

## FROM TAIF TO MAKKAH

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had suffered some personal losses in the death of his beloved wife Khadija and his loving Uncle, Abu Talib. After the passing of Abu Talib, the Makkans had become more hostile towards the Muslims and showed no restraint, even against the Prophet (pbuh). The prophet (pbuh) decided to visit Taif in the hope that they would be more responsive to the message of Islam than the Makkans were. However, the people of Taif also refused to listen to the prophet (pbuh) and refused to accept his teaching. After a few days, they chased the prophet (pbuh) from the city causing him and Zayd to be injured during their escape.

Zayd was the prophet's only companion during the visit to Taif. as they both rested against the wall of a vineyard, two Makkans noticed them. They took compassion on these blood-soaked and exhausted people and sent some grapes by the hands of their servant, Addas. Addas was impressed but also curious with Muhammad (pbuh) who started eating by saying the Bismillah. Addas began a conversation with the prophet (pbuh) and very soon he became sure that Muhammad (pbuh) was actually a prophet. Later when his masters rebuked him, he replied, **"There is no person on the face of this Earth better than Muhammad!"**

Muhammad (pbuh) did a dua to Allah and then they moved on towards Makkah. The Angel Jibrael came to the prophet (pbuh) with the Angel in charge of mountains. The Angel Jibrael told prophet Muhammad (pbuh) that if he so wished he would command the Angel of mountains to bury the city between two mountains. Although the prophet (pbuh) had suffered a great deal in the hands of these people, he replied that maybe their offspring would accept Islam and would proclaim the religion of truth. Due to the kind nature of Muhammad (pbuh), the city was saved from destruction.

On the journey back to Makkah, the prophet (pbuh) and his companion rested for a while in a place called Nakhlah and the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) recited the Qu'ran. As he recited the verses of the Qu'ran, he did not realise that even in the darkness of the desert, there was an audience listening to and admiring these verses. Later on, a few verses of the Qu'ran were revealed which told the prophet

(pbuh) that a group of Jinn had come and had marvelled at these beautiful words. The Jinn had gone and spoke to their companions about these verses. This audience of Jinn then sat, filling the valley, listening to the beautiful recital.

When Muhammad (pbuh) reached near the city of Makkah, he stopped off at Mount Hira on the outskirts of Makkah. He then sent guides to some of the nobles of Makkah, asking them if they would offer him protection when he entered Makkah. All the nobles refused but Al Mu'tim bin Adi, one of the leaders of Makkah volunteered to protect the prophet (pbuh). He sent a message to the prophet (pbuh) asking him to enter the city and go straight to the Ka'bah and he would extend his protection to him.

Muhammad (pbuh) entered Makkah and proceeded straight to the Ka'bah. Mu'tim was waiting with his family and friends, fully armed and ready for battle. The prophet (pbuh) proceeded to the Ka'bah and offered a short prayer by reading two rakats and then the group accompanied Muhammad (pbuh) to his house. Mu'tim announced to the people at the Ka'bah that he was offering Muhammad (pbuh) his protection and if anyone would dare to harm the prophet (pbuh) they would have to face the consequences. The prophet (pbuh) entered the city without being harmed and was returned to the relative safety of his house.

Abu Jahl was very concerned and sent for Mu'tim. He asked him if this protection he was offering Muhammad (pbuh) was a sign that he had accepted Islam. Mu'tim replied his actions were no more than protection for Muhammad (pbuh) and not an acceptance of Islam. Abu Jahl was relieved by this reply and told Mu'tim not to worry because he would offer Muhammad (pbuh) protection instead.

So Muhammad (pbuh) returned from Taif and resumed his duties in preaching and teaching the message of Islam. The Hajj season was at hand and he began to speak to the people about Islam and encouraging them to face the true realities of this life. He told them to stop worshipping the idols and to worship only Allah. In this year's Hajj, there were no great conversions to Islam or any major events. However the prophet (pbuh) was successful in his mission with some people turning towards Islam and listening to the message.

There were many tribes the prophet (pbuh) spoke and he had many dialogues. The tribes as a whole did not accept Islam. In many cases, they listened to the prophet's message and reflected on his words. Although many would accept part of it, they did not want to leave the religion of their forefathers; after all they had travelled to Makkah to pay homage to these Idols. The prophet (pbuh) was not deterred by this and made the point of speaking to as many groups or individuals as he could.

