty and hardship and dark trials; but it is equally true that he came out shining, as a stronger believer than he was before the beginning of his ordeal.

6) What Forgiveness from Allah ﷻ Means for a True Believer

The day a believer achieves forgiveness from Allah ﷻ is a day of great joy; for Ka’ab ﷺ, it was, according to the description of the Prophet ﷺ, the best day of his life. When revelation descended and Ka’ab’s forgiveness was announced as well as the forgiveness of Muraarah ﷺ and Hilaal ﷺ the Messenger of Allah ﷺ became overjoyed and his face lit up, looking “like a piece of the moon.” Crowds upon crowds of people went to Ka’ab in order to congratulate him. And the Prophet ﷺ said to him, “Rejoice for the best day you have had since the day your mother gave you birth,” which indicates that it was even better than the day on which Ka’ab ﷺ had embraced Islam.

When one achieves the forgiveness of Allah ﷻ, it means that Allah ﷻ is once again pleased with him, and this is the greatest goal that any Muslim can strive after. Ka’ab ﷺ expressed his joy immediately, falling down to the ground to perform

prostration, and then giving away his only outfit of clothing to the man who had first given him the good news. Muraarah ؓ and Hilaal ؓ were equally happy, though we know about their stories in less detail, since Ka'ab ؓ was giving an account of the story from his own perspective only. We at least know, based on a narration that is related by Al-Waaqidee, that Sa'eed ibn Zaid ؓ went to congratulate Hilaal ؓ; Sa'eed ؓ later said, "I went to Banu Waaqif (to Hilaal) and gave him the glad tidings, and he immediately fell down to the ground to perform prostration..."^[1]

7) Islamically Legislated Ways of Showing Thankfulness to Allah ﷻ for One of His Favours

It is extremely difficult to express in words the joy that Ka'ab ibn Maalik ؓ felt when he ؓ found out that Allah ﷻ had accepted his repentance; he alone went through the experience, and therefore he is the only human that could accurately describe his frame of mind and the level of his joy upon finding out that his ordeal was over. But we do know, based on his own account of his story, a few of the things that Ka'ab ؓ did to express thankfulness for the blessing of having been forgiven by Allah ﷻ; these are things that we too can do to show thankfulness for things that Allah ﷻ blesses us with.

a) The Prostration of Thankfulness

Immediately upon hearing the good news, Ka'ab ؓ fell down to the ground and performed prostration as a show of thankfulness to Allah ﷻ. This, in fact, was a common practice among the Prophet's Companions ؓ: If one of them would gain some new blessing or would be saved from some form of hardship, he would perform prostration; and it was a practice that the Companions ؓ had learned from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

b) Rewarding the Bearer of Glad Tidings

Ka'ab ؓ took off the only outfit of clothing he owned and gave it

^[1] Refer to *Al-Maghaazee* by Al-Waaqidee (3/1054).

as a gift to the man who had announced the good news. Without a doubt, this is an Islamically legislated way of giving a gift. If the person who gives the good news is rich, then the thing he receives is a gift; and if he is poor, then the thing he receives is charity. But in both cases, one is giving away wealth as a way of showing thankfulness to Allah ﷻ.

c) Giving Charity

Ka'ab ؓ announced that, as a part of his repentance, he would give away all of his money for charity, but the Prophet ﷺ advised him not to do so, saying, "Hold on to some of your wealth, for that is better for you." Thus, even though he ؓ disapproved of the idea of Ka'ab ؓ giving away all of his wealth, the Prophet ﷺ did approve of the core part of his idea: to give charity as a way of showing thankfulness to Allah ﷻ.

