

ASSIGNMENT No. 1

Q 1. Analyze the geographical and social conditions of Arabia before the advent of Islam.

In writing the history of Islam, it is customary to begin with a survey of the political, economic, social and religious conditions of Arabia on the eve of the Proclamation by Muhammad (may God bless him and his Ahlul-Bait) of his mission as Messenger of God.

It is the second convention of the historians (the first being to give a geographical description of the region). I shall also abide by this convention, and will review briefly, the general conditions in Arabia in the late sixth and early seventh century A.D.

Political Conditions in Arabia

The most remarkable feature of the political life of Arabia before Islam was the total absence of political organization in any form. With the exception of Yemen in the south-west, no part of the Arabian peninsula had any government at any time, and the Arabs never acknowledged any authority other than the authority of the chiefs of their tribes. The authority of the tribal chiefs, however, rested, in most cases, on their character and personality, and was moral rather than political.

The modern student of history finds it incredible that the Arabs lived, generation after generation, century after century, without a government of any kind. Since there was no government, there was no law and no order.

The only law of the land was lawlessness. In the event a crime was committed, the injured party took law in its own hands, and tried to administer "justice" to the offender. This system led very frequently to acts of horrendous cruelty.

If the Arab ever exercised any modicum of restraint, it was not because of any susceptibility he had to questions of right or wrong but because of the fear of provoking reprisals and vendetta. Vendetta consumed whole generations of Arabs.

Since there were no such things as police, courts or judges, the only protection a man could find from his enemies, was in his own tribe. The tribe had an obligation to protect its members even if they had committed crimes. Tribalism or 'asabiyya (the clan spirit) took precedence over ethics. A tribe that failed to protect its members from their enemies, exposed itself to ridicule, obloquy and contempt. Ethics, of course, did not enter the picture anywhere.

Since Arabia did not have a government, and since the Arabs were anarchists by instinct, they were locked up in ceaseless warfare. War was a permanent institution of the Arabian society. The desert could support only a limited number of people, and the state of inter-tribal war maintained a rigid control over the growth of population. But the Arabs themselves did not see war in this light.

To them, war was a pastime or rather a dangerous sport, or a species of tribal drama, waged by professionals, according to old and gallant codes, while the "audience" cheered. Eternal peace held no appeal for them, and war provided an escape from drudgery and from the monotony of life in the desert.

They, therefore, courted the excitement of the clash of arms. War gave them an opportunity to display their skills at archery, fencing and horsemanship, and also, in war, they could distinguish themselves by their heroism and at the same time win glory and honor for their tribes. In many cases, the Arabs fought for the sake of fighting, whether or not there was a cause belli.

G. E. Grunebaum

“In the century before the rise of Islam the tribes dissipated all their energies in tribal guerrilla fighting, all against all.” (Classical Islam – A History 600-1258 – 1970)

The nomadic tribes ranged over the peninsula and plundered the caravans and the small settlements. Many caravans and villages bought immunity from these raids by paying a fixed amount of money to the nomadic freebooters.

It is important to grasp the fact that on the eve of the birth of Islam there was no government at any level in Arabia, and this fact may even have affected the rise of Islam itself. The total absence of government, even in its most rudimentary form, was a phenomenon so extraordinary that it has been noted and commented upon by many orientalist, among them:

D. S. Margoliouth

“Arabia would have remained pagan had there been a man in Mecca who could strike a blow; who would act. But many as were Mohammed's ill-wishers, there was not one of them who had this sort of courage; and (as has been seen) there was no magistracy by which he could be tried.” (Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, 1931)

Maxime Rodinson

“Manslaughter carried severe penalties according to the unwritten law of the desert. In practice the free Arabs were bound by no written code of law, and no state existed to enforce its statutes with the backing of a police force. The only protection for a man's life was the certainty established by custom, that it would be dearly bought. Blood for blood and a life for a life. The vendetta, that in Arabic, is one of the pillars of Bedouin society.” (Mohammed, 1971)

Herbert J. Muller

“In Mohammed's Arabia there was no state – there were only scattered independent tribes and towns. The Prophet formed his own state, and he gave it a sacred law prescribed by Allah.” (The Loom of History, 1958)

The population of Arabia consisted of two main divisions, sedentary and nomadic. Hijaz and South Arabia were dotted with many small and a few large towns. The rest of the country had a floating population composed of Bedouins.

They were backward in the civil and political sense but they were also a source of anxiety and fear for the sedentary population. They lived as pirates of the desert, and they were notorious for their unrestrained individualism and anarchic tribal particularism.

The more important tribes exercised a certain amount of authority in their respective areas. In Makkah the dominant tribe was the Quraysh; in Yathrib, the dominant tribes were the Arab tribes of Aus and Khazraj, and

the Jewish tribes of Nadheer, Qaynuqaa and Qurayza. The Quraysh of Makkah considered themselves superior to the Bedouins but the latter had only contempt for the town-dwellers who for them were only a “nation of shopkeepers.”

All Arabs were notorious for certain characteristics such as arrogance, conceit, boastfulness, vindictiveness and excessive love of plunder. Their arrogance was partly responsible for their failure to establish a state of their own. They lacked political discipline, and until the rise of Islam, never acknowledged any authority as paramount in Arabia.

They acknowledged the authority of a man who led them into a foray but he could command their obedience only if they had an assurance of receiving a fair share of the booty, and his authority lapsed as soon as the expedition was over.

Economic Conditions

Economically, the Jews were the leaders of Arabia. They were the owners of the best arable lands in Hijaz, and they were the best farmers in the country. They were also the entrepreneurs of such industries as existed in Arabia in those days, and they enjoyed a monopoly of the armaments industry.

Slavery was an economic institution of the Arabs. Male and female slaves were sold and bought like animals, and they formed the most depressed class of the Arabian society.

The most powerful class of the Arabs was made up by the capitalists and money-lenders. The rates of interest which they charged on loans were exorbitant, and were especially designed to make them richer and richer, and the borrowers poorer and poorer.

The most important urban centers of Arabia were Makkah and Yathrib, both in Hijaz. The citizens of Makkah were mostly merchants, traders and money-lenders. Their caravans traveled in summer to Syria and in winter to Yemen.

They also traveled to Bahrain in the east and to Iraq in the northeast. The caravan trade was basic to the economy of Makkah, and its organization called for considerable skill, experience and ability.