One tribe he spoke to was the Bani Amir bin Sa'sa'ah. They listened to the Prophet (pbuh) and they were impressed with his powerful words and messages. They said that they would support the prophet (pbuh) because this message could potentially conquer all Arabia and would surely succeed with their support. Their chief then offered the prophet (pbuh) their acceptance of Islam with the condition that their tribe would be the rulers, or successors, after the prophet (pbuh). The prophet (pbuh) replied that he could not fulfil that condition because only Allah decides who should rule and not man.

The Bani Amir bin Sa'sa'ah then revoked their offer saying they wouldn't stand up for and sacrifice for Islam if they were not guaranteed to be the rulers after the prophet (pbuh)! They had not truly accepted or understood Islam. The message of Islam is that this world is temporary and the next world is permanent - humans should work with the aim of being successful in the next life not to gain power and fame in this life.

The situation and safety of the Muslims had deteriorated; none of the Muslims were free from the Makkan ill behaviour and persecution. Even Abu Bakr was so fed up with the torture by the Makkans that at one point he was ready to leave Makkah. Now Abu Bakr was a gentle person who had been very well respected, even before Islam came, and everyone knew of his kind and gentle nature. You would not think that such a person would suffer from any kind of abuse no matter what the circumstances were.

The prophet (pbuh) was talking about the toughest times they had to endure. He said that the Quraish did not have an effect on him as they did after the death of Abu Talib. Their lives were made a misery and there was no one that could stop this aggression and stand up for the Muslims as Abu Talib had done. The Makkans showed no compassion or restraint when they dealt with the Muslims.

Another difficult year had lapsed and the Muslims were under the yoke of the Makkans. However, Hajj season was coming up very soon and this time there would be many tribes coming to Makkah to visit the Ka'bah. The prophet (pbuh) was ready to invite the people to the truth of tawheed and fulfil his mission. However, unknown to the prophet (pbuh), there would be a certain group of people who were going to listen attentively to the message. They would take this message to heart and adopt its teachings into their lives.

The pilgrims poured into Makkah as they had done since the time of Ibrahim (as) many centuries earlier. However, these pilgrims did not come to worship the one true god for who this great house was originally built. Instead they would worship the many idols, which littered the holy sanctuary.

As the tribes entered Makkah and performed their Hajj, the prophet (pbuh) made arrangements to speak to these tribes and individuals about Islam. The prophet (pbuh) would speak to these people at night away from the eyes and ears of the Makkans. Many of the tribes would refuse to speak to the prophet (pbuh) but some of them did listen to the prophet (pbuh). There would be a handful of people who would accept the message whilst the majority of them would reject Islam. Often the prophet (pbuh) was accompanied by some of his close companions such as Abu Bakr, Umar or Ali.

The prophet spoke about Tawheed, dedication of one life to the worship of Allah and shunning the worship of everything besides Allah. This proposition was very difficult for the people to accept let alone follow. Makkah was a great city because of the many people coming to visit those very idols that the prophet (pbuh) was preaching against! The people were often filled with pride for their forefathers and were unwilling to accept that their forefathers be wrong!

The prophet (pbuh) would continue to preach Islam, in amidst this sea of idol worship. One of the many tribes that was visiting the Ka'bah and performing the Hajj was a group from Yathrib. The prophet (pbuh) was at a place called Aqabah in Mina when he overheard some people talking. The prophet (pbuh) went to them and asked if he and his companions, Abu Bakr and Ali, could join their company.

The group of six Arabs were from the Khazraj tribe and they had already heard about prophet Muhammad (pbuh) from the Jews and the other Arabs. They were a little curious to see this man who had caused such a stir in Makkah, who was much talked about throughout Arabia. The Jews in Madina had often spoken about a prophet who would come and conquer the Arabs. The group invited the prophet (pbuh) and his companions to sit with them. They listened to the prophet (pbuh) talking about Allah; the need to worship Allah alone; the teachings and responsibilities of Islam.

The group were very impressed by the beauty and simplicity of the message and accepted Islam straight away. They decided that they would speak to the Aws tribe who were their bitter enemy in Yathrib. They thought that maybe they too would accept Islam, which would bring an end to the feuds that often erupted between the two tribes.