5

Lessons And Morals

The Main Themes Of The Qur'anic Verses That Deal With The Tabook Expedition

The Qur'an discusses the Battle of Tabook in more detail than any other conflict between the Muslims and their enemies; and because the battle itself was unique, so was the discussion regarding it. Allah ﷻ made it clear to the Muslims that defending their land from the Christians to the north was the duty of every single individual; that any negligence on their part in regard to fulfilling that duty would not be acceptable; that, in spite of all of the hardships and difficulties that their duties entailed, they still had to perform them otherwise, they would be heading down the roads of apostasy and hypocrisy.^[1] Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ أَنْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَتَأْفِكُمْ
إِلَى الْأَرْضِ أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ فَمَا مَتَّعُ الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ إِلَّا تَنْفِرُوا يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا
وَيَسْتَبْدِلَ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّهُ شَيْئًا وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾﴾

“O you who believe! What is the matter with you, that when you are asked to march forth in the Cause of Allah (i.e., Jihaad) you cling heavily to the earth? Are you pleased with the life of this

^[1] Refer to *Fiqhus-Seerah* by Al-Ghazaalee (pg. 404).

world rather than the Hereafter? But little is the enjoyment of the life of this world as compared with the Hereafter. If you march not forth, He will punish you with a painful torment and will replace you by another people, and you cannot harm Him at all, and Allah is Able to do all things.” (Qur’an 9: 38, 39)

When one studies the Verses that discuss the Tabook expedition, one concludes that they touch on various themes, some of which are as follows:

- 1) The egregious nature of the error of those who stayed behind from the expedition: Among all of the Prophet’s battles, Tabook was unique in the sense that, in Verses of the Noble Qur’an, Allah ﷻ exhorted Muslims to participate in it and reproached those who did not; for example, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ أَنْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ ﴾

“March forth, whether you are light (being healthy, young, and wealthy) or heavy (being ill, old, and poor), strive hard with your wealth and your lives in the Cause of Allah. This is better for you, if you but knew.” (Qur’an 9: 41)

- 2) The Tabook expedition was fraught with hardships and difficulties, a fact that Allah ﷻ made clear when He ﷻ called the expedition ‘The Time of Distress.’ Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ ﴾

“Allah has forgiven the Prophet ﷺ, the Muhaajiroon (Muslim emigrants who left their homes and came to Al-Madeenah) and the Ansaar (Muslims of Al-Madeenah) who followed him (Muhammad ﷺ) in the time of distress (Tabook expedition, etc.)”

- 3) The hypocrites stooped low, even for them, when they mocked poor Muslims for giving small amounts of charity for the

Tabook expedition. For example, when one particular Companion ﷺ came forward with four handfuls of dates, they said, "Verily, Allah does not need the charity of this person." Allah ﷻ then revealed the Verse:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا
يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخِرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾﴾

"Those who defame such of the believers who give charity (in Allah's Cause) voluntarily, and those who could not find to give charity (in Allah's Cause) except what is available to them, so they mock at them (believers), Allah will throw back their mockery on them, and they shall have a painful torment."
(Qur'an 9: 79)

- 4) Allah ﷻ decreed a great reward for those believers that did go out with the Prophet ﷺ to Tabook and there were approximately thirty-thousand of them. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا
يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخِرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾﴾

"Those who defame such of the believers who give charity (in Allah's Cause) voluntarily, and those who could not find to give charity (in Allah's Cause) except what is available to them, so they mock at them (believers), Allah will throw back their mockery on them, and they shall have a painful torment."
(Qur'an 9: 79)

And in another Verse, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ نَفَقَةً صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً وَلَا يَقْطَعُونَ وَادِيًا إِلَّا
كُتِبَ لَهُمْ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾﴾

"Nor do they spend anything (in Allah's Cause) small or great nor cross a valley, but is written to their credit, that Allah may recompense them with the best of what they used to do (i.e.,

Allah will reward their good deeds according to the reward of their best deeds which they did in the most perfect manner)."
(Qur'an 9: 121)