R. V. C. Bodley

The arrivals and departures of caravans were important events in the lives of the Meccans. Almost everyone in Mecca had some kind of investment in the fortunes of the thousands of camels, the hundreds of men, horses, and donkeys which went out with hides, raisins, and silver bars, and came back with oils, perfumes and manufactured goods from Syria, Egypt and Persia, and with spices and gold from the south. (The Messenger, 1946, p. 31)

In Yathrib, the Arabs made their living by farming, and the Jews made theirs as businessmen and industrialists. But the Jews were not exclusively businessmen and industrialists; among them also there were many farmers, and they had brought much waste land under cultivation.

Economically, socially and politically, Hijaz was the most important province in Arabia in the early seventh century.

Francesco Gabrieli

On the eve of Islam the most complex and advanced human aggregate of the Arabian peninsula lived in the city of the Quraysh. The hour of the south Arab kingdoms, of Petra and Palmyra, had passed for some time in the history of Arabia. Now the future was being prepared there, in Hijaz (The Arabs – A Compact History, 1963)

The Arabs and the Jews both practiced usury. Many among them were professional usurers; they lived on the interest they charged on their loans.

E. A. Belyaev

“Usury (riba) was widely practiced in Mecca, for in order to participate in the profitable caravan trade many a Meccan who had only a modest income had to resort to usurers; despite the high interest, he could hope to benefit after the safe return of the caravan. The richer merchants were both traders and usurers.

Money-lenders usually took a dinar for a dinar, a dirhem for a dirhem, in other words, 100 per cent interest. In the Koran 3:130, Allah addressing the faithful, prescribes:

'Do not practice usury doubled twofold.'

This could mean that interests of 200 or even 400 per cent were demanded. The nets of Meccan usury caught not only fellow-citizens and tribesmen but also members of the Hijazi

Bedouin tribes active in the Meccan trade. As in ancient Athens, ‘the principal means of oppressing the people's freedom were money and usury.’ (Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages, 1969)

Social Conditions

Arabia was a male-dominated society. Women had no status of any kind other than as sex objects. The number of women a man could marry was not fixed. When a man died, his son “inherited” all his wives except his own mother.

A savage custom of the Arabs was to bury their female infants alive. Even if an Arab did not wish to bury his daughter alive, he still had to uphold this “honorable” tradition, being unable to resist social pressures.

Drunkenness was a common vice of the Arabs. With drunkenness went their gambling. They were compulsive drinkers and compulsive gamblers. The relations of the sexes were extremely loose. Many women sold sex to make their living since there was little else they could do. These women flew flags on their houses, and were called “ladies of the flags” (dhat-er-rayyat).

Sayyid Qutb of Egypt in his book, Milestones, published by the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, Salimiah, Kuwait in 1978 (pp. 48, 49), has quoted the famous traditionalist, Imam Bukhari, on the institution of marriage in Arabia before Islam as follows:

The Shihab (az-Suhri) said: 'Urwah b. az-Zubayr informed him that Aishah, the wife of the Prophet (God bless and preserve him), informed him that marriage in the Jahiliyah was of four types:

1. One was the marriage of people as it is today, where a man betroths his ward or his daughter to another man, and the latter assigns a dower (bridewealth) to her and then marries her.

2. Another type was where a man said to his wife when she was purified from her menses, 'Send to N and ask to have intercourse with him;' her husband then stays away from her and does not touch her at all until it is clear that she is pregnant from that (other) man with whom she sought intercourse.

When it is clear that she is pregnant, her husband has intercourse with her if he wants. He acts thus simply from the desire for a noble child. This type of marriage was (known as) *nikah al-istibda*, the marriage of seeking intercourse.

3. Another type was when a group (*raht*) of less than ten men used to visit the same woman and all of them had to have intercourse with her. If she became pregnant and bore a child, when some nights had passed after the birth she sent for them, and not a man of them might refuse.

When they had come together in her presence, she would say to them, 'You (pl.) know the result of your acts; I have borne a child and he is your (sing.) child, N.' – naming whoever she will by his name. Her child is attached to him, and the man may not refuse.

4. The fourth type is when many men frequent a woman, and she does not keep herself from any who comes to her. These women are the *baghaya* (prostitutes). They used to set up at their doors banners forming a sign. Whoever wanted them went in to them. If one of them conceived and bore a child, they gathered together to her and summoned the physiognomists.

Then they attached her child to the man whom they thought (the father), and the child remained attached to him and was called his son, no objection to this course being possible. When Muhammad (God bless and preserve him) came preaching the truth, he destroyed all the types of marriage of the *Jahiliya* except that which people practice today.

The State of Religion in Pre-Islamic Arabia

The period in the Arabian history which preceded the birth of Islam is known as the Times of Ignorance. Judging by the beliefs and the practices of the pagan Arabs, it appears that it was a most appropriate name. The Arabs were the devotees of a variety of "religions" which can be classified into the following categories.

1. Idol-worshippers or polytheists. Most of the Arabs were idolaters. They worshipped numerous idols and each tribe had its own idol or idols and fetishes. They had turned the Kaaba in Makkah, which according to tradition, had been built by the Prophet Abraham and his son, Ismael, and was dedicated by them to the service of One God, into a heathen pantheon housing 360 idols of stone and wood.

2. Atheists This group was composed of the materialists and believed that the world was eternal.

3. Zindiqs They were influenced by the Persian doctrine of dualism in nature. They believed that there were two gods representing the twin forces of good and evil or light and darkness, and both were locked up in an unending struggle for supremacy.

4. Sabines. They worshipped the stars.

5. Jews When the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and drove the Jews out of Palestine and Syria, many of them found new homes in Hijaz in Arabia. Under their influence, many Arabs also became converts to Judaism. Their strong centers were the towns of Yathrib, Khayber, Fadak and Umm-ul-Qura.

6. Christians. The Romans had converted the north Arabian tribe of Ghassan to Christianity. Some clans of Ghassan had migrated to and had settled in Hijaz. In the south, there were many Christians in Yemen where the creed was originally brought by the Ethiopian invaders. Their strong center was the town of Najran.

7. Monotheists There was a small group of monotheists present in Arabia on the eve of the rise of Islam. Its members did not worship idols, and they were the followers of the Prophet Abraham. The members of the families of Muhammad, the future prophet, and Ali ibn Abi Talib, the future caliph, and most members of their clan – the Banu Hashim – belonged to this group.