With this hope of unity in Yathrib and zeal of spreading Islam through their community, this group of six young men departed company. What would happen to this small group of six? Would they be successful in Yathrib or would they suffer the same response as the Muslims had received in Makkah? What affect would this small group of new converts have and what contribution would they make to Islam, only time would tell.

There was another major event that was going to take place. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) would be taken on a journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and then to the high heavens. During this journey, he would see many incredible things and speak to some of the greatest people that came before him.

## THE NIGHT JOURNEY

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was now in the eleventh year of his mission. He had strived through some very difficult and testing times. In fact, this was a testing period for all the Muslims, especially since they were suffering so many hardships at the Makkans. However, the Prophet (pbuh) remained steadfast to Islam and his mission. He continued to preach the message of tawheed (worship of one God) in this hostile climate.

There was one important incident that took place during this period. The prophet (pbuh) was taken on a night journey to the farthest mosque in Jerusalem on a journey known as the Isra and then into the heavens known as the Miraj. This was no ordinary journey because normally the journey from Makkah to Jerusalem would take a month if travelling by horse or camel. It would take another month to travel back. The journey into the heavens was totally unheard of and hard for people to understand or accept. The prophet (pbuh) had completed the whole journey to Jerusalem and then into the heavens during a small part of the night.

The Angel Jibrael accompanied Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) throughout the journey. The prophet (pbuh) travelled on an animal called the Buraq which allowed the prophet (pbuh) to travel vast distances in a small period of time. It also allowed him to travel into the heavens, which no normal creature would be capable of. The Buraq is like a horse upon which the passenger would sit.

The prophet (pbuh) was whisked away to the mosque in Jerusalem - Bait ul Maqdis. Here all the prophets were assembled and they prayed salah together behind prophet Muhammad (pbuh). This was a unique event where the most noble of human beings were gathered together in one place. All the prophets from the past were assembled at the same point in time to offer salah behind the last and final messenger.

After the Salah, the prophet (pbuh) was taken away into the heavens. as the prophet (pbuh) ascended the different heavens, he met many prophets and saw

many amazing things. This journey through heaven continued through each heaven until he reached the seventh heaven and was taken to a point where he spoke to Allah in person.

During his journey there he had met prophets at each heaven and also spoke to them. He met prophets such as Adam (as), Yahya (as), Isa (as), Yusuf (as), Harun (as), Ibrahim (as) and Musa (as). He had the opportunity to speak to these prophets and they acknowledged their faith in the final messenger.

When the prophet (pbuh) spoke with Allah, he was given the command for the believers to pray fifty times a day. As the prophet (pbuh) descended, he met Musa (as) who advised him that this would be difficult for the believers and that he should ask for a reduction in Salah.

The prophet (pbuh) returned to Allah and requested that he get a reduction in the number of prayers. Allah granted the Muslims a reduction to forty Salah and again the prophet (pbuh) returned. However, when he spoke to Musa (as) again, he was advised that forty was too much and the believers would not be able to pray so much. Musa had experience with his people for many years and from this experience he was advising the prophet (pbuh).

Muhammad (pbuh) again returned to Allah and again Allah reduced the number of Salah for the believers. This trip to and fro continued until the prayers were reduced to five Salah. Musa (as) still advised the prophet (pbuh) to request the number of Salah to be reduced further but the prophet (pbuh) was too embarrassed to go before Allah and ask for a further reduction.

The five daily prayers were thus made compulsory upon the believers by the command of Allah. It was the will of Allah that the Salah should be reduced to five Salah in a day but still the people who perform them will receive the full reward for the fifty Salah. The prophet (pbuh) then continued his journey through heaven.

The Prophet (pbuh) was shown some amazing sights including Heaven and Hell. He saw the people that were getting punished for the bad actions they had done in

their lives on Earth. These people would suffer many hardships in Hell and would remain in Hell forever suffering these punishments (unless Allah forgave them). In Hell, the punishments were indeed very severe and different type of evil deeds had different punishments.

The prophet (pbuh) was also shown parts of heaven where he saw some of the many delights and ease the good people would be rewarded with. There were many amazing things that no human eyes had seen and would only see in the hereafter. The prophet (pbuh) told his companions about paradise and some of the things in store for the righteous people on Earth.

This had been quite an experience for the prophet (pbuh) and this assembly of all the prophets had never happened before in the history of mankind. The prophet (pbuh) told Umm Hani about this journey and she advised him not to tell the people because they would belie him and try to harm him. However, the truth is the truth and the prophet (pbuh) went and told the people about this amazing journey.