The Mutual Consultation That Took Place During The Tabook Expedition

Up until now, we have seen how, always in crucial situations or regarding matters that pertained to the welfare of all Muslims, the Prophet ﷺ would first consult with his Companions ؓ and then make his final decision. We also learned that he ﷺ was not the kind of leader who arbitrarily and despotically made decisions; very often, he ﷺ would accept and implement the suggestions of his Companions ؓ. This was to his credit and to their credit as well, for they would not give random, nonsensical suggestions; no, they would very carefully think a matter through before giving a suggestion. In previous battles, mutual consultation reaped wonderful fruits; for example, in the Battle of the Confederates, a suggestion made by Salmaan Al-Faarisee ؓ changed the course of the entire battle: as a result of the digging of the trenches, the confederate army was not able to enter Al-Madeenah and had, after an entire month's siege, achieved none of its goals.

The Tabook expedition was no different; the Prophet ﷺ consulted his Companions, and on certain key occasions, they gave very valuable advice, which he ﷺ both accepted and implemented; following are some examples:

1) Abu Bakr ؓ Advises the Prophet ﷺ When the Muslims Become Afflicted with Severe Thirst

At least once during the expedition, the Muslims completely ran out of water; their situation became desperate; they became so thirsty, in fact, that they thought their necks would crack open as a result of the dryness. Also, at least one of them slaughtered his camel so that he could squeeze out and drink any water that he

could find in its stomach. Abu Bakr ؓ then said to the Prophet ﷺ, "O Messenger of Allah, Allah has made you accustomed to supplicate in a good manner, so invoke Allah (for help)."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Would you love for me to do that?"

Abu Bakr ؓ said, "Yes." The Prophet ﷺ then raised his hands to invoke Allah ﷻ for help, and did not lower them until the colour of the sky changed; a cloud then came and shaded the Muslims, and rain began to pour down from it. The Muslims in the encampment filled all of the containers they had with them; some of them walked around the perimeter of the encampment and were amazed to see that it had rained throughout the encampment but nowhere outside of it.^[1]

2) 'Umar ؓ Advises the Prophet ﷺ to Forbid the Muslims from Slaughtering Their Camels

And at least once during the expedition, the Muslims became afflicted with severe hunger; their situation became so desperate that they asked the Prophet ﷺ for permission to slaughter their camels. Slaughtering their camels would certainly have solved their hunger problem, but it would create another and potentially more dangerous problem: They would not have enough riding animals left to complete their journey; it was hard enough to ride the distance from Al-Madeenah to Tabook and back, but walking it would prove very difficult indeed, especially for those Muslims who were relatively old or weak.

And yet the Prophet ﷺ felt that there was no choice left, as a result of which he ﷺ gave them permission to slaughter their camels. 'Umar ؓ then went to the Prophet ﷺ, mentioned what he thought would happen if people were to slaughter their camels, and offered a solution. His solution was that the Muslims should

[1] Related by Ibn Hibbaan in the Book of *Jihaad*, chapter, "The Tabook Expedition," *Hadeeth* number: 1707; to *Kanzul-'Ummaal* by Al-Muttaqee Al-Hindee, chapter, "Miracles and Signs of Prophethood"; to *Dalaail An-Nubuwwah*; to *Mustadrak* by Al-Haakim, who said, "This *Hadeeth* is authentic and fulfills the conditions of both Bukhaaree and Muslim, though neither of them related it."

gather all of their food in one place and that the Prophet ﷺ should then supplicate to Allah ﷻ to bless them in their food. The Prophet ﷺ implemented 'Umar's advice; his supplication was answered, and as a result this is what happened: The Muslims filled all of their containers with food; they ate until they were all full; and after that, they still had some food left over.^[1]

3) 'Umar ؓ Advises the Prophet ﷺ not to Cross Over the Border of Ash-Sham (Syria and Surrounding Regions)