Education among the Arabs Before Islam

Among the Arabs there were extremely few individuals who could read and write. Most of them were not very eager to learn these arts. Some historians are of the opinion that the culture of the period was almost entirely oral. The Jews and the Christians were the custodians of such knowledge as Arabia had.

The greatest intellectual accomplishment of the pagan Arabs was their poetry. They claimed that God had bestowed the most remarkable qualities of the head upon the Greeks (its proof is their science and philosophy); of hand upon the Chinese (its proof is their craftsmanship); and of the tongue upon the Arabs (its proof is their eloquence). Their greatest pride, both before and after Islam, was their eloquence and poetry. The importance of poetry to them can be gauged by the following testimony:

D. S. Margoliouth

In nomad Arabia, the poets were part of the war equipment of the tribe; they defended their own, and damaged hostile tribes by the employment of a force which was supposed indeed to work mysteriously, but which in fact consisted in composing dexterous phrases of a sort that would attract notice, and would consequently be diffused and remembered widely. (Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, 1931)

E. A. Belyaev

Most of the information on the economic conditions, social regime and mores of the Arabs in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., comes from ancient Arabic or pre-Islamic poetry, known for its 'photographic faithfulness' to all phases of Arabian tribal life and its environment. Specialists, therefore, accept this poetry as the 'most important and authoritative source for describing the Arab people and their customs' in this period (Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages, 1969)

Arabic poetry was rich in eloquence and imagery but it was limited in range, and was lacking in profundity. Its content might be interesting but it was stereotyped. The masterpieces of their poetry follow almost exactly the same sequence of ideas and images. It was, nevertheless, a faithful mirror of life in ancient Arabia. Also, in cultivating the art of poetry, the Arab poets were, unconsciously, developing one of the greatest artifacts of mankind, the Arabic language.

Course: Early Islamic History 570-661 (5674)

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The greatest compositions of the pagan Arabs were the so-called “Golden Odes,” a collection of seven poems, supposedly of unsurpassed excellence in spontaneity, power and eloquence. They were suspended in Kaaba as a challenge to any aspiring genius to excel or to match them. Sir William Muir writes about these poems as follows:

The Seven Suspended Poems still survive from a period anterior even to Mohammed, a wondrous specimen of artless eloquence. The beauty of the language and wild richness of the imagery are acknowledged by the European reader; but the subject of the poet was limited, and the beaten track seldom deviated from.

The charm of his mistress, the envied spot marked by the still fresh traces of her encampment, the solitude of her deserted haunts, his generosity and prowess, the unrivaled glory of his tribe, the noble qualities of his camel - these were the themes which, with little variation of treatment, and with no contrivance whatever of plot or story, occupied the Arab muse – and some of them only added fuel to the besetting vices of the people, vainglory, envy, vindictiveness and pride (The Life of Mohammed, 1877)

With the rise of Islam the emphasis shifted, temporarily, from poetry to prose, and poetry lost its prestigious position as the “queen” of the arts of Arabia.

The greatest “composition” of Islam was Al-Qur’an al-Majid, the Scripture of Islam, and it was in prose. Muslims believe that Qur’an was “composed” in Heaven before it was revealed to Muhammad, the Messenger of God. They believe that human genius can never produce anything that can match its style or contents. For the last fifty generations, it has been, for them, a model of literary, philosophical, theological, legal, metaphysical and mystical thought.

An attempt has been made in the foregoing pages to portray the general state of Arabia and the lifestyle of the Arabs before Islam. This “portrait” is authentic as it has been drawn from the “archives” of the pre-Islamic Arabs themselves.

Judging by this portrait, it appears that Arabia before Islam was without social amenity or historical depth, and the Arabs lived in moral bankruptcy and spiritual servitude. Life for them was devoid of meaning, purpose and direction. The human spirit was in chains, and was awaiting, as it were, a signal, to make a titanic struggle, to break loose and to become free.

The signal was given in A.D. 610 by Muhammad, the son of Abdullah, in the city of Makkah, when he proclaimed his mission of prophethood, and launched the movement called Islam on its world-girdling career.

Islam was the greatest blessing for mankind ever. It set men and women free, through obedience to their Creator, from slavery in all its manifestations. Muhammad, the Messenger of God, was the supreme emancipator of mankind. He extricated man from the “pits of life.”

The Arabian peninsula was geographically peripheral and politically terra incognita until the early seventh century A.D. It was then that Muhammad put it on the political map of the world by making it the theater of momentous events of history.

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Before Islam, the Arabs had played only a marginal role in the history of the Middle East, and they would have remained forever a nation of animists and shepherds if Muhammad (may God bless him and his Ahlul-Bait) had not provided them the focus and the stimulus that welded their scattered nomadic tribes into a purposeful driving force.

He molded a “nation” out of a rough mass without basic structure. He invested the Arabs with a new dynamism, idealism and explosive creativity, and they changed the course of history. He created an entirely new mental and psychological ecology, and his work placed an emphatic period in world history; it was the end of one era and the beginning of another.

Writing about this watershed in history, Francesco Gabrieli says in his book, *The Arabs – A Compact History*, (1963):

Thus terminated the pagan prelude in the history of the Arabian people. Whoever compares it with what followed, which gave the Arabs a primary role on the stage of world, and inspired high thoughts and high works, not only to an exceptional man emerged from their bosom, but to an entire elite which for several generations gathered and promoted his word, cannot but notice the leap that the destinies of this people assume here.

The rhythm of its life, until then, weak and dispersed, was to find a unity, a propulsive center, a goal; and all this under the sign of religious faith. No romantic love for the primitive can make us fail to recognize that without Mohammed and Islam they would have probably remained vegetating for centuries in the desert, destroying themselves in the bloodletting of their internecine wars, looking at Byzantium, at Ctesiphon and even at Axum as distant beacons of civilization completely out of their reach.

Q 2. Identify the main features of the confinement of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) in the valley of Abu Talib.

During the birth of Islam, the polytheists persecuted the Muslims, those who proclaimed belief in one God and God’s messenger, the Prophet Muhammad (s). This resulted in Prophet Muhammad’s suggestion to them to leave Mecca and seek protection in Abyssinia. Many questions arise with respect to this migration: What factors led to this migration? When did it happen? Why did the Prophet Muhammad choose this country over others? And what events took place during the Muslims’ stay there?