The Makkans were ecstatic, finally prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had said something that was unbelievable and they could use this to attack and ridicule the prophet (pbuh). The words and the message of the prophet had always been clearly the truth and he spoke words of such wisdom and guidance. However, the night journey was different because it was very difficult for the Makkans to grasp. How could the prophet (pbuh) travel a two-month journey in such a short time? How could the prophet (pbuh) ascend into the heavens? They would use this experience to ridicule the prophet (pbuh) and call him a liar.

The Makkans taunted Muhammad (pbuh) and asked him many questions. They laughed at him and claimed that he was making this whole experience up. They asked him many questions but this did not satisfy their curiosity. In fact, they began to taunt Muhammad (pbuh) more - saying how could he make a journey to Jerusalem in such a short time - it just wasn't possible.

Muhammad (pbuh) told them details of his journey and about how he had seen some caravans on their way back to Makkah. He told them some incidents that had taken

place where camels had gone missing and he had guided the people there. He described the caravans and the camels that were leading them in great detail. He also gave them many accurate details of the mosque in Jerusalem, even though the Makkans knew that the prophet (pbuh) had not travelled there prior to this experience. The travellers later confirmed all these details but still they refused to believe the prophet (pbuh).

There were some Muslims who had accepted Islam but wouldn't believe this journey had taken place. Some Muslims left the folds of Islam whilst others, such as Abu Bakr, had their faith increased. This experience was a test from Allah for all the people. Some people of weak faith left Islam but the true Muslims of deep faith and understanding recognised the truth. They remained steadfast as ever to Islam and the prophet's teachings.

Some Makkans went to Abu Bakr and said that your companion (Muhammad) is relating some amazing stories. Abu Bakr accused the Makkans of lying and making up stories about the prophet (pbuh). He then added that if they were telling the truth that the prophet (pbuh) made this journey then the journey must be true. He said that Muhammad (pbuh) would never lie and that the journey was true. He reasoned, if the Qu'ran can come to the prophet (pbuh) in an instance from the high heavens to the Earth then why is it unbelievable that the prophet (pbuh) can ascent into the heavens in such a short time?

After this incident, Abu Bakr was given the title of as-Siddique (the truthful). This journey to the heavens had a number of effects on the people. The first was that the Muslims of weak faith had left Islam, leaving only the cream of the Muslims. Secondly, the details about the caravan and Jerusalem were later confirmed by the travellers which highlighted the truth of the prophet's words.

The traders from the caravans related the same incidents as the prophet (pbuh) had said and also the caravans fitted the description the prophet (pbuh) had given. The description of Jerusalem was also confirmed to be accurate. Some of the Makkans accepted that the prophet (pbuh) had spoken the truth and had indeed gone on this journey. However, the Makkans continued to mock and insult the

Muslims and made things more difficult in Makkah for the Muslims.

As time had gone, the conditions were becoming more hostile for Muhammad (pbuh). The Makkkan community had made things very difficult for the Muslims and progressively things became worse. The death of Abu Talib had been one major turn point for the mission of Muhammad (pbuh) with hostilities against the Muslims increasing many folds. However, he remained undeterred and continued to preach the message of truth to the people.

Muhammad (pbuh) knew that Islam was the truth, he had full faith in Allah and even when things were at their worst, he knew that Allah would give them success. Allah had appointed Muhammad (pbuh) as a prophet and had promised that Islam would conquer their hearts. Muhammad (pbuh) was just a warner and a guide; the success of his mission was in the hands of Allah. Allah would grant this mission success and Islam would prevail above all else.

The Hajj would be approaching soon and the prophet (pbuh) would soon be preaching to the many tribes that would come to perform the Hajj. The prophet Muhammad (pbuh) would take the opportunity to tell the people about Allah and the purpose they were created for. He would encourage the people to leave idol worship and all the evil things they did. He would offer them a chance to repent from their past sins and reform their lives by accepting Islam.

The Makkans were also ready; they would ridicule the prophet (pbuh) calling him a liar, a poet or invent some other lie against him. They would encourage the people to ignore the prophet (pbuh) and to keep away from him. They would warn the people to avoid listening to anything Muhammad (pbuh) said because he recited words of magic!

Source: [musalla.org](http://musalla.org)