When the Prophet ﷺ reached the region of Tabook, he ﷺ found that the Romans had already fled from the area; they were afraid of the Muslim army and wanted to avoid a battle at all costs. The Prophet ﷺ then consulted his Companions ؓ, asking them whether they should cross the borders of Ash-Sham and attack the Romans in their cities. 'Umar ؓ advised against that course of action, saying that the Muslims should instead return to Al-Madeenah; he reasoned that the Roman army was huge and that there were no Muslims on the other side of the Ash-Sham borders. And 'Umar ؓ was right: to attack the Romans inside of their territory was, at the time, too difficult a task for the Muslim army. The Roman army in Ash-Sham consisted of more than two-hundred and fifty thousand soldiers; to face them in the desert was one thing, but to face them in their cities was an altogether different matter. An army of thirty-thousand which was the size of the Muslim army would be no match for two-hundred and fifty thousand enemy fighters who were inside the fortresses of their homeland. 'Umar's advice, therefore, was sound; and the Prophet ﷺ accepted it and departed from Tabook twenty days after first having arrived there.

Rigorous And Harsh Training

These days, soldiers undergo extremely rigorous training: they are deprived of sleep for days at a time; they are forced to walk or jog many miles a day; they are prevented from eating and

^[1] *Saheeh Muslim*, the Book of Faith, chapter, "Proof that Those Who Die Upon Islamic Monotheism Will Definitely Enter Paradise."

drinking for extended periods of time all in the name of training. It is then hoped that they will be ready to endure the harsh conditions of war.

The Tabook expedition was not all that different; it was, in effect, a long and difficult training exercise. That is not to say that there was no other purpose behind the Tabook expedition; to the contrary, it had very important tactical and military purposes. All that I am saying here is that one of the purposes of the expedition was to train the Muslim army for later conflicts.

The training was harsh indeed: Muslim soldiers were required to traverse more than seven-hundred miles of the desert during a season of extreme heat and under conditions that were very difficult to bear. The army had a short supply of both water and food; and there were not enough riding animals to carry everyone. It is safe to say that very few people today could even imagine taking such a journey, never mind actually embarking upon it. The Prophet's Companions ﷺ were strong and hardy men, and the Prophet ﷺ was preparing them for future battles that would require exceptionally high levels of strength and fortitude.

The Tabook expedition was, after all, the last battle the Prophet ﷺ participated in; he ﷺ therefore had to complete the training of his Companions ﷺ and make sure that they were ready to go on without him. This final training exercise proved invaluable and helped prepare the Companions ﷺ to conquer the lands of Ash-Sham and Persia during the era of the rightly guided *Khaleefahs*.

The Most Important Consequences Of The Tabook Expedition

- 1) For too many years, Arabs were afraid of the Romans and here I am referring to both Arab Muslims and Arab polytheists. The Tabook expedition removed that fear from their hearts.

In the minds of Arabs, Rome was too powerful to be even challenged by any other nation. Perhaps the defeat of the Muslims at Mo'tah helped solidify that notion in the minds of

Arabs. But all of that changed at Tabook, when Roman forces fled from the Muslim army, and Arabs began to realize that if anyone was going to defeat the Romans, it was going to be the Muslims.

- 2) The Muslim army put on a show of strength and proved to the people of the region that they alone could challenge the most powerful empire on earth. And Muslims proved that they were not rallying around national or racial pride; no, they were rallying around the message of Islam, and their goal was to travel as far as possible with the message of Islam, in order to take as many people as possible out of the darkness of disbelief and bring them into the light of Islam.

So even though no military clash took place at Tabook, the expedition was a success. The Roman army left their posts, fled to Ash-Sham, and, in effect, surrendered control of the area to the Muslims. As a result, the Christian tribes of the region, which were hitherto allied to the Romans, cast off their previous alliance and agreed to submit to the rule of the Muslim nation. The Prophet ﷺ wrote a detailed treaty for them, outlining both their rights and their obligations towards the Muslim nation.

Many tribes of the region were shaken and could not believe that the Romans fled. They began to evaluate their situation, and many of them saw no benefit in continuing to ally themselves to the Romans; they naturally concluded, then, that it was in their best interests to ally themselves to the Muslim nation.