In the following, I seek to answer these questions. Moreover, a brief account will be given on the Prophet’s contact with the king of Abyssinia years after the hijrah, or the migration to the city of Medina that marks the Islamic calendar. A final analysis will be provided regarding the importance of this event in sustaining and spreading Islam, as well as its lessons in teaching the Islamic approach of interacting with other nations.

Factors that Led to the First Migration

During the first years of the Proclamation of Islam when the Prophet Muhammad (s) extended an open invitation to Islam, the polytheists were furious over the revolutionary ideas Islam brought forth. The Prophet taught people to worship the One God who is the Lord of the universe, to have faith instead of tribal and kinship

pride, to provide for the poor, and to realize that all humans are equal regardless of race, geographical contiguity or a specific privilege.

Islamic teachings applied to all individuals and this meant that the polytheists would feel propelled to give up their gods, share their wealth and humble themselves with the realization that they are not better than others due to specific privileges. Though Islam attracted people from the lower class economically, the leaders of Quraysh were enraged, worried that these ideas would cause an immense change in the system that gave them power.

Furthermore, the polytheists did not tolerate the Muslims' rejection of their gods and reacted with serious harassment and abuse. In the beginning, the maltreatment of Muslims by the polytheists was confined to jeers and insults. However, Muslims gradually became victims of physical violence in addition to insults¹.

The polytheists harmed the weaker Muslims by instigating others against them, defaming them, or cheating them. Muslims were also left hungry and thirsty until they verbally professed the divinity of the two chief idols of the polytheists i.e. Lat and 'Uzza. And as refraining from hurting people of other tribes was their custom, each leader abused the Muslims of his own tribe and members of other tribes could not intervene. Of course, if they had wanted to do so. Muslims were persecuted by being imprisoned in their own homes (there were no public prisons during that era) and more so by being prevented from seeing the Prophet.

In addition to mistreating lower class Muslims, the polytheists blackmailed the rich Muslims, causing a severe decline in business. However, during this period, the Prophet was not yet subject to the same maltreatment because he was under the protection of his uncle Abu Talib and enjoyed the support of the Bani Hashim tribe.

This severe abuse left some Muslims unable to stand firm against it and, full of remorse, they had no choice but to leave Islam. Others hid their monotheistic faith; in other words, they practiced taqiyyah, and preserved it thus. There were yet others who resisted and faced imprisonment, torture, and even martyrdom².

There were Muslims whose steadfastness made them notable characters in Islamic history. Those to be named and described here are Bilal al-Habashi, Ammar bin Yasir and his parents, and Abdullah bin Mas'ud. Bilal's parents were brought as captives from Ethiopia to Arabia. Bilal became a slave of Umayyah bin Khalaf, one of the sworn enemies of the Prophet (s). After learning about Prophet Muhammad and his teachings, Bilal converted to Islam. When Umayyah learned that Bilal had converted to Islam, he ordered that he be taken into the scorching sun. A large rock was placed on his chest as he was told to give up his faith in monotheism and submit to Lat and 'Uzza. To Umayyah's dismay, Bilal only replied "Ahad! Ahad!" (One! One!).

Upon seeing his condition, Waraqah ibn Nawfil, a Christian Arab scholar, was brought to tears and swore to Umayyah that if Bilal is killed, he will make Bilal's gravesite become a sacred pilgrimage site³.

As said in Tabaqat by Ibn Sa'd, a rope was tied around Bilal's neck and Umayyah ordered children to drag him in the streets of Mecca.⁴

Another group that was among the early Muslims is 'Ammar and his parents, Sumayyah and Yasir. 'Ammar's parents were tortured to death, making them the first martyrs in Islam. Subsequently, 'Ammar himself was tortured, so much so that he had no choice but to verbally renounce Islam to the polytheists. With great sorrow,

he ran to the Prophet, admitted his action, and declared that his heart is still overflowing with faith. The Prophet then advised him to continue to hide his faith to save himself from further discrimination and torture.⁵

Abdullah bin Mas‘ud, a new convert, participated in a Muslim group discussion where a member suggested that since the people of Quraysh had never heard the verses of the Holy Qur’an, one of them should publicly recite the Qur’an in Masjid al-Haram. Abdullah was willing to do so. He proceeded to the Masjid while the people of Quraysh were assembled there and read in a loud, melodious voice,

“In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. It is the Merciful who has taught the Qur’an” (5:1-2).

Upon reading the verses, the polytheists were struck with amazement, and in order to prevent the heavenly verses from affecting them, they pounded on him with their fists until he bled profusely. He ran back to the Prophet (s) in this condition, feeling overjoyed that the verses were heard.⁶

As a result of the persecutions experienced by the early Muslims, the following verses from the chapter The Bee (Al-Nahl) were revealed:

Those who migrate for the sake of Allah after having been wronged, We will surely settle them in a good place in the world, and the rewards of the Hereafter is surely greater, had they known. Those who are patient and put their trust in their Lord. (16:41-42)

According to historians, these verses were sent specifically as an instruction for migration to Abyssinia⁷. The threat of the polytheists became so serious that the Prophet decided to have the Muslims migrate to Abyssinia to save their lives and faith.

The moment the number of Muslims increased, faith in Islam became apparent, and they began to experience harassment and imprisonment with such intensity that some became apostates, the Prophet told them to scatter themselves on this earth. They asked, “Where should we go?” The Prophet replied, “Abyssinia.”

Those who have analyzed this migration say that the actual reason was entirely due to saving the Muslims from the polytheists’ harassments and preserving their faith. Urwat ibn Ishaq also confirms that Muslims’ becoming apostates was due to the polytheists’ abuse. Moreover, he says that the Prophet also knew that his protection was due to God and his uncle Abu Talib⁸.

As a result, the Prophet told them to go to Abyssinia. They, due to fear of turning back to idol-worshipping and in hopes of preserving their faith, headed towards Abyssinia. This became the first migration in Islam. Concerned about this situation, the Prophet supplicated, “Oh Allah, accept my companions and do not let them return back to their previous state.”

