

Khalifa Abu Bakr - Makkah Revisited

Treaty of Hudaibiya

Journey to Makkah. Early in 628 C.E. the Holy Prophet along with his companions including Abu Bakr started for Makkah with a view to performing the Haj. When the Quraish of Makkah came to know that the Muslims were coming to Makkah they sent Khalid bin Walid and Ikramah bin Nbu Jahl with two hundred horsemen to intercept the Muslims and prevent their advance to Makkah. Finding the way to Makkah barred, the Holy Prophet consulted his companions as to what course of action they should adopt. Abu Bakr advised: "O Prophet of Allah, we have come to perform the Haj. We have no intention of fighting with the Quraish. Let us go ahead. If they stop us we shall fight, otherwise not."

This advice was accepted by the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet inquired of his companions whether any one out of them could lead the Muslims to Makkah by a path other than the main route which had been barred by the enemy. One of the companions volunteered to show an alternative way. He accordingly led the Muslims on a way full of rough rocks through the ravines of Mudniya.

Camp at Hudaibiya. After a weary march the Muslims reached Hudaibiya on the lower side of Makkah and within the sacred territory. The Muslims encamped at Hudaibiya and here Urwa b. Masud came to see the Holy Prophet on behalf of the Quraish. He talked in diplomatic language, and tried to impress the Muslims that the Quraish were strong, and would not allow the Muslims to visit Makkah. He also insinuated that at the time of crisis the followers of the Holy Prophet were likely to abandon him. Thereupon Abu Bakr flared up and said, "May God curse you, how dare you think that we will abandon the Holy Prophet. Rest assured we will fight to the last for him." While talking, Urwa in the usual Arab way pushed his hand too close to the beard of the Holy Prophet. Mughira, a companion who stood near, warned him, "Keep your hands away from the beard of the Holy Prophet, for the hand that touches the sacred beard will be cut."

Hudaibiya pact. When Urwa returned to the Quraish he gave his impressions about the Holy Prophet and the Muslims in the following terms: "O people of the Quraish. I have seen kings but by God I have never seen any king as I have seen Muhammad amongst his companions. If he makes his ablutions they would not let the water fall on the ground; if a hair from his body falls they pick it up. They will not surrender him for anything in any case, do what you please."

After some further negotiations a pact was executed between the Quraish and the Muslims. According to the treaty of Hudaibiya, truce was declared between the Quraish and the Muslims for a period of ten years. It was stipulated that if any tribe wished to enter into treaty with the Muslims it could do so, and whoever wished to enter into a covenant with the Quraish was likewise free to do so. It was provided that if any one from the Quraish came to the Muslims without the permission of his guardian he was to be returned to the Quraish. On the other hand if a Muslim sought refuge with the Quraish, he was not to be delivered to the Muslims. It was further agreed that the Muslims would withdraw that year without performing the pilgrimage, and that they would be free to perform the Haj the following year when they could stay in Makkah for three days.

Abu Bakr on the treaty of Hudaibiya. Prima facie the Hudaibiya pact favored the Quraish, and some of the Muslims were critical of the terms of the treaty. Umar regarded the treaty as humiliating to the Muslims. He saw Abu Bakr, and wanted him to persuade the Holy Prophet to withdraw from the pact. Abu Bakr said: "The Holy Prophet knows things more than we do. What the Holy Prophet has done is in the interest of the Muslims. Do not be critical, but hold fast to the stirrup of the Holy Prophet."

Umar waited on the Holy Prophet, and gave expression to his discontentment with the terms of the treaty. The Holy Prophet assured him that whatever he had done was under the command of God, and the terms

which appeared to be against the interests of the Muslims would turn out to their advantage.

Abu Bakr expressed his views about the treaty of Hudaibiya in the following words: "No victory of Islam has more importance than the treaty of Hudaibiya. Men are always for hurrying things on, but God lets them ripen. Previously there had subsisted a wall of partition between the Muslims and the rest of men; they never spoke to each other, and wherever they met they began to fight. Subsequently hostility died down and security and mutual confidence took its place. Every man of even moderate intelligence who heard of Islam joined us and in the twenty-two months in which the truce subsisted the number of conversions was greater than throughout the whole of the previous period, and the faith of Islam diffused itself in all directions among the people."

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