Perhaps more than anything else, the Tabook expedition was a precursor to the conquests of Ash-Sham that ended up taking place only a few years later. True, efforts were made prior to the Tabook expedition to have an influence on the region of Ash-Sham, but none of those efforts was as successful as the Tabook expedition. And though it was the last expedition that the Prophet ﷺ participated in himself, he ﷺ did have a hand in the conquests of Ash-Sham, for before he ﷺ died, he ﷺ prepared another army to invade the region; and he ﷺ appointed Usaamah ibn Zaid ibn

Haarithah ؓ to lead that army. The army was assembled in the last days of the Prophet's life but was dispatched for Ash-Sham only after the Prophet ﷺ died. The point here is that the Prophet ﷺ laid down the foundations for the conquests of Ash-Sham and of other lands as well.

- 3) The Makkah conquest helped to unite the tribes of Arabia under the banner of Islam; the Tabook expedition had a further unifying effect on the region. More and more tribes expressed their desire to ally themselves to the Muslims; to the south, for example, the people of Najraan signed treaties with the Muslims, promising to pay the *Jizyah* tax. With the success of the Tabook expedition, Arab tribes were left with no choice; they put a halt to their efforts to resist the Prophet's *Da'wah* and entered into the fold of Islam. In light of the many delegations that visited Al-Madeenah after the Tabook expedition in order to announce their entry into the fold of Islam, the year 9 H has been famously called 'The Year of the Delegations.'

6

The Most Important Events That Took Place Between The Battle Of Tabook And The Farewell Pilgrimage

The Delegation Of Thaqeef

During the period of the Makkah conquest and after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left At-Taaif, 'Urwah ibn Mas'ood Ath-Thaqafee ؓ left his fortress in At-Taaif and went out in search of the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ almost reached Al-Madeenah when 'Urwah ؓ caught up to him. 'Urwah ؓ announced his entry into the fold of Islam and then returned to his people. The first thing he did upon arriving in At-Taaif was to invite his people to Islam. As much as the people of Thaqeef loved the old 'Urwah, the 'Urwah that was a polytheist, they despised the new 'Urwah ؓ, the 'Urwah who was inviting them to Islam. They expressed their hatred towards him by firing arrows at him; at least one of the arrows fatally wounded him, and he soon died.

Shortly thereafter, the people of At-Taaif came to their senses; they realized that they could no more resist the Muslim tribes that surrounded them from all directions than they could resist one of the major empires of the time the Roman or Persian Empire. And so they agreed among themselves to send a delegation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, a delegation that consisted of six men and

that set out for Al-Madeenah in the month of Ramadan, in the year 9 H.^[1]

The Thaqeef tribe generally broke down into two sub-divisions: the Banu Maalik clan and the Ahlaaf (the allies); each of the two groups was represented by three men in the delegation, and the man that was appointed as leader over them all was 'Abd Yaa-Lail ibn 'Amr.^[2] The delegation was not organized in a haphazard manner; to the contrary, it was strategically put together to give it a diplomatic advantage during negotiations with the Muslims in Al-Madeenah. The leaders of Thaqeef hoped that the Banu Umayyah clan from the *Muhaajiroon* would intercede on their behalf and convince the Prophet ﷺ to agree to sign a treaty with them. Their hopes were based on past good relations between the Banu Umayyah clan and the Ahlaaf.^[3]

The Companions ؓ knew that the Prophet ﷺ had been hoping for a while that the Thaqeef tribe would enter into the fold of Islam. For that reason, Abu Bakr ؓ and Al-Mugheerah ؓ raced with one another to give the Prophet ﷺ the good news when they saw the delegation of Thaqeef arrive in Al-Madeenah. In the end, Al-Mugheerah ؓ yielded and told Abu Bakr ؓ that he could be the one to give the good news.^[4]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was happy to receive the delegation, and he ﷺ even built a tent for them near the *Masjid*, so that they could hear the Qur'an and watch the people when they prayed. Also, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took upon himself the expenses that were incurred during the hosting of the delegation.