Rasul Ja’farian adds that had the immigrants stayed in Mecca, more conflicts would have emerged between them and the polytheists, and the Prophet wanted to prevent this. The Quraysh would also feel less threatened by the growing number of Muslims in their city⁹

Furthermore, the Quraysh felt humiliated by the migration since foreigners may come to know of their persecutions. Ja’farian points out that the primary reason for the migration is not entirely due to the polytheists’

abuse; rather, in the long run, Islam was under the risk of being annihilated, had the Muslims continued to live in Mecca¹⁰.

It is true that the Muslims were persecuted, and the verse was sent to advise Muslims to leave; however, not all the Muslim migrants left because of abuse. One of these people was Ja'far ibn abi Talib who was under the protection of the Bani Hashim tribe.

The Time of Migration

Historians agree that the migration took place on two different occasions. The first one occurred in the fifth year of the Proclamation of Islam in the month of Rajab. In this month, twelve to seventy men and women migrated to Abyssinia. They stayed there during the months of Sha'ban and Ramadan until some Muslims heard of the Gharaniq rumors and returned to Mecca. After learning that the Gharaniq reports were false, the Muslims headed back to Abyssinia.

The exact time of the second migration is unknown. However, Ja'farian states that there was only a short gap between the two migrations, because both migrations happened before the Quraysh drafted and signed in the 7th year after the Proclamation a document that ordered the Bani Hashim to surrender or they would be subjected to economic and social boycott¹¹. Therefore, the time in between the two migrations could not have extended for more than two to three years.

Ja'farian refutes Ibn Ishaq's view that the migration took place only once. Eighty people traveled with Ja'far ibn Abi Talib leading the group. Thirty-three people returned, although Ibn Ishaq does not believe in the fiction of Gharaniq. Biladhari compiled a list of those who migrated, and according to Ja'farian, this proves that some migrants went twice.

The members of this group did not belong to one family, and according to Ibn Hisham every one of these ten persons belonged to a separate family¹². Ja'far the son of Abu Talib was the leader of the second migration. This migration was arranged with perfect freedom and some of the migrants were, therefore, successful in also taking their women and children with them. Consequently, the number of the Muslims in Ethiopia reached eighty-three and taking into account the children taken there or born there the number exceeds this figure.

According to Sayyid Ali Asgher Razvy in A Restatement of the History of Islam and Muslims, the king of Abyssinia welcomed the Muslim refugees from Mecca into his kingdom. He gave them sanctuary and they enjoyed peace, security, and freedom of worship under his protection. About a year later, the Muslims in Abyssinia heard rumors (Gharaniq) that the Quraysh in Mecca had accepted Islam. They were homesick and found no reason to live in exile: thus, they decided to return to Mecca. Upon their arrival, they found out that not only were the rumors they had heard false, but also that the Quraysh had intensified their abuse of the Muslims.

For this reason, the Muslims left for Abyssinia once again. Many other Muslims also accompanied them. This new group comprised of 83 men and 18 women. All narrations agree that the Prophet Muhammad selected his first cousin, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, an elder brother of Ali, as the leader of this group. This second migration of

the Muslims to Abyssinia took place in the sixth year of the Proclamation, or 616 C.E.13. Ja'far appeared to be the only member of the Bani Hashim to leave for Abyssinia with the other refugees. All other members of Bani Hashim stayed in Mecca14.

Choosing Abyssinia

Upon searching for a solution to the persecution of the polytheists, the companions sought the Prophet's advice regarding migration and he (s) replied:

If you were to go to Abyssinia (it would be better for you), for the king (there) will not tolerate injustice and it is a friendly country, until such time as Allah shall relieve you from your distress15.

Thus, his companions went to Abyssinia, while afraid of apostasy and fleeing to God with their religion. This was the first hijrah (migration) in Islam.

The Prophet's words about the country encouraged his companions to move as soon as possible, mounted or on foot, without the enemies' awareness. He was familiar with Abyssinia, and in comparison to other countries with their oppressive rulers, this was a good choice. The Red Sea passed through Abyssinia and was close to Yemen. Business vessels passed through this path and Muslims made use of this when migrating to the country. The Muslims went to Jeddah, a developed trading port, where two trading vessels were ready to sail for Ethiopia. Though the Quraysh heard about their departure, by the time they reached Jeddah, the vessels had already left16.

The Prophet's objective in sending his companions to this country was none other than giving them the freedom to perform their religious duties without insecurity and abuse. He knew that migration to any area inhabited by Arabs, who were idol-worshippers and reluctant to receive Muslims, was dangerous. Migrating to Christian and Jewish areas was also not recommended because conflicts of spiritual penetration between the two existed. In addition to their stance, they considered Arabs to be inferior17.

Yemen was not a preferred option because it was under the rule of Khusrow Parviz, the King of Iran who, upon receiving a letter from the Prophet inviting him to Islam in the year eight A.H., wanted him (s) arrested. Syria, on the other hand, was far from Mecca. Furthermore, Yemen and Syria were not chosen because they were markets for the Quraysh and they had close ties with them. If the Muslims had migrated to either of these areas, they would have been expelled at the request of the Quraysh18.

As the Prophet predicted, the Muslims found Ethiopia to be a prosperous country with a calm and free atmosphere. Umm Salamah, the Prophet's future wife, said, "When we settled in Ethiopia we found ourselves under the protection of the best supporter. We did not experience any trouble.19"

Q 3. Discuss the causes and significance of the Battle of Badr.

The Prophet's first full battle with the Quraysh was the Battle of Badr. This fight, in which 70 idolaters were killed and around the same number taken captive, took place on the 17th of Ramadan, 2nd hijrah, at the location of Badr. This battle damaged the strength and status of the Quraysh irreparably and the major leaders of the Quraysh were killed. The Quran called it the "Battle of Furqan," i.e. the fight to discern between truth and

falsehood. It is astonishing that such a great event has been hidden behind history in such a way that it has become difficult to gain access to facts and several questions to which answers are unavailable are raised about the same.

