

Khalifa Abu Bakr - Conquest of Makkah and After

The Farewell Pilgrimage

The Holy Prophet's last pilgrimage. In 632 C.E. the Holy Prophet decided to proceed to Makkah for performing the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage was planned on a large scale. Messengers were sent to all parts of Arabia asking the Muslims to collect at Madina for the purpose of the pilgrimage. In response to this call over one lakh Muslims from all parts of Arabia assembled at Madina.

The caravan. After all arrangements had been completed, a caravan of over one lakh Muslims, fired with their enthusiasm for Islam, started for Makkah in submission to the call of Allah. It was a remarkable sight the like of which the people of Arabia had not seen before. The Holy Prophet rode at the head of the caravan. All his wives accompanied him. By the side of the Holy Prophet rode Abu Bakr. He too was accompanied by his wives.

Dhul Hulaifa. At Dhul Hulaifa on the outskirts of Makkah, the Holy Prophet and all his followers put on the Ihram-the pilgrim's garb. The Holy Prophet gave the signal call Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk-here I am at your service O Lord, and this was repeated by all the one lakh persons in the congregation. The entire valley came to ring with this sound the resolve of the Muslims to place themselves at the disposal of God.

Makkah and Mina. The party reached Makkah on the 4th of Zul Hajj, after a journey of nineteen days. After a stay of four days in Makkah the party left Makkah for Mina on the 8th of Zul Hajj, and passed the night there. The following day the pilgrims proceeded to Arafat.

Farewell Address. After mid-day prayers on the 9th of Zul Hajj at Arafat, the Holy Prophet delivered his historic farewell address. After giving praise to God, the Holy Prophet said: "O people, listen carefully to my words for I may not be among you next year, nor ever address you again from this spot. O people just as you regard this month as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as sacred. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one that none may hurt you. Usury is forbidden. Satan has despaired in leading you astray in big things, so beware of obeying him in small things. Women have rights over you and you have rights over them. Be good to them. You may soon have to appear before Allah and answer for your deeds. So beware. Do not go astray after I am gone. O people, no prophet will come after me, and no new faith will be born. Worship your Allah, say your prayers, fast during the month of Ramadhan, and give of your wealth in charity. All Muslims, free or enslaved have the same rights and the same responsibilities. None is higher than the other unless he is higher in virtue. Feed your slaves as you feed yourselves. Do not oppress them, nor usurp their rights" Having spoken thus the Holy Prophet turned his face to the Heavens and said "Be my witness O Allah, that I have conveyed Your message to Your people". Thereupon the people corroborated saying "Yes, you Prophet of Allah you have done so."

The revelation. After the Prophet had delivered his address. God revealed to him the verses: "This day have I perfected for you your faith, and completed My blessing upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion "

Reaction of Abu Bakr. As Abu Bakr heard the verses about the faith having been perfected he wept because he realized that the mission having been completed, the day when the Holy Prophet was to depart to meet his Lord was imminent.

Return to Madina. After the farewell address, the party left Arafat in the evening and passed the night at Muzdalifa. The following day they went to Mina and sacrificed the animals. The Holy Prophet sacrificed 63 animals, one for each year of his life. Abu Bakr sacrificed 61 animals, one for each year of his life. The

men then shaved their heads and the ceremony of the Haj was completed. Thereafter the pilgrims returned to Madina. On the return journey. Abu Bakr was overwhelmed with the feeling that one epoch was coming to close and another epoch was about to begin which would be fraught with difficulties for the Muslims.

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