Throughout their stay in Al-Madeenah, the delegates visited the Prophet ﷺ on a daily basis. And while they were out visiting him, they would leave 'Uthmaan ibn Abu Al-'Aas behind, charging him with the task of watching over their things. Whenever they

[1] Refer to *Risaalatul-Anbiyaa* by 'Umar Ahmad 'Umar (pg. 199).

[2] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishaam (4/193).

[3] Refer to *Rijaal Al-Idaarah Fid-Daulatul-Islaamiyyah* by Dr. Husain Muhammad (pg. 76).

[4] Refer to *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishaam (4/193).

returned from a visit to the Prophet ﷺ and 'Uthmaan's guard duties were over, they would take their midday nap; meanwhile, 'Uthmaan ibn Abu Al-'Aas would go to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, ask him about the religion, and ask him to recite the Qur'an for him; 'Uthmaan ؓ was a quick study and soon learned a great deal about the teachings of Islam. Midday was a time during which most people took a nap, and so 'Uthmaan ؓ would sometimes go to the *Masjid* only to find out that the Prophet ﷺ was, like most other people, taking his midday nap. But even that did not deter 'Uthmaan ؓ, for he would then go to Abu Bakr ؓ and ask him questions about the teachings of Islam. And he ؓ would keep these activities a secret from his fellow delegates. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ took notice of 'Uthmaan's desire to learn and became impressed by both his desire and determination.

The delegates continued to visit the Prophet ﷺ day after day, and each day he ﷺ invited them to Islam. 'Abd Yaa-Lail said to him, "Will you agree to a treaty with us, so that we can return to our families and our people?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Yes, if you accept Islam, I will agree to a treaty with you; otherwise, there will be no treaty, and there will be no truce between us and you."

'Abd Yaa-Lail said, "Consider the matter of fornication; our people are mostly single and travel far to the west; we have to fornicate, for none of us can patiently endure celibacy." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Fornication (and adultery) is among the practices that Allah made prohibited upon Muslims. Allah said:

﴿وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا﴾ (٣٢)

"And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse. Verily, it is a Faahishah [i.e., anything that transgresses its limits (a great sin)], and an evil way (that leads one to Hell unless Allah forgives him)." (Qur'an 17: 32)

'Abd Yaa-Lail said, "Consider the matter of usury." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Usury is prohibited." 'Abd Yaa-Lail said, "All of what we have is usury wealth (i.e., is mixed in usury, is derived

through usury, is involved in usury)." The Prophet ﷺ said, "You may keep your original capital. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾
 ﴿٢٧٨﴾

"O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah and give up what remains (due to you) from Riba (usury) (from now onward), if you are (really) believers." (Qur'an 2: 278)

'Abd Yaa-Lail said, "Consider the matter of alcohol. It is the juice of our grapes, and we cannot live without it."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily, Allah has prohibited it!" He ﷺ then recited this Verse:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾
 ﴿٩٠﴾

"O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks), gambling, Al-Ansaab, and Al-Azlaam (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Shaitaan's (Satan) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful." (Qur'an 5: 90)

The delegates left the Prophet ﷺ and returned to their tent, so that they could discuss matters in private. 'Abd Yaa-Lail was vehemently opposed to embracing Islam if the above-mentioned things fornication, usury, and alcohol would be forbidden upon them. It must be understood that he was not rejecting those prohibitions because of a lack of faith in Islam; no, he was ready to accept and embrace Islam. His problem was that he was thinking like a politician: he could not return to his people and impose rules that would be highly unpopular among them. He expressed this sentiment when he privately said to the other delegates, "Woe upon you all! How can we return to our people with the prohibition of these three things? By Allah, the people of Thaqeef will never be patient (and disciplined) enough to stay

away from either alcohol or fornication.”