The Causes of The Battle of Badr

Historians describe the following as being the reasons for the battle:

1. The Quraysh were enraged by the killing of ‘Amr ibn al-Hadrami during the sariyyah of ‘Abdullah ibn Jahash (rta) and the capture of ‘Uthman and al-Hakam. They could not tolerate this humiliation. Taking revenge for killing was, in any case, a tradition of the Arabs. Thus, they began to make preparations for war, as a result of which the Battle of Badr took place.
2. Madinah is located along the route which runs from Makkah to Syria. The trade convoys of the Quraysh travelled through this route to Syria. By making cooperation agreements with the tribes living around Madinah, Muslims had made it impossible for the Quraysh to get permission to use this route. This was akin to cutting off the main artery of their economy, hence war became incumbent.
3. The spoils of war obtained from Nakhlah had created greed for more among Muslims. Hence, they waylaid a large trade caravan which was returning after bringing products from Syria towards Makkah. The Quraysh became suspicious and came out to defend their caravans.

If these are the reasons for the Battle of Badr, what are the characteristics that distinguish it from ordinary wars, on the basis of which the Quran named it “The Day of al-Furqan?” The premise behind all worldly wars is either political or economic. Wars have been started because of killing of people. When a nation has sensed danger to its economy, it has picked up weapons of war. Do the prophets of God too fight on the basis of such factors? These are the questions to which no satisfactory answers are available with biographers and it is necessary that we determine these.

In our view, the above are not the real causes for the battle, because of the following reasons:

1. ‘Amr ibn al-Hadrami’s killing and ‘Uthman and al-hakam’s captivity was certainly humiliating for the Quraysh, and it was also used to incite the emotions of people, but the preparation of a 1,000 soldier strength army and attack on Madinah was completely unnecessary. According to the Arab tradition, qisas (retaliation for murder) could have been demanded. If the Prophet (sws) did not cooperate, revenge could have been asked for from the Banu Hashim tribe members who had been left in Makkah, because the Prophet (sws) was one of them and according to Arab custom, a tribe was held responsible for an individual’s actions. According to some narratives, the Prophet (sws) had offered payment of blood money, but the offer was rejected by the Quraysh. Before the battle, the Qurayshi leader, Hakim ibn Hizam had offered to the mayor of Makkah, ‘Utbah ibn Rabi’ah that he would pay blood money so that the matter could rest. This idea was accepted by Rabi’ah, but other leaders opposed it. It seems, therefore, that waging a war was not the only way to avenge a killing and that the leaders of the Quraysh not only did not consider such retaliation significant but also did not find it suitable to think of the options available.

2. The stated cause of the Syrian route becoming a danger is also unrealistic and the outcome of a perception only. There is a span of one whole year between the agreements with Juhaynah, Banu Damrah and Banu Mudlaj, and the Battle of Badr. Firstly, the wording of these agreements has been preserved and does not include stopping the trade caravans of the Quraysh. Secondly, during that one year, no trade convoy of the Quraysh was asked to obtain permission, nor was any stopped. Their convoys continued to ply on this route. If the purpose had been to stop the trade caravans, one or two incidents would surely have taken place. Thirdly, if it is supposed that Muslims were not so strong during that phase to have served such a notice, they became strong and emboldened after the battle and could have done so. But the truth is that even in later years, there were no signs of putting curbs on such trade. Hence, this cause is merely based on speculation.

3. Muslims would have become greedy after obtaining the war booty of Nakhlah, if the Prophet (sws) had praised them and patted them on their backs. Contrary to this, biographers narrate that he was unhappy with this incident and kept the booty aside. It was only distributed after the Battle of Badr. Was this behavior of the Prophet (sws) a deterrent to war or an incitement?

According to narratives, when Abu Sufyan was informed about the sariyyah of ‘Abdullah ibn Jahash (rta), he was in Syria. He felt that Muslims could attack his convoy while he was en route to Makkah passing by Madinah. He sent a man named Damdam ibn ‘Amr to Makkah to alert them of the potential danger so that they could send a group of soldiers. When this man arrived in Makkah, panic erupted. As a result, they formed a full army and marched towards Madinah. These narratives are not correct because it was impossible in those times for the news to have reached Syria from Makkah, for someone to travel from Syria to Makkah again, for the Quraysh to have made full preparations for war and then to reach Madinah which was a week’s distance away, all within six weeks. Such an activity would have required at least 10-12 weeks, provided the travel time of the man from Syria to Makkah was excluded. According to another narrative, Damdam was not sent from Syria, but from when the convoy was a little distance away from Madinah. The same objections can be applied to this because of the travel time in those days. Had this been the case, the caravan would have been very close to Badr, whereas the messenger was quite far away. [The time taken for travel can be assessed by considering the fact that it took 10 days to travel between Makkah and Madinah. The Prophet (sws) had arrived at northern side of Arabia for the Battle of Tabuk after travelling for 24 days].

What is more likely, therefore, is that the Quraysh may have made plans for war and prepared all the war equipment, and wanted to make the safety of the trade route an excuse. The scheme could have been that a man would come as a representative from Abu Sufyan, and the Quraysh army would move just when the trade convoy would be close by. The man reached Makkah, tore his clothes, toppled the saddle of the camel and starting lamenting, calling upon the people to beware of their convoy as Muhammad (sws) and his companions had waylaid them. This made the people of Makkah angry and they participated in the battle, according to the scheme of their leaders. Even if such a description is accepted, questions on the attack of the trade convoys remain.

Firstly, no incident of robbing any convoy before the sariyyah of 'Abdullah ibn Jahash had taken place. The trade convoys of the Quraysh used to travel without any barriers to and from Syria. Without any previous bitter experience, Abu Sufyan could not have been concerned about the safety of his convoy. News about the incident that occurred in Nakhlah could not have reached Abu Sufyan in time for him to send a messenger to obtain timely help from the Quraysh. It has to be admitted that sending Damdam ibn 'Amr was part of another plan which had no connection with the news of the sariyyah of 'Abdullah ibn Jahash.

Secondly, if protection of the convoy has been the purpose of the Quraysh, it would have sufficed to send a few hundred individuals. Instead, the Quraysh had prepared for a battle on a large scale and ensured that every person participated. This arrangement was far in excess of any need for protection of the convoy and greatly imbalanced.

Thirdly, if the Muslims had wanted to rob Abu Sufyan's convoy, they would have started from the north-west of Madinah, where they would have achieved their objective before the Quraysh army arrived. Before proceeding towards Badr, the Prophet (sws) had sent two spies in that direction. All biographers agree that when the Prophet (sws) prepared his army, he moved it towards Badr, which is 80 miles away from Madinah towards Makkah. Proceeding towards Makkah to rob the convoy would have been a dangerous tactic. It is impossible to imagine such a huge technical error on the part of Muslims.