Sufyaan ibn ‘Abdullah, another member of the delegation, said, “O man, listen: If Allah wants good for the people of Thaqeef, they will be able to patiently stay away from those things! Look at those people who are with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (His Companions ﷺ). In the past, they too were in a similar situation (i.e., they fornicated and drank alcohol during the pre-Islamic days of ignorance), but they changed: They were patient and abandoned all of those practices. And pray, do not forget that we fear this man (i.e., the Prophet ﷺ). He has achieved ascendancy over all of these lands. We, on the other hand, are in a fortress in a corner of the earth, while Islam has spread all around us. By Allah, were he to lay siege to our fortress for only a single month, we would die of hunger. I see no solution except Islam, and I fear the coming of a day that will be like the day of Makkah (the Makkah Conquest).”

Khaalid ibn Sa’eed ibn Al-‘Aas, yet another member of the delegation, was charged with the task of going back and forth as a negotiator between the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Thaqeef delegation. He continued to carry out this task until the treaty was written down in its entirety. And throughout the visit of the Thaqeef delegation, the Prophet ﷺ would send them food; and up until the moment they embraced Islam, they would refuse to eat from the food he gave to them until he ﷺ ate some of it first.

During the negotiations, the Thaqeef delegates said to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, “Consider the matter of Ar-Rabbah.” Ar-Rabbah was their idol. The Prophet ﷺ said, “It must be destroyed.”

They said, “Never! Were Ar-Rabbah to know that we intend to destroy it, it would kill all of our families.”

‘Umar ibn Al-Khattaab ؓ said, “Woe upon you, O ‘Abd Yaa-Lail! Ar-Rabbah is nothing more than a stone; it does not know who worships it and who does not worship it.”

“We did not come to you, O ‘Umar,” ‘Abd Yaa-Lail said.

Nonetheless, the delegates embraced Islam, and the treaty was signed, its terms having been written down by Khaalid ibn Sa'eed. After the treaty was signed and agreed upon, the delegates asked the Prophet ﷺ to delay the destruction of Ar-Rabbah for a period of three years. They had entered into the fold of Islam, but it seems that their faith was still weak; but perhaps more than anything else, they feared the anger of their people, and wanted to bring them around to the truth slowly. Whatever their intentions were, they did not understand as of then that compromises regarding issues of faith and beliefs were not acceptable. The Prophet ﷺ of course refused, but still they did not let up: They asked for a delay of two years. Again the Prophet ﷺ refused, and so they asked for a delay of one year. When the Prophet ﷺ refused even that, they asked for a delay of one month. The Prophet ﷺ refused to allow for any delay whatsoever; the idol had to be destroyed immediately, regardless of how the population of Thaqeef particularly their women and the foolish among them reacted.

Realizing that Ar-Rabbah had to be destroyed but not wanting for their people to turn against them, the delegates asked the Prophet ﷺ to release them from the duty of having to destroy it themselves. To this the Prophet ﷺ agreed, which meant that he ﷺ would have to send a unit of men to carry out the task for the delegates. The delegates then brazenly asked the Prophet ﷺ to release them from the obligation of having to pray. Here, they were going too far; but they were new Muslims, and so gentleness, and not harshness, was called for. So rather than chastise them, the Prophet ﷺ simply said, "There is no good in a religion in which there is no prayer."^[1] The delegates further asked to be exempted from other religious duties and to be given license to perpetrate certain unlawful deeds. When they saw that the Prophet ﷺ was not going to grant them what they wanted, they finally submitted and stopped asking for any more exemptions.

^[1] Refer to *At-Taareekh Al-Islaamee* by Al-Humaidee (7/50); to *Al-Maghaazee* by Al-Waaqidee (3/968); to *As-Seerah* by Ibn Hishaam; and to *Al-Mabsoot* by As-Sarakhsee.

From the moment they arrived in Al-Madeenah until the time of their departure, the Prophet ﷺ remained a kind and generous host to them. And when they left, he ﷺ announced to them that he was appointing 'Uthmaan ibn Abul-'Aas ؓ to be the new governor of At-Taaif. Of all the delegates, 'Uthmaan ؓ was the youngest, but he was also the most eager to study the teachings of Islam.