Fourthly, According to historians, the idolaters knew before they reached Badr that Abu Sufyan had taken the convoy safely out towards Makkah through the coast and he no longer needed any protection. If the Quraysh had come only to protect the convoy, there was no reason for them to go on to Badr despite this news. This proves that their purpose was different.

In the light of these points, it can be deduced that the trade convoy coming from Syria was not the factor behind the Battle of Badr, although biographers have given it more importance.

Q 4. Highlight the main features of the Last sermon of Holy Prophet (SAW).

This sermon was delivered on the Ninth day of Dhul-Hijjah, 10 A.H. (623AD) in the Uranah valley of Mount Arafat in Mecca. It was the occasion of annual rites of Haj. It is also known as the Farewell Pilgrimage.

After praising and thanking Allah the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) began with the words:

"O People! Lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore, listen carefully to what I am saying and take these words to those who could not be present here today."

"O People! just as you regard this month, this day ,this city as sacred ,so regard the life and property of every Muslim a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that he will indeed reckon your deeds."

"Allah has forbidden you to take usury, therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital is yours to keep .You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequality. Allah has judged that there shall be no interest and that all interest due to Abbas Ibn 'Aal-Muttalib be waived."

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"Every right arising out of homicide in pre-Islamic days is henceforth waived and the first such right that I waive is that arising from the murder of Rabiah ibni al-Harithiah."

"O men! the unbelievers indulge in tampering with the calendar in order to make permissible that which Allah forbade, and to prohibit what Allah has made permissible. With Allah the months are twelve in number. Four of them are holy, there are successive and one occurs singly between the months of Jumada and Shaban."

"Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will be able to lead you astray in big things so beware of following him in small things."

"O People it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well never to be unchaste."

"O People! listen to me in earnest, worship Allah, say your five daily prayers, fast during month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat .Perform Haj if you can afford it."

"All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a White has no superiority over a Black nor a Black has any superiority over a White except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly."

"Do not therefore do injustice to yourselves. Remember one day you will meet Allah and answer your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone."

"O People! No Prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore O People! and understand words that I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Quran and the Sunnah and if you follow these you will never go astray."

"All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly."

"O Allah, be my witness, that I have conveyed your message to Your people."

As part of this sermon, the prophet recited to them a revelation from Allah, which he had just received, and which completed the Quran, for it was the last passage to be revealed:

This day the disbeliever's despair of prevailing against your religion, so fear them not, but fear Me (Allah)! This day have I perfected for you, your religion and fulfilled My favor unto you, and it hath been My good pleasure to choose Islam for you as your religion. (Surah 5, Ayah 3)

The sermon was repeated sentence by sentence by Safwan's brother Rabiah (RA), who had powerful voice, at the request of the Prophet and he faithfully, proclaimed to over ten thousand gathered on the occasion. Towards the end of his sermon, the Prophet asked "O people, have I faithfully delivered unto you my message?" A

powerful murmur of assents "O Allah! yes!" arose from thousands of pilgrims and the vibrant words "Allahumma Na'm," rolled like thunder throughout the valley. The Prophet raised his forefinger and said: "O Allah bear witness that I have conveyed your message to your people."

Q 5. Write short notes on the following:

(a) The Battle of Hunain

The conquest of Makkah triggered the mass conversion of the Arabs to Islam in many parts of the country. But there were some tribes living in the east and south-east of Makkah which did not wish to abjure idolatry.

They were alarmed at the rapid progress of Islam, and they thought that if it continued to spread at the same speed, they would soon be surrounded by the Muslims, and would become isolated from other pagan tribes. Their leaders figured that it would be unwise on their part to let the Muslims consolidate their recent gains and become too strong.

They, therefore, decided to act immediately by attacking the Muslims in Makkah and destroying them. The leading tribes among them were the Thaqeef, Hawazin, Banu Sa'ad and Banu Jashm, all fierce warriors, jealous of their independence and proud of their warlike traditions.

They had noted that Makkah had surrendered to Muhammad without striking a blow but they attributed the failure of the Quraysh to resist him, to their effeminacy. As for themselves, they were confident that they were more than a match on the battle-field for the warriors of Islam or any other warriors.

In late January 630, the Prophet received intelligence that Thaqeef and Hawazin had left their home base, and were moving toward Makkah. When these reports were confirmed, he too ordered a general mobilization in the newly-conquered city.

The Prophet didn't want Makkah to become a battle-ground. He, therefore, hastily left Makkah on January 26, 630 at the head of 12,000 warriors, to meet the enemy. Out of this force, ten thousand men were from Medina, and the other two thousand were recruits from the newly-converted Makkans.

This new army was the largest force ever assembled in Arabia to that date. As its various formations marched out of the city gate, in full panoply of war, Abu Bakr who was watching, was much impressed, and exclaimed: "We cannot be defeated this time because of lack of numbers."

But very soon he was proven wrong. Muslims were defeated at the beginning even though they were thrice as numerous as the enemy. Qur'an itself called attention of the Muslims, rather pointedly, that numbers alone were no guarantee that they would be victorious.

Sir William Muir

Four weeks had just elapsed since he (Mohammed) had quitted Medina, when he marched forth from Mecca at the head of all his forces, swelled now, by the addition of 2000 auxiliaries from Mecca, to the large number of 12,000 men.

Safwan, at his request, made over to him one hundred suits of mail and stand of arms complete, and as many camels. The array of tribes, each with a banner waving at its head, was so imposing that Abu Bakr broke forth,

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as the marshaled forces passed, with the exclamation: “We shall not this day be worsted by reason of the smallness of our numbers.” (Life of Mohammed, London, 1861)

When the first column constituting the Muslim vanguard, commanded by Khalid ibn al-Walid, entered the valley of Hunayn in the south-east of Makkah, the enemy was already lying in ambush, ready to greet it with his missile weapons. The pass was narrow, the road was very rough, and the Muslims were advancing apparently unaware of the enemy's presence. It was just before dawn when all of a sudden, the Hawazin launched their attack.

The surprise was complete and the charge of the enemy was so impetuous that the Muslims could not withstand it. The vanguard, composed of the tribesmen of Banu Sulaym, broke and fled. The main body of the army was just behind.

Khalid's column ran smack into its face, and struck panic into its men so that they also turned their backs to the enemy, and began to run. Soon everyone in the army was running, and it was not long before Muhammad was left alone with a handful of his faithful followers around him.

The men led by Khalid were the first to run before the charging enemy, and they were followed by the newly-converted Umayyads of Makkah and their friends and supporters. Behind them were the citizens of Medina. Many Muslims were killed in the stampede, and many others were wounded. The Apostle called out the fugitives but no one listened to him.

The army of Islam was in headlong rout with the enemy at full tilt in pursuit. The Apostle, of course, did not abandon his post, and stood firm like a rock. Eight men were still with him, all watching the spectacle of the flight of their army. They were:

1. Ali ibn Abi Talib
2. Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib
3. Fadhl ibn Abbas
4. Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith ibn Abdul Muttalib
5. Rabi'a, the brother of Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith
6. Abdullah ibn Masood
7. Usama ibn Zayd ibn Haritha
8. Ayman ibn Obaid

Out of these eight, the first five belonged to the clan of Banu Hashim. They were the uncle and the cousins of the Prophet.

The Prophet asked his uncle, Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib, to call the fleeing Muslims. Abbas had a very powerful voice, and he shouted: “O ye Muhajireen and O ye Ansar! O ye victors of Badr and O ye men of the Tree of Fealty! Where are you going? The Messenger of God is here. Come back to him.”

The voice of Abbas boomed in the narrow valley and almost everyone heard it, and it proved effective in checking the flight of the Muslims.

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The Ansar were the first to halt, and to return to the battle. Inspired by their example, others also rallied. Soon they were able to regroup. A fierce skirmish took place. At first, the issue appeared uncertain but then the Muslims began to press the enemy. Once they recovered their morale, they went on the offensive. The enemy still fought bravely but was hampered in his mobility by the vast number of women and children he had brought with him. The Muslims pressed their advantage and then it was the Bedouins who were running in all directions.

Sir William Muir has told the story of the rout and rally of the Muslims in the battle of Hunayn at some length. He writes in his book, *The Life of Mohammed*, (London, 1877):

Very early in the morning, while the dawn was yet gray, and the sky overcast with clouds, the army of Mohammed was in motion. Clad in full panoply, as on the day of Ohod, he rode on his white mule, Duldul, in the rear of the forces.

The vanguard, formed of the Banu Sulaim and led by Khalid, were defiling leisurely up the steep and narrow pass, when on a sudden the Hawazin sprang forth from their ambushade, and charged them with impetuosity.

Staggered by the unexpected onslaught, the Banu Sulaim broke and fell back. The shock was communicated from column to column. Aggravated by the obscurity of the hour, and the straitness and ruggedness of the road, panic seized the whole army; all turned and fled. As troop by troop they hurried past him, Mohammed called out: "Whither away? The Prophet of the Lord is here! Return! Return! – but his words had no effect, excepting that a band of devoted friends and followers gathered round him.

The confusion increased, the multitude of camels jostled wildly one against another; all was noise and clamor, and the voice of Mohammed was lost amid the din. At last, seeing the column of Medina troops bearing down in common flight, he bade his uncle, Abbas, who held his mule, to cry aloud: "O citizens of Medina! O men of the Tree of Fealty! Ye of the Sura Bacr!"

Abbas had a stentorian voice, and as he shouted these words over and over again at the pitch of his voice, they were heard far and near. At once they touched a chord in the hearts of the men of Medina. They were arrested in their flight, and hastened to Mohammed, crying aloud, "Ya Labeik! Here we are at thy call!"

One hundred of these devoted followers, disengaged with difficulty from the camels that jammed the narrow pass, threw themselves upon the advancing enemy and checked his progress. Relieved from the pressure, the army rallied gradually, and returned to the battle. The conflict was severe; and the issue, from the adverse nature of the ground and the impetuosity of the wild Bedouins, remained for some time doubtful.

Mohammed ascended an eminence and watched the struggle. Excited by the spectacle, he began loudly to exclaim: "Now is the furnace heated: I am the Prophet that lieth not. I am the offspring of Abdul Muttalib."

Then bidding Abbas to pick up for him a handful of gravel, he cast it towards the enemy, saying, "Ruin seize them!" They had indeed already wavered. The steadiness of the Medina band, and the enthusiasm of the rest when once recalled, had won the day. The enemy fled, and the rout was complete. Many were slain and so

fiercely did the Moslems pursue the charge, that they killed among the rest some of the little children – an atrocity which Mohammed had strictly forbidden.

Betty Kelen

They (the Muslims) camped short of Hunayn Valley and at dawn advanced on the enemy through a defile.

Umar's son described what happened then:

“We came down through a wadi, wide and sloping descending gradually in the morning twilight; but the enemy was there before us and had hidden in the by-paths, side-tracks and narrow places. They were in force, fully armed and knowing exactly what to do, and by God, we were terrified when we descended and suddenly the Hawazin came down on us as one man!

The Bedouin attacked with stones, boulders, arrows, lance and sword. Muhammad's van, under General Khalid, broke, the camels jostling and crashing, screeching and tangling up their long legs.

He (Muhammad) saw among the fleeing men his new converts from Mecca, and he called to them as one of their own: 'Where are you going men? Come back! Come to me! I am God's Apostle. I am Muhammad, son of Abdullah!'

Not one of them heeded, and why should they? There was a Hawazin warrior after them on a russet camel, his standard flying from the long lance, and every time he dipped the blade of that lance, it showed up on the other side of someone's chest.

The Prophet's voice was drowned in the uproar of men, the clamor of camels. He asked his uncle Abbas, a man with a mighty lung, to take up the cry, 'O comrades, remember the acacia tree...' And Ali, so quiet in peace but in battle like a demon, lunged viciously about him, fighting to get behind the Hawazin leader's camel and hamstringing it..." (Muhammad, Messenger of God)

(b) Second pledge of Al-Aqba

The second pledge at al-Aqabah was an important event in the mission of the Islamic prophet Muhammad where 75 residents of the settlement of Medina pledged their loyalty to Muhammad as their leader. It preceded the Hegira, or migration of Muhammad and his supporters to Medina where Muhammad became ruler, from Mecca where they were persecuted. The pledge occurred in 622 CE at a mountain pass five kilometers from Mecca.