In fact, all of the delegates underwent a positive change during their stay in Al-Madeenah. Meeting with the Prophet ﷺ and mixing with his Companions ؓ enabled them to see the practical manifestation of Islam's teachings, and they were duly impressed. They wanted to start off their new life as Muslims on the right note, and so they fasted every day for the remainder of the month. Having stayed in Al-Madeenah for fifteen days, they embarked upon their return journey to At-Taaif.

Shortly thereafter, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent a unit of men to destroy Ar-Rabbah. The unit was headed by Khaalid ibn Al-Waleed ؓ and among its members were Al-Mugheerah ibn Sho'bah ؓ and Abu Sufyaan ibn Harb ؓ. In the meanwhile, the Thaqeef delegates had returned to At-Taaif and had successfully convinced the rest of their fellow tribesmen to embrace Islam.

When Khaalid's unit arrived in At-Taaif, Al-Mugheerah ibn Sho'bah ؓ, with the aid of a number of men, went directly to Ar-Rabbah in order to destroy it.^[1] Throughout the period of demolition, Al-Mugheerah ؓ was heavily guarded by his fellow clansmen from the children of Mu'attib, who feared that the people of Thaqeef might attack him just as they had previously attacked and killed 'Urwah ibn Mas'ood Ath-Thaqafee ؓ.

Everyone from the Thaqeef tribe men, women, and children came out to witness the demolition of their once revered idol, Ar-Rabbah. Because they had only recently been polytheists, and because their faith was not strong, most of them thought that Ar-Rabbah could not be destroyed that, somehow, it would defend itself and wreak vengeance on those who tried to do it harm.

^[1] Refer to *Al-Maghaazee* (3/671).

This was of course only wishful and foolish thinking on their part, and they soon came to realize that Ar-Rabbah was nothing more than an inanimate object that could no more defend itself than could a piece of wood when it is about to be hacked up into pieces with an axe.

Al-Mugheerah ؓ was a man of a very easygoing disposition; he enjoyed banter and good-natured teasing. He ؓ said to his companions, "By Allah, in regard to the people of Thaqeef, I will give you something to laugh about." He pretended to strike down Ar-Rabbah with his hatchet, and he then fell to the ground, acting as if he were mortally wounded. Everyone in the crowd gasped, and they said, "May Allah distance Al-Mugheerah (from all that is good); Ar-Rabbah has killed him." Thus they all became overjoyed when they saw Al-Mugheerah fall down to the ground.^[1] They then turned to the rest of the members of Khaalid's unit and said, "Whosoever among you wishes to approach Ar-Rabbah, let him do so, and let him try to destroy it. For by Allah, no one will ever be able to do so." At that moment, Al-Mugheerah ibn Sho'bah ؓ sprang up off the ground, showing that nothing was wrong with him, and he said, "May Allah cover you in shame, O people of Thaqeef! It is nothing more than a trifling thing that is made of stone.... So accept safety and well-being from Allah, and worship Him (alone)."^[2]

Al-Mugheerah ibn Sho'bah ؓ and the other members of his unit then proceeded to destroy Ar-Rabbah and completely level it to the ground. While they were destroying Ar-Rabbah, its custodian was standing nearby and was furious. He was also impatiently waiting for Ar-Rabbah to defend itself to lash out at Al-Mugheerah ؓ and his Companions ؓ. But his waiting was in vain; soon they finished destroying it completely, and all that was

^[1] Refer to *As-Saraayah Wal-Bu'ooth* (pg. 300); to *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* by Ibn Katheer, chapter, "The Thaqeef Delegation Visits the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Ramadan of the Year 9 H."

^[2] Refer to *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* by Ibn Katheer, chapter, "The Thaqeef Delegation Visits the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Ramadan of the Year 9 H"; and to *Dalaail An-Nubuwwah* (5/303).